

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, September 6, 2023 to discuss the following:

Members present: Frank Horneck, Chair, Brad Lawrence, Laura Powell, Nicole Green, Ben Pauly
Public present: Andrew Winter, Jacqueline Mongillo, Anthea LaVallee, Ellen Hender, Kevin Geiger, John Haffner, Senator Alison Clarkson, Jake Hemmerick, Jon Spector, Senator Kesha Ram Hinsdale, Representative Tesha Buss
Staff present: Steven Bauer and Stephanie Appelfeller

Administrative Tasks

1. Call to Order – Frank Horneck called meeting to order at 7:02pm
2. Adjustments to Agenda – Laura Powell suggested moving Rules of Procedure to last item on agenda under other business.
3. Approve Minutes
 - (a) 8/1/2023
 - (b) 8/2/2023

Laura Powell motioned to approve the minutes as printed.
Brad Lawrence seconded the motion.

Vote 4-0-1. Approved – Ben Pauly abstained.

Public Hearing

1. Review the proposed draft of the housing modernization amendments.

Frank Horneck explained the proposed draft changes of Housing Modernization amendments mainly impact parking, density, and timelines. Steven Bauer referred to the zoning map for the Village and indicated the newly passed Act 47 substantially impacts areas with access to municipal water and sewer.

2. Receive Public Comment on proposed amendments.

State Senator Alison Clarkson questioned if the Planning Commission had considered the water supply and how that will impact development. Alison Clarkson presented that the Home Bill S100 ([Act 47](#)) is a big step to help the housing issues as single-family zoning has been eliminated which will make multifamily housing easier to construct. She indicated the water supply is a main factor impacting Woodstock. 500

new units is the goal but may not be enough to house the people who work in Woodstock.

Steven Bauer replied that the proposed changes have been in the works for a year and have been working with EDC and Housing Trust and the 5 top items focused on are parking, density, timeliness, sewer & water, and general growth plan.

Jake Hemmerick with Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development mentioned that the proposed Woodstock bylaw changes reflect the Home Act and supported the changes.

Jon Spector spoke in support of the changes on his own personal behalf. Jon asked that the commission recognize Woodstock's economic development is contingent on increasing population. Over the next 10 years huge infrastructure financial demands are needed, such as sidewalks, town hall, new schools, and the water systems. He suggested the only way to make it affordable is to spread over more people by increasing population and only way to grow population is increasing housing. He agreed there is need for housing for workers in Woodstock but also need to increase number of housing units.

Senator Kesha Ram Hinsdale – Chair of Economic Development - explained the Planning Commission's plan is in the spirit of the Home Bill to provide stable, safe housing. Home values have tripled and cost to build a home have doubled since 2018 and people are set back further in wealth gap. 76% of homes in Woodstock are occupied by 2 people or less. Sen Kesha Ram Hinsdale explained many of these people want senior housing and smaller homes that are currently not available. Vermont has 20,000 open jobs and less than 1000 housing units available, and this is critical to build housing over next year or less.

Tesha Buss – Just completed the first ADU, funded in part by the Housing Working Group grant, in Woodstock and offered to help anyone with questions about the process. Tesha asked the financier of the proposed new school difference would it make if there would be 3% more children in district, the amount property values would increase would significantly reduce. A small amount of population change can make a big impact.

Andrew Winter – Executive Director Twin Pines Housing trust endorsed the parking and density changes downtown and the increase in height to come in line with Act 47. Mellishwood- 26 units of senior housing on Pleasant were purchased by Twin Pines in November rated 63 out of 100 by HUD and needs renovation. The proposed zoning changes will help increase the housing stock by increasing the number of units they can add.

Anthea LaVallee and Jacqueline Mongillo – Anthea is on the board of Twin Pines, has lived in Woodstock 18 years, single mom and homeowner and supports the changes to make a vibrant diverse community. Jacqueline is also on the board of Twin Pines and has considered leaving Woodstock as it is unaffordable. She would like to see more housing.

Kevin Geiger from Two Rivers Ottauquechee – Kevin suggested that communities need to attract younger families as people are aging out of workforce. Zoning does not build housing, it enables it, but need to also look at sewer and water capacity and brokering state funding available to make path easier for development.

Ellen Hender and John Haffner from Vital Communities. Ellen Hender and John Haffner mentioned it is exciting to see the support of the Planning Commission. John suggested the Planning Commission may also want to prepare for infrastructure, parking, and transportation issues. Also explore micro transit, ebikes, and bike lanes.

Alison Clarkson – Suggested Woodstock consider the Home Share network and find an incentive to have seasonal and older residents share homes. She would like workers to live closer to the Village center. Perhaps offer incentives for sellers to sell homes to full time residents.

Jon Spector responded to Alison Clarkson that expanding the number of housing units is only way to grow. Filling 2nd homes with full-time residents can help, but Woodstock needs more housing units to make the town affordable.

Anthea LaVallee mentioned that climate migration is happening, and Woodstock needs to prepare for new residents.

Tesha Buss explained that the perception of landlord's renting to challenging tenants is not realistic, she suggested there are excellent tenants that contribute to our community who need housing.

Alison Clarkson asked the timeline of changes and Steven Bauer responded these changes are going in front of Village Trustees in October. The town will be next.

3. Vote to approve draft amendments for transmission to the Village Trustees for public hearing at their October meeting.

Laura Powell motioned to approve the draft amendments.

Brad Lawrence seconded the motion.

Vote 5-0. Approved.

New Business

1. Short-term rental regulations

Alison Clarkson mentioned that short term rentals are currently determined locally by each community but may be determined statewide in the future.

Laura Powell presented that the Selectboard granted a 6-month moratorium in Town to review the Short-Term rental policy with deadline of March 31. There will be an Open Discussion at the October and November meetings with stakeholders and community members. The Planning Commission will not totally prohibit or eliminate all regulations on short term rentals.

Alison Clarkson asked how to enforce and monitor short term rentals. Laura Powell mentioned it is not possible to enforce the way the regulations are currently written. That is one of the goals of this revision and perhaps offer an incentive to comply.

Laura Powell explained 60 platforms now list short term rentals which is too many to track. Alison Clarkson suggested the one place that can perhaps share this data is the State Tax Department as short-term rentals pay tax or a rental registry database to help track properties.

Tesha Buss mentioned Airbnb collects tax on behalf of renter. She hopes at the state level there is a statewide program created as it's inequitable and confusing for homeowners from town to town. She suggested perhaps if a Vermonter owns the property that a different incentive be offered.

Derek Demas – long term and short-term rental owner in Woodstock, explained Airbnb pays the short-term meals and rooms tax for him to state on his behalf but he does have to fill out a quarterly report.

Identify Action Items (what we each need to do before next meeting) –

Laura Powell added an action item to invite community members to attend next meeting October 7th at 7pm. Laura will also send the draft short-term housing docs from former April meeting to Ben Pauly and Allison Clarkson.

Other Business

Approval of Planning Commission Rules of Procedure

1. Main changes are Officer term limits – Laura Powell suggested it should say “Any officer position shall be limited to 5, consecutive 1-year terms”.
2. Added that office staff are responsible for notices required by law and these rules of procedures.
3. Attendance – 80% of meetings expected.

Laura Powell motioned to adopt the Rules of Procedure as amended in this meeting.
Ben Pauly seconded the motion.
Vote 5-0. Approved.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Ben Pauly
The motion was seconded by Brad Lawrence.
Vote 5-0. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.