

MEETING MINUTES
MUNICIPALITY OF WOODSTOCK, VERMONT
WOODSTOCK PLANNING COMMISSION
31 The Green
Woodstock, VT 05091

The Woodstock Planning Commission held a public meeting on Wednesday, February 8th, 2023
to discuss the following:

Members present: Susan Boston (Chair), Mary Margaret Sloan (Vice Chair), Frank Horneck,
Laura Powell, Brad Lawrence, Susan Silberberg, Nicholas Seldon
Public present: Rebecca Mitchell, Jill Davies (EDC Housing Working Group)
Staff present: Steven Bauer

Administrative Tasks

- Call to Order: Susan Boston called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.
- Adjustments to the agenda: Steven Bauer requested the Commission approve last meeting's minutes at the next meeting in March.

Planning Commission Clerk Appointment

Chair Boston and Steven Bauer requested a clerk appointment for the Planning Commission. The clerk's role is to be the keeper of the record - minutes, agendas, archives, as well as public comments. For example, if one of the Commissioners is unable to attend a meeting, they could send their comments to the clerk to be read into the record for the meeting. They are responsible for keeping the Commission in accordance with Open Meeting Law.

Chair Boston asked if anyone would like to volunteer for the position of clerk. Laura Powell volunteered.

Brad Lawrence motioned for Laura Powell to be appointed clerk for the remainder of her term. Frank Horneck seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7-0. Approved.

Village Zoning Changes Presentation

The Commission discussed the presentation and transmittal draft of the Village Zoning changes. Edits discussed include:

- Summarizing House Bill 68 (H.68)
- Sourcing Woodstock area housing supply needed, need to define "Woodstock area"

Mary Margaret Sloan asked for the timeframe Woodstock housing inventory is needed - e.g. is it over the next decade?

Jill Davies responded that this is actually the immediate need but that it's not realistic to expect 500 new housing units to be created in the immediate future. She will ask Kevin Geiger at Two Rivers to double check those numbers and define: "Woodstock area."

Edits continued

- Highlighting the housing mismatch: more than 50% of housing in the US is now occupied by single persons, most housing being built is 3+ bedrooms.
- Highlighting how the housing crisis affects older residents, working families, businesses.
- Simplifying the Planning Commission's goals by removing unnecessary commentary

Mary Margaret Sloan departed the meeting at 6:30PM.

Edits continued:

- Removing language about static population, highlight the average household size is decreasing
- Clarify that the impacts we are discussing are specifically for the Village
- Moving the line edits to the end of the presentation so that the order goes: zoning map, definitions, graph of changes, line edits
- Order of definitions

Susan Silberberg commented that Mary Margaret Sloan had previously asked if ADUs should require administrative review so it wouldn't be such a drastic change to the current policy.

Chair Boston asked for clarification on the timeliness of administrative review for an application, when compared to the proposed removal of review.

Steven Bauer stated that administrative review adds a maximum of 46 days: the administrative officer has 30 days to act, assuming it does not need any other approval, then it would be 15 days after the permit has been issued.

Steven Bauer reiterated that there are still policies in place ADUs need to be compliant with: for example, if they are in the Design Review District, they will need approval from them; they will need to be compliant with state fire code; they will need to be in compliance with the actual definition of the ADU, setbacks still apply. It doesn't remove all review. In addition, folks are

welcome to come make an appointment with the office to ensure they understand the standards that apply.

Chair Boston highlighted that the definition of ADU makes it a secondary use and not a primary use.

Jill Davies commented that the Commission shouldn't assume that non-Commission participants will understand administrative review, suggested it would be helpful to define the processes at the beginning of the presentation.

Chair Boston noted Mary Margaret Sloan's objection to the removal of the administrative review and asked how the rest of the Commission felt about the change.

Nicholas Seldon stated that he agreed with Mary Margaret Sloan and was also concerned about the change. He commented that he's concerned about neighbors suddenly learning they can do these things without prior approval, that this would remove safeguards currently in place. He commented that he doesn't believe ADUs solve the housing crisis and has seen instances where they invade the privacy of the neighbors. He understands he is in the minority on the Commission on this particular issue.

Susan Silberberg and Chair Boston thanked Nicholas Seldon for sharing his opinion.

Chair Boston asked if the Commission was ready to vote on the proposed changes.

Brad Lawrence moved to approve the commission's draft of the proposed amendments and report for a public hearing to be held in town hall on Wednesday March 13th at 7pm. Laura Powell seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-1 (Seldon: Nay). Approved.

Chair Boston thanked Jill Davies for her assistance with the presentation. She reminded the Commission that they will be reviewing the presentation and preparing for the Trustees meeting at the next meeting (March 1st).

Chair Boston made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Susan Silberberg seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6-0. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:31pm.