

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, May 1, 2024, to discuss the following:

Members present: Benjamin Pauly (Chair), Matt Driscoll, Mary Margaret Sloan and Nicole Green, & Laura Powell and Frank Horneck as ex-officio members.

Public present: Bill MacDonald, Amy Martsof, Teresa Tan

Staff present: Steven Bauer, Director P&Z, Stephanie Appelfeller

Administrative Tasks

1. Call to Order at 7:02pm
2. Adjustments to Agenda
 - a. Added to agenda - Draft a letter of support for Aqueduct company acquisition.
3. Approve Minutes
 - a. 4/3/2024 – Moved to next meeting.

Ongoing Business

1. Short-term rental ordinance update – Steven Bauer updated the Commission on the Joint board meeting that occurred 5/1/24. Voting will be held on 5/2/24 at 8:30am.
2. Update on H.687 and S.311 – H.687 will be on the Senate floor for second reading today.

New Business

1. Request for consideration to amend zoning map to convert 1522 Barnard Road from R5 to R1 or R3.

The map provided in the materials showed the subject property and surrounding zoning districts. Steven Bauer explained the request is regarding a policy change to amend the zoning map. PC needs to decide if this parcel fits best in R5 or R1. If the Commission decides to hear the application, the hearing will need warned, presented to the Select Board, then a 21-day petition period. If no petition is received, the change becomes effective. Mary Margaret Sloan said it should be considered; she lives next door to the parcel. Ben agreed it is worth the process.

The request will be added to the agenda for June.

2. Master Planning Kickoff – Goals and Process – Open discussion for the master plan.

Steven Bauer suggested making a list of things most important, what is integral to the process.

Foundational Principles of Woodstock

Steven and the Commissioners suggested several principles including Connectivity, Housing, Sustainability, Renewable Resources, Water and sewer capacity, Schools, Resilience, Vision for town owned assets.

Public Comment

Bill MacDonald asked the Planning Commission to make a change to the zoning regulations so projects like his application to fill in a pool would be exempt from a permit. He explained his project is considered a lawn and filling the pool removed a hazard from the neighborhood which should not be included in the permit process.

Ben mentioned it is up to the Commission to decide if they want to take up changing the Village zoning regulations. Steven indicated under Section 515 for the Village states moving over 9 cubic yards of soil requires an administrative review. He said the PC could decide if wants to amend section 515 or add a exemption to the regulation regarding eliminating a hazard. Mary Margaret Sloan stated she is hesitant to change the regulations as these are in place to protect the neighborhood and promote conservation. Ben agreed and did not support changing the regulation.

The Commission decided not to consider Bill MacDonald's request to change the Village zoning regulation language.

Continuation of Master Plan Discussion

Laura Powell said each board will be setting goals and priorities over the next few months and will all work together. She indicated the Municipal Manager will present the current state of Woodstock and set goals for each board to bring to the Planning Commission.

Steven explained a master plan is typically 25 years, then broke out into 3–5-year segments and annual goals. The Town Plan has had the same language for 30 years. Steven suggested each PC meeting for the next two years will spend 1 hour on master planning. He also added the importance of redesigning the Design Review and Conservation Commission and how to use each board's time in the best way.

Frank Horneck mentioned the need for strategic planning and who is responsible for making sure hit the goals. Some of these same items were discussed 10 years ago, who holds the Town responsible for not meeting the goals? How do we make sure capacity is not maxed out?

Ben asked who uses the town plan? Steven replied it is used for grants and as a plan for where the town will be in the future. Laura responded that the town plan is the reference document for the town and every time a decision is made it should guide the decision. She mentioned the Selectboard uses it and agreed it needs updated to guide how to move forward as a town.

Action Item - The Planning Commission should read examples of how other towns organized the Master Planning process before the June meeting.

3. Drafting letter of support for acquisition of Aqueduct company – Laura explained a public forum will be held May 7 at 5pm to ask questions to engineering and financial audit groups.

Steven and Ben will draft a letter for Commission to review mid-May and will vote at next meeting in June. Boards plan to vote at the end of summer on acquisition.

Other Business

None

Adjournment

Motion: by Ben Pauly to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned 8:19pm