

Town of Richmond
Planning Commission Meeting
AGENDA
Wednesday, April 20th, 2022, 7:00 PM
Online via Zoom

PLEASE NOTE: In accordance with Act 78, this meeting will be held online and conference call via Zoom only. You do not need a computer to attend this meeting. You may use the "Join By Phone" number to call from a cell phone or landline. When prompted, enter the meeting information provided below to join by phone.

For additional information about this meeting, please contact Ravi Venkataraman at 802-434-2430 or at rvenkataraman@richmondvt.gov.

The Zoom online meeting information is as follows:

Join Zoom Meeting:<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88419874605>

Meeting ID:884 1987 4605

Join by phone: (929) 205-6099

For additional information and accommodations to improve the accessibility of this meeting, please contact Ravi Venkataraman at 802-434-2430 or at rvenkataraman@richmondvt.gov.

1. Welcome, sign in and troubleshooting
2. Review of the agenda and adjustments to the agenda
3. Public Comment for non-agenda items
4. Approval of Minutes
 - April 6th, 2022
5. Discussion on the Gateway District
6. Presentation and Discussion on the Zoning for Affordable Housing Study
7. Other Business, Correspondence, and Adjournment

Table of Contents

4. Approval of Minutes

- Page 3: April 6, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

5. Discussion on the Gateway District

- Page 7: Draft outline for zoning regulations for the Gateway District
- Page 10: Rationale for disentangling development standards from permitting, prepared by Virginia Clarke
- Page 11: Draft regulations and reorganization outline for Sections 4 and 5
- On separate standalone documents:
 - Wetlands maps prepared by Arrowwood Environmental

6. Presentation and Discussion on the Zoning for Affordable Housing Study

- On separate standalone document:
 - Richmond Housing Study, prepared by Brandy Saxton of Placesense

Richmond Planning Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR April 6, 2022

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Members Present: | Virginia Clarke, Lisa Miller, Dan Mullen, Joy Reap, Mark Fausel, Chris Cole, |
| Members Absent: | Alison Anand, Chris Granda, |
| Others Present: | Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner/Staff), Erin Wagg (MMCTV), Gary Bressor, Rod West, Bob Reap |

1. Welcome and troubleshooting

Virginia Clarke called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

2. Review of the agenda and adjustments to the agenda

Clarke reviewed the meeting agenda.

3. Public Comment for non-agenda items

Mark Fausel brought to the attention of the commission the Fourth of July, and suggested setting up a booth during the event for community outreach. Clarke recommended Fausel’s suggestion be added for other business.

4. Approval of Minutes

Lisa Miller asked about the reference to visualizations and if the commission will continue conversations about that subject. Clarke said that the commission will continue that conversation later today as part of the next steps for the Gateway.

The minutes are accepted into the record as written.

5. Discussion on the Gateway District

Clarke asked Joy Reap about updates from the Water and Sewer Commission. Reap said she does not have much of an update from the Water and Sewer Commission.

Clarke suggested adding an update on the proposed zoning amendments presented to the Selectboard on Monday to “Other Business”.

Clarke reviewed the discussion documents and the commission’s goals for the area. Miller asked for clarification on “scenic entrance” and establishing a better concept of “scenic entrance”. Clarke said that the term is associated with rural character. Dan Mullen suggested tying in future residential and commercial development with scenic and historic considerations, and considering design standards.

Reap said that the goals listed are more so actions rather than goals in a broad sense, and suggested

establishing a general vision for the area. Cole concurred. Reap said that having a vision statement would help with providing a better basis for the actions and the goals the commission wants to achieve. Clarke welcomed ideas for a vision statement.

Miller noted the importance of allowing properties to redevelop and allowing the town to grow.

Clarke overviewed the options of creating a single zoning district or two distinct zoning districts. Fausel suggested that the committee receive requests from landowners in the Gateway and engage with them, similar to the commission's process for Jolina Court. Cole concurred, and suggested looking to the Town Plan. Clarke said that the list of goals is from the Town Plan, and alluded to past conversations with the public in which the public wanted more flexibility. Reap said that she would appreciate more flexibility, more allowed uses, and more lot coverage. Reap noted the financing challenges she's faced for redeveloping the barn. Reap added that the Gateway could aid with the town-wide housing issues. Reap said that she would love to do housing, and that she would need sewer service. Fausel asked Reap if she would be interested in building a 16-unit apartment building. Reap said that she is unsure, that she has had conversations with Venkataraman and the commission in the past about this, and that she would have to get a better understanding of developing multifamily housing. Fausel asked Reap what other uses she would like in the Gateway area other than what is already allowed currently. Reap pointed out the 50 percent commercial requirement, and input she received to build a car wash.

Clarke overviewed a possible proposal to amend the existing Gateway District regulations to allow for more uses and multifamily dwelling uses. Rod West asked about the proposal to create two separate districts, said that the 50 percent commercial requirement was impractical because of the size of the parcels, asked about the site visit, said that the main desire is to not have chain businesses in the Gateway area, and said that the having more commercial opportunities in the Gateway area would make sense. Clarke asked West about commercial strip development. West said that he doesn't mind the area looking like commercial strip development as long as there are no bright illuminated signs, that standards for development should be in place, and that he would encourage the development of local businesses. West said that he had suggested to the Water/Sewer Commission that it work on providing services to the Willis Farm area and that the remainder of the line could be undertaken by the property owners themselves.

Miller noted the slope of the Gateway area and the types of uses that could be developed depending on the slope, and the role the property owners should play to determine future uses. Miller suggested that the commission pursue amending the Gateway District regulations instead of creating two distinct districts, and establishing design and compatibility standards. West identified the 35-foot height limitation and how that limits the development of sloped roofs. Clarke said that keeping one district for the entire Gateway area could meet the commission's overall goals, and that the intent for creating two districts was to allow for more commercial uses on the Willis Farm property and less commercial uses on the other properties.

Clarke reviewed next steps in the Gateway planning process—including organizing a site visit for April 23rd. Dan Mullen asked Venkataraman if it would be easier to draft regulations that would apply for the entire district equally rather than on a lot-by-lot basis. Clarke reviewed the considerations for the lot containing the Fieldstone building and lots within the lower Gateway area. Gary Bressor suggested keeping both options available for the public to review and consider along with visualizations, and said that building housing may be difficult without establishing a neighborhood. Clarke asked Bressor about

the feasibility of a secondary road. Bressor noted the possible elimination of driveways along Route 2 and said that the presence of wetlands would be the main factor.

Mullen asked about the feasibility of installing traffic calming measures along Route 2. Cole said that it would be difficult, reviewed the VTrans process for installing traffic calming measures, and said that actual safety data would be needed. Mullen asked if increased residential development would be a factor. Cole said that he wouldn't expect VTrans to lower the speed more than they already have.

Clarke said that the next step would be to draft possible zoning standards and discuss.

Cole asked Venkataraman if he had a preferred approach to amending the zoning regulations. Venkataraman said that he does not have a preferred approach, and that the approach would depend on what the property owners and the town desires.

Clarke asked if members were available for a site visit on April 23rd. Commission members agreed to meet at 3 pm on April 23rd for the site visit.

Miller asked about the timetable for zoning amendments. Clarke said that the Water/Sewer Commission's timetable has been pushed back, and that a vote may be held in November for the bond. Clarke said that the housing study and the village districts will need to be reviewed, and that her goal is to have the Gateway and the village districts finished by the end of the summer.

6. Discussion on defining Affordable Housing terms

Venkataraman said that he provided the commission definitions from state statute and other zoning regulations to help clear up confusion from the previous Planning Commission meeting. Clarke suggested that the commission review the meeting materials to get an understanding before the item is discussed further. Mullen asked for additional information on median household income. Venkataraman said that he can provide more information to the commission. Clarke suggested the Housing Committee could lead discussions on this topic.

7. Other Business, Correspondence, and Adjournment

Clarke asked Venkataraman about the amendments discussion during the last Selectboard meeting. Venkataraman said that the Selectboard voted to hold a public hearing on the proposed amendments to Vehicle Fueling Station, Nonconforming Uses and Structures, and Wetlands on April 25, 2022. Venkataraman said that the Selectboard raised questions about the EV charging requirement, which will need to be addressed during the public hearing.

Clarke asked Fausel about his proposal for a Fourth of July booth. Fausel asked for a list of members of all the town's boards and committees and pictures to provide information to the public on town boards and committees. Clarke said that for Fausel's idea, one would need to reach out to town board and committee members, create posters and ask for volunteers to staff the table. Miller volunteered to help Fausel. Fausel asked if Venkataraman had funds to help support this outreach work. Venkataraman said that he might have something small in the budget.

Clarke said that the commission may discuss the housing study and the draft regulations for the Gateway area during the next meeting.

Motion by Cole, seconded by Miller, to adjourn the meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner

Gateway Residential/Commercial District – (single district) FOR DISCUSSION ONLY 4.10.22

Area: NE side of Rt 2 from south of Mobil Station to “Welcome to Richmond” sign (see map)

Purpose: This district is designed to allow for both residential and commercial uses in an area that has importance as a scenic entrance to the Town of Richmond. The historic settlement pattern of a Vermont village is maintained.

Features:

- The iconic view of Camel’s Hump as seen from Exit 11 will be preserved by managing the height and placement of buildings.
- The features of commercial strip development will be avoided. *(can add commercial strip development definition or as per state statute)*
- A range of commercial and residential uses, including multifamily housing, will be allowed at a moderate density that makes efficient use of the land.
 - *(optional: Commercial uses will be encouraged to locate nearest to I-89, while landscaping, screening or distance will be used to shield residential uses from interstate noise and commercial uses from the Rt 2 viewshed.*
- Curb cuts will be limited to the current number or less – these access points will serve new development as shared driveways or private roads.
- Green space, screening and deep landscaped front setbacks along Rt 2 will continue the historic settlement pattern of the village and provide a scenic viewshed.
- A shared path for bike and pedestrian use is planned to connect lots within the district and with the village center to the east and the Park and Ride to the west.
 - *(optional: Allowance for eventual public transit along the Rt 2 corridor will be provided.)*
- All lots will be served by municipal water and sewer service when available.

Development that can be permitted by the Administrative Officer (“Permitted”):

(Under this division into “permitted” and “reviewed” categories, adjustments will have to be made to the following sections: site plan review, DRB review and PUD and possibly more)

- Accessory dwelling
- Accessory structure or use, except outdoor storage
- Arts/crafts studio
- Bank
- Bed and breakfast
- Catering service
- Cemetery
- Cottage industry
- Child care facility – family home
- Child care facility – large family home
- Child care facility – center-based
- Dwelling, single-family
- Dwelling, duplex
- Dwelling, multifamily with 3-4 units
- Educational Facility
- Funeral parlor
- Group home

- Home occupation
- Inn
- laundromat
- Mixed use building with up to 4 compatible permitted uses (*remove “multiple use building” from definitions and alter PUD section to allow*)
- Museum
- Office, business
- Office, medical
- Office, professional (*could be combined with “ office, business”? – would need to change in definitions*)
- Personal services
- Religious facility
- State or municipal facility
- Supported housing facility

Development that requires review by the Development Review Board (“Reviewed”)

- Adaptive use (*including conversion of single-family to multifamily – changes in the adaptive use section 5.6.8 will be needed*)
- Brewery
- Dwelling, multifamily with > 4 units
- Health care services
- Kennel
- Light manufacturing
- Mixed-use building with compatible permitted or conditional uses
- Recreational facility
- Restaurant (*not drive-through*)
- Retirement community
- Veterinary clinic
- Pub or tavern
- PUD or PRD (*changes will be needed to the PUD section*)

Dimensional Requirements:

- Minimum lot size: 1/4A
- Maximum residential density: 1/8A (5,500sf) /unit or 8 U/A
- Maximum lot coverage: 60%
- Maximum building footprint: 10,000sf if within 200’ of Rt 2; 17,000sf if further than 200’ from Rt 2
- Maximum height: same as current
- Minimum lot shape: same as current
- Minimum setback for principal structure: 60’? 75’? from Rt 2 (*ROW edge?*) for any structure ;
10’ for side and rear;
75’ from I-89 (*ROW edge ?*) for residential structures
and 35’ for non-residential structures
- Minimum setback for accessory dwelling or structure: 10’ behind front of principal structure;
10’ for side and rear

- Minimum setback for garage: 5' behind front of principal structure

District Specific Development standards:

- There will be no new curb cuts beyond existing as of _____. All development will access Rt 2 by way of the existing curb cuts which will become shared driveways or private roads with permanent easements as further development occurs. Further sharing of driveways that will reduce the existing number of curb cuts will be encouraged.
- The setback from Rt 2 will be maintained in a vegetated state, which shall include some combination of trees, shrubs, perennials, groundcovers or gardens in addition to grass.
 - *Optional: A 10' wide easement across all Rt 2 frontages for a shared path parallel to Rt 2 will be required.*
 - *Optional: A secondary road parallel to Rt 2 providing access to internal lots may be developed if feasible and if desired by all affected property owners.*
- Parking between structures and Rt 2 shall not be permitted.
- Outside storage, parking and loading areas, utilities and mechanicals shall be screened from the Rt 2. Viewshed.
- The planting of trees or other noise-reduction strategies will be required for residential uses within 100' of I-89 (*ROW edge?*).
- Restoration or reuse of existing historic structures is encouraged.
- Multistory buildings, rather than single-story buildings, are encouraged.
- Traffic study will be required for _____.
- Buildings will be located and screened to protect the privacy of residents and neighbors, and will be oriented to allow for rooftop solar panels.
- Bulk storage, waste storage and mechanicals/utilities shall be within enclosed areas or otherwise screened from the Rt 2 viewshed.
- Shared parking will be allowed. (*will need to revise parking section*)
 - *(There may be multiple structures on a lot).*
 - *(There shall be at least one parking space per principal structure within 12' of, and wired for, level 2 EVSE (see section ----))*

In our 2018 Town Plan, there are a number of goals that relate to improvements in our Zoning Regulation (RZR) that are to be carried out by the Planning Commission. For example, in the Economic Development section we find:

- *Economic Development 1.1 –create clear guidelines and information resources for permit applicants, clarifying requirements and steps for permitting and approval*
- *Economic Development 1.2 – streamline the business permitting process and reduce permitting costs for small businesses or entrepreneurs*

Similar goals relating to housing and natural resource protection can be found elsewhere in the Plan. Lengthy permitting procedures with their additional costs are felt to have contributed to our extreme housing shortage.

Part of the “streamlining” and “clarifying” process involves disentangling the **development standards** from the **permitting process**. Having a clear and concise statements of the standards that we expect all development to adhere to is the first step in enabling more permits to be issued by our Zoning Administrative Officer (ZA) rather than having all reviewed in a lengthier and more costly Development Review Board (DRB) process. Currently, these standards are intermixed with the steps of the permitting process resulting from the long evolution of the document over time.

To achieve this goal, we are proposing to re-arrange the RZR in 5 sections as follows:

1. Authorization/applicability
2. Base Zoning Districts and Overlay Districts
3. **Development standards**
4. **Administrative Procedures**
5. Definitions and Maps

So far, in our zoning update process, we have been working on the specific zoning districts. It would be helpful at this point, if we could think about the uses and standards that we are proposing to alter in these districts, in the context of a clear set of standards and permitting processes. Most of the information contained in the current document would be retained, just arranged differently. There would be a small number of substantive changes, as alluded to above in allowing the ZA more discretion in the permitting process.

One area of proposed change is the **site plan review**. Currently, the DRB must review all site plans except for a very small number of uses (single and two-family homes, home occupations, group and childcare homes, farming, and public service board uses). If we have a clear and complete set of development standards, there is no reason that many of our other **permitted uses**, including the site plan, cannot be adequately reviewed by the ZA.

What this would mean for our Zoning Districts (section 2) is that the current system of having essentially three use categories: 1) permitted (with basic site plan review); 2) uses with “site plan review”, and 3) uses with conditional review (+/- site plan review) would be changed to a simpler set of two categories: 1) **ZA permitting** (with review of site plan) and 2) **DRB reviewed** (with site plan and/or use considered, as determined by the ZA, with additional application requirements when needed and possible additional conditions imposed).

There are two requirements that must be in place for us to trust that having ZA review of development will meet our needs: a full-time professionally-trained individual in the ZA role and a complete and carefully-thought out zoning document to guide the decisions that are made. We have moved into the era of being willing to fund trained planning and zoning staff, and with a clear, complete and well-organized zoning document we can streamline the process, while retaining the additional scrutiny of the DRB when it is actually needed.

Two additional reasons for doing this reorganizing work now are 1) the fact that we have just hired a new ZA who is not set in the ways of our current zoning, and would, perhaps, be easier to train in a new system; and 2) we are about to review the report from our housing consultant, Brandy Saxton, who has identified a cumbersome DRB process as a barrier to creating much needed additional housing. Doing this work now will also reduce the number of amendments that we need to propose later to make the updated districts compatible with the final document.

5.1 Zoning Permit

- 5.1.1 No land development shall commence in Richmond without a Zoning Permit issued by the Administrative Officer in conformance with these Zoning Regulations. ([sections 5.1, 5.4, 5.5](#))
- 5.1.2 The Administrative Officer shall not issue a Zoning Permit for any land development that requires the approval of the DRB or the SB until such approval has been obtained. ([sections 5.6, 5.7, 5.8](#))
- 5.1.3 The Administrative Officer shall not issue a Zoning Permit for any land development on a lot that requires subdivision approval until such approval has been obtained and the plat duly recorded, with the exemptions listed in [section 5.9](#). (and see [Subdivision Regulations](#))
- 5.1.4 The Administrative Officer shall not issue a Zoning Permit for land development within a wetland or wetland buffer until a permit approving such development has been issued by the state Wetland Program. ([section 6.9.4](#))
- 5.1.5 A State of Vermont Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Permit is not required prior to the issuance of a Zoning Permit, but a State of Vermont Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Permit is required prior to the commencement of any land development. ([section 5.10](#))
- 5.1.6 The applicant for a Zoning Permit shall submit an application to the Administrative Officer on forms provided by the Town, along with the application fees as established by the SB, and all other information required by these regulations. ([section 5.1](#))
- 5.1.7 The Administrative Officer or the DRB may require the applicant to pay for the reasonable costs of an independent technical review subject to the Procedures and Standards for Technical Review Fees. . ([section 5.3](#))
- 5.1.8 Every application for a Zoning Permit shall be accompanied by a site plan rendered in sufficient detail for the Administrative Officer to ascertain whether the proposal is in conformance with these regulations. ([section 5.2](#))
- 5.1.9 The Administrative Officer may issue a Zoning Permit for types of land development listed in the **Permitted** section of each Zoning District if, in the Officer’s opinion, the application is in full conformance with these Zoning Regulations and any other applicable municipal ordinances and policies.
- 5.1.10 The Administrative Officer may refer an application for a **Permitted** type of land development to the DRB for further review if, in the Officer’s opinion, further review is needed.
- 5.1.11 Types of land development listed in the **DRB Review** section of each Zoning District will, in addition to the Administrative Officer’s review, have the **site plan** and the **use** reviewed by the DRB to insure that public concerns are addressed, and that the spirit and specifics of these regulations are followed. Additional conditions for approval may be required.

5.2 Zoning Permit Application Requirements

5.3 Site Plan Requirements

5.4 Technical Review

5.5 Administrative Officer Review and Decision

5.6 Special Administrative Officer Zoning Permits
Boundary Line Adjustment
Minor Revisions to Approved Plans and Permits

5.7 DRB Review Application Requirements
Additional Use Considerations
Additional Site Plan Considerations

5.8 DRB Review and Decision

5.9 Special DRB Reviewed Zoning Permits
Adaptive Use
PUD

5.10 Exemptions from Subdivision Regulations but Requiring a Zoning Permit

5.11 Certificate of Occupancy

5.12 Variances and Appeals

5.13 Document Recording and Availability

5.14 Enforcement and Violations

5.15 Fee Schedule

Section 4 Development Standards

(this is just a partial initial list to get going on this section and provide a home for some of the uses that we are dealing with currently.....)

Performance Standards for All Uses

- Noise
- Hazardous materials
- Smoke, dust, Odor and Air Pollution
- Liquid or Solid Waste and Refuse
- Vibration
- Electromagnetic Interference

Site Design Standards

- Access and Frontage
- Parking and Loading
- Outdoor Lighting
- Landscaping and Screening
- Signs

Bike and Pedestrian Pathways
Utilities
Fill and Storage of Material

Uses Having Specific Standards

Accessory Dwelling
Cannabis Cultivation
Child Care Facility – Family Home
Child Care Facility – Large Family
Child Care Facility -- Center-based
Cottage Industry
Extraction of Earth Resources
Farm-based business, Agrotourism and Other On-Farm Enterprises
Group Home
Home Occupation
Renewable energy Facility
Short-term Rental Dwelling
Supported Housing
Swimming Pool
Temporary Structure or Dwelling
Vehicle Fueling Station

Natural Resources

Wetlands
Steep Slopes
Water Supply Source Protection

Nonconformities

Nonconforming Structures
Nonconforming Uses
Nonconforming Lots

Wireless Telecommunications Facilities