

Richmond Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

February 20, 2013

Approved Minutes

Members Present: Mark Fausel (Chair), Lauck Parke, Christy Witters

Members Absent: Lou Borie (Vice-Chair), Gary Bressor

Others Present: Cathleen Gent (Town Planner/Staff to the DRB), Jon Kart, Dan Noyes, Heidi Bormann, Denise Barnard, Enid Wonnacott

7:07 PM Call to order by the Chair.

Public Comment - There were no public comments.

Mail - Gent reviewed the mail.

Meeting Minutes & Town Planner Report

Meeting Minutes: For February 6, 2013

No amendments were offered. Motion by Witters, seconded by Parke, to approve the minutes. Voting: 3 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstentions.

Town Planner Report

Gent provided the following updates to the February 15, 2013 report:

- Hiring new zoning administrative officer – The Selectboard has appointed Neil Leitner to the position.
- SFY12 Ecosystem Restoration Grant – Town engineer Mike Weisel has visited the potential project site at the end of Railroad Street and does not recommend that the project be pursued because the stormwater has ample area for water quality improvement before it reaches the Winooski River via a series of wetland areas. The Kenyon Road project is still being considered for that project and Gent will send the engineering plan to DEC for its review. For the Railroad Street project, Weisel recommends stabilizing the outlet. Gent will talk with the Highway Department about whether there is any money for such stabilization.
- CCRPC FY2014 Unified Work Program – The Selectboard approved an application for \$50,000 for a long-term transportation study in Richmond village. The Planning Commission briefly reviewed that application, which Gent will submit to CCRPC tomorrow. Gent noted that the Selectboard has not determined how to cover the town's match for the project in next year's budget.

Application for Richmond Conservation Reserve Fund: Natural Resources Inventory

Gent provided introductory comments about the application and noted that the funds from the Richmond Conservation Reserve Fund will focus on the field work this summer. Kart added that the funding will restore the Richmond portion that was not funded via the CCRPC ECOS grant and provide a much more solid data set to finalize the final report and maps. Parke asked for background information, since he is new to the Planning Commission and Gent and Kart provided explanation, noting that the Conservation Commission is the gatekeeper for the Conservation Reserve Funds and that the Planning Commission is the applicant for the application. Parke asked whether the creamery parcel brownfields might be eligible and Kart said it's possible, depending on whether the project is in keeping with the Conservation Reserve Fund policy guidelines and criteria. Kart said that a web site for the natural resources inventory project has been launched and that an article has been written for the Times Ink and other local papers. He will send information about those to the Planning Commission.

Motion by Parke, seconded by Witters, to submit the application for the use of the Richmond Conservation Reserve Fund for the completion of the natural resources inventory project in Richmond. Voting: 3 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstentions.

Kart noted that this application is consistent with the full application submitted for ECOS funding and that project updates will be presented to the Planning Commission during the coming months.

Richmond Zoning Regulations

Creamery Parcel

Denise Barnard asked for clarification regarding Planning Commission work sessions versus meetings when the board is voting on changes to bylaws. Fausel explained that the Planning Commission is currently holding work sessions. A public hearing regarding bylaw changes will not be scheduled until the work sessions and an informal public information session are held. Heidi Bormann said that public outreach is important and a letter should be sent out about the information session and future public

1 hearings. Fausel discussed the general process, adding that he thinks the public information session
2 won't take place until the end of March or early April.

3
4 Barnard and Bormann brought up questions about the proposed change to the parking requirements in
5 the main business block in the Village Commercial zoning district. Bormann said that Howard Novak
6 has communicated to her that he would like his dentistry business to be included in the area with
7 relaxed parking requirements. Enid Wonnacott said that NOFA depends on the public parking spaces
8 and a number of NOFA employees commute together. On any given day, there might be 12 employees,
9 with five cars on site and several others off site. Barnard said that shared parking generally takes place
10 in the Bender block, where business employees park behind the building for the day when rental
11 tenants leave in the morning. Bormann suggested that the plan for the Depot Street parking lot should
12 be reviewed to see if it's possible to get more than 35 parking spaces. She also suggested that it is
13 worth considering a monthly fee and sticker system for those spaces to ensure that they aren't used for
14 commuting. Wonnacott said NOFA would contribute to that kind of system. Parke also suggested the
15 conservation reserve fund could be used to design the lot with picnic tables and a green space. Fausel
16 said that the purpose for the proposed zoning change is to address the clearly defined issues with
17 parking at Toscona's and the main business block. Parke suggested tabling the final decision about the
18 changes in parking in the Village Commercial zoning district until after the Depot Street parking lot vote
19 takes place on town meeting day. Noyes provided a brief history about how the town acquired the
20 Depot Street property.

21
22 The Planning Commission then went on to discuss the creamery parcel. Noyes said that he is
23 concerned about the maximum building square footage footprint in the proposed Village Mixed zoning
24 district. Fausel said he thinks the Planning Commission should proceed with the proposed changes
25 because these are what the current owner wants and represent what has been proposed to date. He
26 added that the Planning Commission has been operating in good faith with the owner and does not
27 want to stonewall moving forward for a potential local owner. Noyes recapped a meeting on Tuesday
28 regarding the condition of the brownfields on the parcel, which he, Bormann, and Gent attended. Noyes
29 said he is concerned that pressurized ammonia is still located in the creamery building. He brought up
30 the fact that grants are available for nonprofits and governments which are not available for private
31 businesses. The examples of Barre City and St. Albans city were mentioned, where the city became
32 owner of a brownfields site for a short time and then turned the parcel over to a private entity. The
33 creamery parcel owner appears to be working with the Champlain Housing Trust. Parke said he would
34 like the parties to be present before he wants to move forward with the proposed village mixed zoning
35 district. Fausel discussed trade offs, for instance, if Noyes wants a larger building footprint, there might
36 be design review standards or some other standards that the town would want. Noyes said that a larger
37 building is economically viable and that he would not want to see a required two-story building height.
38 With respect to the question of whether the land in the floodplain is excluded from the number of
39 dwelling units, Fausel confirmed that it is. Parke spoke more broadly about looking at the town plan
40 again and analyze what Richmond will look like in 50 years. Gent asked the Planning Commission to
41 think about what they would like the zoning to be in the creamery area as a starting place. She also
42 suggested that one of the strengths of a PUD section in the bylaws is that it can provide the flexibility
43 and parameters that the DRB needs when reviewing applications. Both Witters and Parke said they
44 would like to do a site visit at the property. Parke said that, if the town is charging ahead for one
45 developer, it's important to figure out how to take a neutral position within the bylaws. Noyes requested
46 that the Planning Commission remain flexible in crafting the bylaws. He added that Paul O'Leary is
47 reviewing what can be developed under both the current Village Commercial and the proposed Village
48 Mixed bylaws. The Planning Commission agreed to take up this topic again in a few weeks, when
49 hopefully there is more clarity about the ownership situation.

50
51 The Planning Commission decided to hold work sessions on March 6 (Section 6.8-Flood Hazard
52 Overlay District) and on March 20 (Village Mixed and parking in the Village Commercial), with the goal
53 of having a public information session on April 17th. The Planning Commission briefly discussed the
54 creamery brownfields again.

55
56 **Adjournment**

57 Parke made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Witters. So voted. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

58
59 Respectfully submitted by Cathleen Gent, Town Planner/Staff to the DRB