

WOODSTOCK PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, July 7, 2021

7:30PM

ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL

MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT- Sally Miller, Sam Segal, Mary Margaret Sloan, Susan Silberberg, Susan Boston, Neal Leitner

MEMBERS ABSENT - Sara Stadler

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES May 5, 2021; June 2, 2021: May 5, 2021, minutes approved and June 2, 2021, minutes approved with edits to energy standards discussion.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A.** Accessory on Farm Business (AOFB)/ Act 143 update
- B.** VT Public Utility Commission notification to Planning Commission for comment
- C.** Village Neighborhood Analysis

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A.** Taftsville Village Center Designation discussion

D. OTHER BUSINESS

Accessory on Farm Business (AOFB)/ Act 143 update:

Neal Leitner gave updates about the Act 250 hearing for Peacefield Farm, LLC. It was tense due to neighbor opposition but was ultimately not withdrawn. The next Act 250 hearing will be held on July 29th. Lighting will be discussed since neighbor issues included lighting. Other neighbors voiced the same concern, among others at the meeting.

VT Public Utility Commission notification to Planning Commission for comment:

Neal Leitner mentioned that he sent the solar array to the DEC Floodplain Manager for comment since the solar panels would be in a flood zone. He mentioned that he did not receive any comments back from John regarding the proposed solar array. Sally Miller suggested that bushes would be ineffective in trying to hide the future solar paneling. Susan Boston suggested a fence would fit the landscape. Sally Miller suggested pushing them further back from the road and staking out the area to get an idea of how much space the panels will take up and how close to the road they will be.

Taftsville Village Center Designation discussion:

The Taftsville country store has new owners that would like to reopen it. When the inspection was done, the needed corrections totaled 200-250 thousand dollars. Idea to make Taftsville a designated village center was proposed. It will take a minimum of six months. Town boundaries would need to be mapped. Mapping would open potential grant funding. There was a proposal to open the country store a year and a half ago but was denied due to unmet fire safety standards. Susan Silberberg proposed crowdfunding and other ways to fund the country store to get it done faster. The individual does not need planning commission help. She needs local approval but help from the planning commission is only suggested. Tax credit is another option not often exercised. Downside of expanding the village destination- They like to see a compact designated area. Sally Miller suggested grant funding could be 25 thousand depending on their financial state.

Village Neighborhood Analysis:

Sally Miller discussed the EDC housing group that is focusing on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's). The EDC is looking for the town to make sure the ADU's are supported by zoning. There is debate between whether a downstairs apartment is separate or not. It is taxed as separate, but sewer needs to be contacted to get their perspective. The biggest obstacles are setbacks in the village making it hard for people to get ADU's. 50% reduction of setbacks is suggested in specific parts of the two, specifically the village. Neal Leitner mentioned that Act 73 to promote affordable housing has funds coming through to update bylaws making it easier to access affordable housing; but it has become more competitive, and dates have not been released yet. Idea proposed to investigate the neighborhoods and different types of properties to see what the best way is to reduce the setbacks. The historical aspect is being considered when proceeding. A document has been created to add information about the properties such as who is on town water, what homes are in the historical district and sizes of properties.

Neal Leitner stated that GIS and parcel database work has been moving slowly; permits are up 200% from last year but people are constructing much less now due to high costs. Sally Miller thought that Peter Fellows at TRORC could be enlisted to help update the GIS map for the town.

Neal Leitner stated the VDRB is excited to see what is proposed for the old Gulf station. He noted that there is no proposed use yet, potentially an adaptive use building. Parking requirements need to be reviewed as well as a determined use.

Food trucks by east end parks now have a designated area. 7 days a week 9am to 9pm.

Town is working on developing a potential parking variance to make it safer for pedestrians on the east end. Sally Miller suggested looking back at the study that was done for the East End.

Vote passed to meet in person in August. The next meetings will be held in hybrid form, anyone who wants to come to town hall for the meeting can, but zoom will remain an option.

Sam Segal stated that he will be resigning from the Planning Commission. The commissioners wished him the best with his future endeavors.

E. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for August 4th, 2021.

DRAFT