

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes 1/8/2020

Called to Order: 7:00 pm

Members present: Chris Cole (Chair), Brian Tellstone, Joy Reap, Scott Nickerson, Virginia Clarke, Chris Granda, Alison Anand, Mark Fausel (Lauck Parke was absent)

Staff Present: Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner

Others present: None

Chris Cole called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Cole introduces the new Town Planner, Ravi Venkataraman, to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commissioners each introduce themselves.

1. Adjustments to the agenda - None

2. Approval of Minutes

Venkataraman disclosed that the meeting minutes could not be provided for the packet—as he does not have the minutes from the December 18, 2019 meeting. Joy Reap said she may have the meeting minutes. Cole said the discussion of the minutes will be postponed until after the other agenda items have been discussed.

3. Public Comment for non-agenda items - None

4. Public hearing on proposed changes to the Zoning Regulations

Cole overviewed that the proposed changes to the Village Downtown Zoning District were to correct and clarify the recently approved Village Downtown Zoning District regulations. This item was discussed during the previous Planning Commission meeting.

Virginia Clarke provided an overview of the proposed changes to the Village Downtown Zoning District. The changes are only effective for properties located within the Village Downtown Zoning District. The proposed changes are to spell out the number of allowable residential units per lot in the district, because the calculation of residential density creates fractional numbers.

Reap asked if the logic of these bylaws would be applied to the entire town at a later date. Cole said this bylaw makes sense for the downtown areas but would not for other parts of town. Clarke said additional conversations would be necessary at a later date to talk about residential density in other parts of town.

Chris Granda asked if there are any properties within the district that would have the capacity to host one residential unit. Cole and Clarke referred to a chart provided by Jessica Draper that lists the lots currently in the district and their respective lot sizes. Cole explained the potential for development under the proposed regulations for specific lots in the district.

Reap asked if the proposed bylaw changes would solve the problems the owners of the Toscano's lot faced. Cole said the changes would.

Motion by Chris Granda, second by Brian Tellstone, to open the public hearing.

Motion by Virginia Clarke, second by Scott Nickerson, to close the public hearing.

The public hearing closed at 7:16 PM.

Motion by Mark Fausel, second by Brian Tellstone, to approve the associated zoning change required

5. Continued review of proposed amendments to the Jolina Court Zoning District

Cole recommended following the draft Clarke prepared for the Jolina Court Zoning District regarding uses. Cole suggested reviewing the red-lined areas of the draft that identifies the changes.

Clarke outlined the changes in the list of uses she has provided to the Planning Commission. Clarke said that Buildings 3 and 4 in the Buttermilk/Creamery PUD are to be entirely commercial because the applicant would fully maximize their allowance for residential units in Buildings 1 and 2. Clarke said that the organization of the draft is as such because Site Plan Review is required for all uses except single- and two-family residential dwelling uses. In the particular case of the Buttermilk PUD, PUD review involves Site Plan Review.

Reap asked about parking. Venkataraman said that even with the approved master plan for the entire PUD, changing uses from one commercial use to another commercial use would probably trigger minor Site Plan Review. Minor Site Plan Review amendments can be reviewed by the zoning administrator. Clarke said major changes in use or in the Site Plan would require an amendment to the PUD.

Clarke said that the setbacks listed in the draft amendment is different from the setbacks listed in interim zoning. Granda said at the time interim zoning was drafted and adopted, there was a reason for the specific setback numbers but he cannot remember what that reason was. Cole said the setbacks listed in the draft proposal is the same as the setbacks listed in the Village Downtown Zoning District. Clarke said that Buttermilk has DRB approval for Buildings one and two. Clarke said more research into the setbacks in the interim zoning regulations are required. Reap asked Venkataraman for additional information on the interim zoning regulations for the next meeting.

Venkataraman drafted language under the traffic impacts section after consulting with Vtrans and researching bylaws from nearby municipalities. Venkataraman provided an overview of the draft language. Reap asked about traffic lights. Venkataraman will look into permit conditions to require traffic lights. Cole informed the Planning Commission on how Vtrans and municipalities evaluate traffic, signage, and traffic lights. Alison Anand asked what aspects would determine the conversion of a stop sign to a traffic light. Cole said this would be based on wait times at the stop sign; studies would be done on the level of service of the roadways. Granda mentioned the reference to secondary access points in the draft language, and noted the public's concerns about secondary access points. Tellstone said that the Selectboard would need to approve secondary access points. Cole said that the reference to secondary access points refers to traditional ways of mitigating traffic. Clarke said much deliberation would need to occur for any secondary access points to be considered. Clarke also said that this section of the bylaw could be further discussed at the Selectboard level. Scott Nickerson and Cole reinforced that the allowance of any secondary access points would need public discussion, and Selectboard approval. Nickerson asked if subdivision of the PUD would affect how traffic would be reviewed. Cole said no because the study is required for the district as a whole.

Granda asked about what the vegetative buffer would be buffering. Clarke suggested removing the language about the buffer. Mark Fausel said that stormwater permits would protect the water quality and mitigate any adverse impacts. Cole said the language as written is not a goal, but a requirement. Clarke said that there should be green space around the lot. Cole said the sentence should be removed. Venkataraman said if the goal is to protect environmental quality and natural features, the goal should state that open space should be provided and protected.

Venkataraman provided an overview of the suggested language to definitions. Further discussion ensued regarding Family Child Care Homes, as defined in statute, and the draft language. Tellstone suggested that a third categorization for child care homes is needed; Cole agreed. The Planning Commission further discussed the text of: Cooperative Workspaces, Fitness Facilities, Health Care Services, Recreational Facilities.

Cole said that the use table would need to be deleted, as discussed in previous Planning Commission Meetings.

Cole reviewed the draft language for building height. Venkataraman said that the Division of Fire Safety determines adequate access from the lowest ground floor elevation to the sill of the egress window on the highest floor. Clarke asked about using fire escapes for fire suppression. Venkataraman said that fire escapes are for people leaving a building, not for people entering a building. Reap asked about the windows in high-rise buildings in Burlington. Venkataraman said the windows should be egress windows; however, the building could be grandfathered in because of its age. Reap said the requirement is egress windows or sprinklers in the building, not both. Venkataraman said both are required. Reap said that in Colchester, buildings are required to be sprinkled or have egress windows. Cole said that the National Life Building in Montpelier are sprinkled and do not have egress windows. Cole suggested to Venkataraman to send them the draft regulations. Reap suggested that the Fire Marshal talk to the Planning Commission in order to gain a better understanding of fire codes.

6. Other business, Correspondence, and Adjournment

Clarke would like the zoning bylaws in its entirety to be consistent, and would like these minor changes to be included in next week's conversation. Fausel would like to see the list of uses in other districts next week. Clarke would like to take inventory of the Town plan goals and make sure the town is on track to achieve those goals.

Motion by Brian Tellstone, Second by Joy Reap, to adjourn the meeting.

Voting: unanimous, motion carried

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 PM.