## Richmond Planning Commission

Wednesday, May 9th, 2018

Unapproved Minutes

Members Present: Mark Fausel, Brian Tellstone, Joy Reap, Lauck Parke, Virginia Clarke, Alison Anand, Scott Nickerson

Others Present: Brad Elliot, Paulita Irish, Cara LaBounty, Bruce LaBounty, Jeff Forward, Jack Linn, Bob Low

Called to Order: 7:01pm

Public Comment

NA

Administrative Items

Minutes were tabled in order to allow for longer town plan discussion

Town Plan

Housing was the first technical plan that was discussed. Lauck asked about the action regarding Community Rating System, and how he remembers the discussion of it being too cumbersome to accomplish. The commission agreed that the action should be removed if it is unlikely to be done within the lifetime of the plan. Cara suggested a language change to the action regarding flood proofing. The commission agreed to change “technical assistance” to “guidance”.

Future Land Use was discussed next. Lauck suggested that the edits made to his previously adopted introductory paragraphs defeated the point he was trying to make. Mark asked if it really is true that agriculture and forestry are suffering to the extent being expressed. Jack told the commission that he has heard from forestry industry professionals that forestry is on life support, and the wood in Vermont is low quality. He said that recreational forest uses are much more successful. Lauck explained that he is not against these industries but there is ample evidence that they are in trouble. Cara told the commission that it is not dairy alone that is in the decline.

Brad suggested that the language in Future Land Use regarding these industries contradicts the positive nature of the language in other sections on the same topic. Alison explained that her reasoning for participating in changing some of Lauck’s language was because she felt it was overly negative. Lauck asked Alison what she does to stay viable as a large landowner, and Alison told him that she lets the Maltroups mow her field for hay and has logged her forest in the past. Lauck pointed out that if flexibility is not allowed, the Birdseye building may not have been allowed. Jeff Forward said it would be considered Adaptive Reuse and would be allowed.

Bruce told the commission that some people have retirement funds and some people have land as their investment. He said that limiting what can be done with that investment can hurt people financially in addition to their development rights. Jeff Forward said that the issue of being able to do whatever you want with your land has always been an issue, but you can’t let commercial or industrial use everywhere or it could jeopardize the plan. Lauck explained that he doesn’t want to see that. Bob Low suggested that it may be necessary to determine what exactly would be considered appropriate commercial uses in the Agricultural-Residential district now.

Discussion returned to the language of the introduction to Future Land Use. Alison moved to accept the changes to lines 17, 23, 27, 31, 32, and 33 and revert the changes to lines 29 and 30. Virginia seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed. It was agreed to change line 41 and 42 to remove currently and replace the last 6 words to “be grandfathered”. Lines 11-17 on page 2 were deleted. Adding a brief narrative about industrial utilities was discussed and ultimately not adopted.

Joy recused herself from discussion of the Gateway as a commissioner and joined the audience. Joy asked for clarification about language regarding scale, character, and density in the Gateway. She said she noticed that density was not addressed in every section, and needs to be all or none. Jessica explained that the language she wrote about “fitting” in the village was related to building sizes. The commission and attendees discussed past gateway zoning regarding retail, restaurants, and the potential for water and wastewater extension.

The meaning of density was also discussed. It was apparent that it meant different things to everyone. Jessica explained that when density is discussed in terms of residential in the planning and zoning office they are referring to the number of dwelling units allowed per specified acreage. Others suggested that sometimes density refers to lot coverage or clustering of development on large parcels. Cara suggested that the Future Land Use map gives a false illusion of developable areas when we know there are natural restrictions all over town like the floodplain. Brian suggested to add the word spatially to the first sentence of the Gateway purpose, and Jessica proposed adding a sentence to the beginning about how the gateway was originally designated to be an attractive entrance to the historic Richmond Village.

Cara asked if the amenities listed in the Jonesville Village section referred to publicly funded and maintained amenities or if they would be part of development conditions. Jessica said she believed this was more about what we would want to see there whether public or private, but would likely be public. It was also suggested to cut the language about comfortable spacing between mobile homes, because comfortable is vague. After much discussion the commission decided to better define single family, duplex, and multi-family home.

The Rural-Commercial area was also discussed in terms of uses and the name itself. Cara said that the name Rural-Commercial does not convey secondary commercial uses being allowed on farms, VYCC, and Cochran’s etc. as it is intended. It was agreed to sleep on the name and come back with alternatives next week.

Brad Elliot provided some feedback to the Sensitive Natural Areas section about leaving out habitat connectors in the language. Alison suggested that Owl’s Head Mountain should be included as a dark green area on the map.

Jessica asked the commissioner’s to sign their ethics policy forms and return them to her, and reminded everyone that our next meeting will be the last to work on the plan.

Adjourn

Brian made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Lauck

All in favor, Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm

Respectfully submitted, Jessica Draper, Town Planner