

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 20, 2023

Members Present: Kevin Anderson, Bob Cook, AnnMarie Harmon, Emma Hanson, Alice Peal

Members Absent:

Staff Present: JB Weir, Planning & Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Beth Cook, Jonathan Ursprung

II. Regular Business.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Alice. The meeting was held in person at the Town Offices and remotely via Zoom.

Alice explained that Jonathan will be officially appointed at the June 27 Selectboard meeting. Beth Cook was in attendance as a potential new PC member. Beth introduced herself to the group.

2. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items.

AnnMarie and Alice clarified that the zoning regulation changes being considered outside of the bylaw modernization project will be reviewed at an upcoming meeting, after Alice, AnnMarie, and JB have a preliminary meeting to organize the topics that will be discussed.

AnnMarie added an item to the Other Business portion of the agenda, regarding the 'Homes for All' application she is working on.

3. Public Forum.

Nobody requested an opportunity to address the PC.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of June 6, 2023 were amended and approved.

5. SE Group Bylaws/Vibrant Villages Discussion

- PC Discussion on progress

JB explained that due to technology issues, he has rescheduled with SE Group and will be meeting with them twice in the upcoming week; they will address finding the best location for each of the proposed new regulations within the document currently in effect, and ensuring that there are no conflicts with other sections of the current Regulations.

Kevin provided an overview of the proposed strategies which had been discussed in recent meetings, giving a summary of the PC's position on each. He noted:

- Village Residential
 - Reduce minimum lot size to 1/4 or 1/5 acre
 - Increase lot coverage maximums accordingly
 - Implement glazing and sidewalk-facing entrance standards
 - Adjust zoning district to include Read property and school (both are in designated Village Center)
 - Adjust zoning district to move area of intact forested area to Ag-Res

- Multi-family dwellings of up to four units as a permitted use
- Allow some level of mixed use as a permitted use
- No requirement for upper story dwelling units
- Inclusionary dwellings – better understanding of affordability thresholds needed
- Density bonus for including affordable units – topic needs more clarity and further discussion
- Village Business
 - Adjust setback requirements to accommodate what already exists
 - No fourth story (further clarity/discussion re S.100 needed)
 - Potentially some level of permitted use for mixed use parcels
- Irasville
 - Reduce minimum lot size to 1/4 or 1/5 acre (no contingency on availability of wastewater system)
 - Adjust lot coverage maximums accordingly
 - Implement glazing and sidewalk-facing entrance requirements
 - Allow for ‘flag’ lots
 - Multi-family units with a ceiling on number of units as permitted use
 - Residential and mixed-use units up to three stories; commercial-only structures capped at two
 - No requirement for two dwellings per lot
 - Further clarity/discussion needed regarding inclusionary/affordable units
 - PUD to be further defined for the zoning district, exactly what changes to include needs further discussion
 - Require pedestrian connections
 - Parking considerations
 - Shared parking consideration as requirement
 - Reduce number of required spaces to one per dwelling unit
 - Consider impact fee
 - Require parking to side or behind structure

Alice raised the topic of traffic calming/difficulties for pedestrian travel on the northern end of Mad River Green, noting that this is likely best addressed through future Master Plan development. Kevin will ask SE Group if there are any ways to address this through the regulations being suggested. Alice will also look into resources for addressing this, including a traffic calming toolkit available through VTrans.

It was agreed that a review of compatibility with S.100 will take place after the draft changes to the Regulations have been completed.

- Home Bill (S.100) summary from ACCD

A preliminary summary of the Bill is available from ACCD, with updates being provided as more information is clarified. Alice explained that there is now a requirement for the Regional Plans to address population growth and make associated housing recommendations for each town.

It was discussed that one of the biggest challenges of the Home Bill is the provision that allows for an additional story for development that includes an affordable housing component. PC members outlined the dilemma faced by this, as the preference is to allow for three stories in the village

districts, but a lack of support for allowing four-story structures. This was echoed in the survey responses received at the Open House event. Members potentially would support reducing the limit on the number of stories to two in order to allow for a possible maximum of three due to this provision. Points made during the discussion included:

- Four stories is out of character with the nature and feel of the Town.
- An incentive for creation of affordable units is desired, but a preference for the incentive to lead to three-story units.
- Housing is needed, at both affordable and other attainable levels; allowing for three stories without an affordable component is preferable.
- The high water table, particularly in Irasville, potentially precludes four-story structures.

It was agreed that further discussion of this topic is needed as the contents of the Home Bill are clarified, and that more input from SE Group will be helpful.

6. Other Bylaw Changes

As noted in the beginning of the meeting, this topic will be placed on a later agenda.

7. Wastewater Project Update

JB provided an update, noting that the Selectboard is expected to approve the draft ESA Agreement with Dubois & King at their next meeting, based upon the expectation that the \$125K from the CWSRF is provided as anticipated. He has begun that Step 2 loan application for DEC, which if received will help defray the 30% design cost of \$182K, with the potential for using town ARPA funds to cover the difference. JB explained that originally the time frame for this work was anticipated at 3-4 months, but that recently Jon Ashley has indicated that it may only require two months. He also noted that conversations with landowners regarding needed easements will begin.

Bob pointed to the worksheet of a draft analysis of wastewater flows, which will be included in the final PER. He explained that the data gathered for the proposed plan leave approximately 20K gallons of capacity to be allocated to new development, the amount available for residential development will be dependent upon how much new commercial input is created.

8. Short Term Rentals

Report on Meeting in Stowe

Alice and AnnMarie attended a recent meeting in Stowe related to short-term rentals (STRs); notes compiled by Ann Marie were provided in the meeting packet. It was outlined how Stowe is approaching this issues, using a subcommittee structure. Noted at the meeting was that the fire department has encountered many of the related problems, including improper use of wood stoves, other heating issues, and renters being locked out of units.

There was a brief discussion among PC members of the use of registry software, enforcement, and other aspects of addressing STRs. It was agreed that any related ordinance work would best be approached outside of the scope of the current bylaw work taking place.

9. Other Business

- Homes for All application
AnnMarie shared what she had prepared for answers to the 'why participate' question on this application, and received feedback/input from the group.
- Intersection of Routes 100 and 17
Information regarding this was included in the meeting packet, explaining that VTrans is in the process of reviewing previous project proposals and is currently rescoping this project.
- Upcoming meeting schedule
It was agreed that meeting in person should begin again at some point, and that there will be no meeting scheduled for July 4. The next meeting will be on July 18.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary