

8.2.23 meeting memo from the Chair

Here is the public outreach piece that I have posted in the FPF and on the PC's webpage. Also in these materials is a closer look at the items we identified at our last meeting as requiring changes to the RZR. I am hoping we can get more and more specific as we progress through our next few meetings looking at these items and identifying strategies.

Act 47 – Publicity for PC Review of Requirements 7.26.23

Act 47 (formerly S. 100) – What does it mean for us?

As readers of the *Seven Days* award-winning series “Locked Out” know, we have a housing crisis here in Vermont, and especially in Chittenden County. Homes, as the series says, are either “unavailable or unaffordable” to either buy or rent for too many people. Our state legislature decided to tackle one aspect of this problem by mandating the removal of regulatory barriers that might be inhibiting efficient housing construction at the level of municipal zoning, as well as at the level of state agencies, Act 250 and the regional planning commissions. This effort is now known as Act 47, and it can be found in its entirety and in summary form at the “Vermont Laws” website.

Richmond's Planning Commission, like many others across the state, is now tasked with incorporating the mandated changes into our Zoning Ordinance. We plan to spend a portion of each of our next few meetings reviewing and discussing the features of Act 47 that require changes to our documents. This is not optional, and our planning staff has been required to follow the state law since July 1, 2023 despite what our documents might say, so we are aiming to bring our regulations into compliance.

We invite you to join us for these work sessions to learn about Act 47. For the first hour or so of our meetings on August 2, August 16 and September 6 (and more if needed) we will look at how we will need to change our Zoning Ordinance and the implications for future development. The meetings will be held over Zoom, and details can be found in each Monday's weekly meetings schedule on FPF and on the Planning Commission page of the Town website. Additional information about our talking points can be found under “meeting materials” for each meeting. Please contact our Director of Planning and Zoning, Keith Osborne, at koborne@richmondvt.gov or 802-336-2289 with any questions.