

WOODSTOCK PLANNING COMMISSION
Wednesday, November 4, 2020
7:30PM
ZOOM MEETING
MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sally Miller, Ben Jervey, Susan Boston, Susan Silberberg, Mary Margaret Sloan, Sam Segal
MEMBERS ABSENT: Sara Stadler
OTHERS PRESENT: Neal Leitner

I. CALL TO ORDER 7:30 P.M.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES October 7, 2020

Susan Boston moved to approve the minutes with two changes: The next meeting date to be changed to November 4th, and to change Susan Stadler to Sara Stadler.

Sam Segal seconded the motion.

Motion Passed 6-0.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Accessory on Farm Business (AOFB) discussion

Chair Miller opened the item up for discussion. The town planner gave the commissioners a summary of what has transpired since the last discussion on Accessory On Farm Businesses (AOFB). He noted that the Town Development Review Board (TDRB) has placed an AOFB application into recess to allow the TDRB to gather more information pertinent to the application and mull over Act 143 as it relates to the application. He summarized information he received from the Agency of Agriculture along with a summary of what issues the TDRB is having while mulling over their AOFB application. In particular, the TDRB is grappling with finding that the application meets the definition of an AOFB as per Act 143. The two part

definition allows municipalities to determine if an AOFB application meets one or both of the definitions.

Part one of the definition states: The storage, preparation, processing, and sale of qualifying products, provided that more than 50 percent of the total annual sales are from products that are principally produced on the farm at which the business is located.

Part two states: Educational, recreational, or social events that feature agricultural practices or qualifying products, or both. Such events may include tours of the farm, farm stays, tastings and meals featuring qualifying products, and classes or exhibits in the preparation, processing, or harvesting of qualifying products.

The TDRB has found that operation plans of the farm and AOFB are needed to make a determination. The Agency of Agriculture does not make the determination for the municipality.

Chair Miller confirmed with the town planner that the Agency of Agriculture makes the determination that a farm meets the definition of a farm under the RAPs, but they do not give out approvals for AOFBs. The town planner confirmed that is correct.

Chair Miller asked the commission if they wanted to look at making separate site plan review standards for AOFBs.

The town planner mentioned that the Performance Standards in the zoning regulations could be enhanced, which would be applicable for Site Plan Review.

Chair Miller asked where looking at operations standards falls under site plan review. She noted that the town zoning regulations aren't giving guidance as to what is needed in an operations plan for an AOFB, and perhaps that is something that can be revised in the zoning regulations.

Mary Margaret Sloan asked to look at what the problem is that the Planning Commission can try to solve and be conscientious that we don't add extra layers of regulation for the farmers who want an AOFB on their farm.

Sally responded that we need to be sensitive of the neighbors of AOFBs as well.

Sally thought that adding a definition of AOFB to Section V in the town zoning regulations could be helpful.

Susan Silberberg asked if we can map out the process for farmers and if we can add AOFB to the town plan. She mentioned that the Town of Charlotte appears to have done that.

Chair Miller responded that making town plan changes is a lengthy process, but making a zoning change is easier and faster.

She also noted that if we make a change to the zoning regulations we should do a good job the first time around. She reiterated that adding a town definition of an AOFB under Section V in the town zoning regulations could be effective.

The town planner also noted that the definition of a restaurant is lacking from the town zoning regulations, and that might be useful to help delineate between an AOFB and a restaurant.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Town Plan – Education Chapter

a) WCUUSD Board Chair, Vice Chair & School Superintendent

The town planner informed the commissioners that the Select Board voted to send the Education Chapter back to the Planning Commission after receiving comments from Barnard school board members at the public hearing. The Select Board did not give any specific recommendations.

Chair Miller mentioned that someone should talk to the Select Board to see if they have any thoughts and recommendations.

Susan Boston asked if perhaps the Select Board was just defaulting to the letters written by the school board members.

Sam Segal said he can reach out to Keri Cole since she has children in the school and her husband, Ben Ford, who is on the School Board as a Woodstock representative.

The commission agreed that was a good plan of action. Sam Segal said he will keep the Planning Commission informed.

B. Discussion of enacted Act 179 (S. 237) and associated effects on Village and Town Zoning Regulations.

The town planner re-introduced Act 179, which was signed into law by Governor Phil Scott on October 12th. The law makes changes to increase affordable housing opportunities and encourage growth in village centers served by water and sewer. He asked the commissioners if they thought the Act would affect the zoning regulations.

Other than removing the conditional use requirement for multi-family dwellings of 4-units or less, the final wording of the Act does not appear to have any material effect on the existing zoning regulations.

The town planner noted that an earlier draft set a maximum lot size limit of 1/8th of an acre, which would have had an impact since that is the minimum lot size required in the Residential High Density District. That wording was removed from the final draft.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

VI. ADJOURNMENT Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm
