

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, June 12, 2024, to discuss the following:

Members present: Benjamin Pauly (Chair), Alex Mulley, Mary Margaret Sloan, Brad Lawrence, and Laura Powell as an ex-officio member.

Public present: Amy Martsolf, Chris Boyle, Al Alessi, BJ Dunn, Michael Stoner

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

Administrative Tasks

1. Call to Order at 5:01pm
2. Adjustments to Agenda
3. Approve Minutes
 - a. 5/1/2024

Ben Pauly motioned to approve the minutes as printed.

Brad Lawrence seconded the motion.

VOTE: 3-0-1. Not approved due to lack of quorum, moved to next meeting.

Ongoing Business

1. Update on H.687 ([H.687 As Passed by Both House and Senate Unofficial.pdf](#))

Steven Bauer mentioned the veto session is scheduled and H. 687 contains Act 250 revisions which will relate to the Woodstock master plan process if passed.

2. Update on Master Planning – Steven has 10 examples of master plans he will send to the Planning Commission members.

New Business

1. Request for Consideration to amend zoning map to convert 1522 Barnard Road from R5 to R1.

Amy Martsolf presented that she and Teresa Tan own a 6.2-acre parcel and residence on Barnard Road. She requested the Planning Commission consider amending the zoning at this property, 1522 Barnard Road from R5 to R1. The plan is to divide the site in half and build a home on the rear portion. Rezoning will create more housing, which is a goal of the town plan and the parcel is surrounded by R1 properties.

Ben Pauly explained this is not a public hearing so no vote tonight. Mary Margaret Sloan mentioned she is an abutter and owns a farm zoned R5. She asked if R3 is possible to create a buffer between R1 and R5? Amy said she would consider R3. Ben mentioned it needs to be

viewed objectively and does not see R3 used as a buffer in other areas. Ben Pauly and Laura Powell said a site visit may be appropriate.

Mary Margaret suggested she will abstain on the final vote as an abutter but is comfortable voting to continue the conversation at a public hearing.

Ben Pauly motioned to schedule a public hearing to amend the zoning map for 1522 Barnard Rd from R5 to R1.

Alex Mulley seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0. Approved.

2. Letter of support for the acquisition of the Woodstock Aqueduct Company –

Alex Mulley suggested the language of the letter be more prescriptive of the overall scope. In addition to the acquisition, there are capital projects that are necessary to bring to compliance and allow for new connections and growth. Steven Bauer added the revised language to the letter of support.

Ben Pauly motioned to approve sending the letter on behalf of the Planning Commission to the Select Board

Alex Mulley seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0. Approved.

3. On-farm Restaurants size and scale – TZR §536(B)

Ben Pauly explained that the Selectboard tasked the Planning Commission with looking at TZR §536(B) to make sure that language follows the intent of the regulation. Laura Powell said the Select Board has asked the Commission to revisit all R5 properties.

Alex asked for the history behind the request. Steven replied that in 2021 there was a petition to amend the On-farm restaurant regulation, which became effective in 2022. In summer 2023, an application for this use was approved by the town and appealed to the Environmental Court and the permit was denied as the footprint of the building exceeded 2800 SF.

Alex asked where 2800 SF footprint language came from? Ben Pauly said it did not come from the Planning commission but thought it was probably intended to limit the impact on an area. Ben explained there are limits to occupancy of 100 people and site plan review is also required to make sure it fits the surrounding area. Ben said 2800 SF is too small for a normal barn to be a farm restaurant. He suggested removing the square footage requirement.

Mary Margaret Sloan had concerns about eliminating the SF and felt like it is just for one application. Any on-farm restaurant will be in a rural area that is not heavily developed or commercialized. She liked the way it is currently written to prevent building something much larger than what is desired.

Ben said if the occupancy limit is 100 people, he would eliminate the square footage completely. Brad agreed with Ben and felt the occupancy limit keeps it in check. Alex did not have enough info to decide and asked for the footprint of other restaurants to compare.

Selectboard intends to hold a hearing on August 20th and the Planning Commission can hold a public hearing on July 29th.

Public Comment

Michael Stoner explained he initiated the petition in November 2021 and the intent was to encourage on-farm restaurants. They did not specify SF but asked for an occupancy limit. It took a year to get the amendment passed. Supporters thought the 2800 SF represented the public space as barns are larger. If entire building is only allowed at 2800 SF, it would require new construction. He suggested a 10,000 SF barn should be allowed to have a restaurant.

Brad asked if adding different sizes for new vs existing structures is possible? The PC members were open to that idea.

Chris Boyle represents Tom Meyerhoff and Cythia Volk and explained that the regulations were designed to keep restaurants consistent with the rural area and took a year to approve. He mentioned only one application has been submitted since. Why does the regulation need to change now? Ben Pauly responded that the intent of the regulation is believed to be different than what the court ruled and the Planning Commission has been tasked with determining the intent. Chris replied there is nothing to suggest Section 536 does not work, it's only due to one particular property that this is being discussed.

Al Alessi is an abutter who mentioned this was driven with one project in mind. The community discussion was not held. He is most concerned with the hours and how it fits into the setting. The boards should be careful making decisions about one parcel.

BJ Dunn mentioned in a recent Act 250 denial, the owner appealed and asked to be considered under Act 143. He suggested if square footage is struck completely, should keep a limitation on new construction size. Could use larger size for old, existing barns.

Steven said Planning Commission need to solidify language if plan to warn public hearing. The Commission would like to see sample language for five options at the next meeting.

Option 1. Stays same, Option 2. SF stricken completely, Option 3. Keep 2800 SF and define the spaces, Option 4. Change the SF, Option 5. SF limitations for new construction versus no SF restrictions for repurposing existing spaces.

4. Department and Committee Reconstruction – Moved to next meeting

Other Business

The Commission will reschedule July 3 meeting to July 10 at 5pm and schedule Monday, July 29th for a Special meeting.

Adjournment

Motion: by Ben Pauly to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned 7:25pm