

6.21.23 Report on 5.26.23 site visit to C and I/C zoning districts

On 5.26.23 Keith Osborne, Director of Planning and Zoning, and Virginia Clarke, Chair of the Planning Commission (PC) met with Michelle and Zachary Beal, and Linda and Bill Donovan, to conduct a tour of the Commercial (C) and Industrial/Commercial (I/C) zoning districts. No other members of the PC were available at this time to join the walk, but they will be able to view the area at a later date.

The tour started at the Donovan's house located on a private road off Roger's Lane. This driveway or private road also serves a Patterson Fuel lot (92 Roger's Lane), and a lot hosting J.Hutchins and Landshapes businesses (88 Roger's Lane). Roger's Lane itself continues on northwards to three residential lots, two of which are owned by Ernie and Louise Spence and one owned by Kimberly Bombard (226 Roger's Lane), and a driveway that extends to two residential lots in Jericho. Within the boundary of the J. Hutchins lot is a 3 A residential lot which is accessed from North St in the neighboring Mobile Home Park (MHP). These five residential lots, the residential driveway to Jericho and the two commercial lots are all in the I/C district. The remainder of the Donovan's 10 A parcel, consisting of woodland and areas of steep slopes towards the Jericho line was viewed. This is the site of the Beals' proposed new residential lot.

The Donovans reported no conflicts with their commercial neighbors. They reported that truck traffic mostly left in the AM and returned in the PM, leaving the business yards mostly quiet during the day and at night. Their children rode bicycles around the large paved areas. No noise or performance standards violations were alleged. Materials appear to be stored both outside and inside of the sizable (25 A) J. Hutchins lot and its warehouse-type buildings. The lot also hosts an office building. Trees and vegetation appeared to screen the J. Hutchins/Landshapes lot from the residences of the neighboring MHP neighborhood. The remaining area of this portion of the I/C district is owned by the Town of Richmond, with a third leased to the recycling facility (2-3 A) and the other two-thirds being a non-developable swamp.

The portion of the I/C district south of the MHP was not viewed. This area consists mostly of a large solar array owned by Green Mountain Power (GMP); two small commercial lots on Governor Peck Rd; the Exit 11 interchange of I-889 and Rt 2 and the Park and Ride lot (owned by Richmond and/or the state of Vermont) and the Mobil Fueling Station lot on W. Main St.

The tour continued on to the adjacent Commercial district (C). Neighboring the MHP on the Jericho Rd side is a residential lot owned by 88 Roger's Lane, and the Lucky Spot Fueling Station/Convenience Store owned by the Donovans, which also has a residential structure (now disused) on the property. The MHP entrance (in the MHP district) extends along Rt. 117 for a short distance southwards before the C district resumes with three commercial properties including Patterson Fuel and Blue Flame Gas extending to the intersection with Governor Peck Rd. These businesses share a border with the residences of the MHP. Two lots hosting residences going east on Gov. Peck Rd are also included in this C district.

On the west side of Rt 117 there are four lots within the C district; two large lots owned by Milton Cat (about 15 A); one small lot that hosts the Vermont Fine restaurant, and a fourth, inaccessible parcel along the Winooski River conserved and owned by the Richmond Land Trust. Parts of Rt 2 and I-89 also appear to be in this district. According to the Milton Cat website, their business consists of "a complete source for all Caterpillar equipment, parts, sales and services" On a brief tour of the lot, there were numerous pieces of equipment parked, an office-type building and warehouse-type buildings presumably for repairs and storage. There was minimal activity on the lots in the middle of the day on

Friday, with no noticeable noise or performance standards issues. One piece of earth-moving equipment was being driven to a parking area.

We were able to make a few observations on this tour:

- there seem to be minimal differences between the commercial enterprises in the I/C district and the C district, none of which we would consider traditional “heavy industry;”
- there are a number of residences scattered throughout these two districts, with both districts bordering on the large adjacent mobile home park residential neighborhood
- the arrangement of uses appears to be of an older, more functional type for which a rigid separation of residential and commercial categories doesn’t seem applicable
- with all the currently existing residences, this is likely not a suitable location for “heavy industry” (we already allow for “light manufacturing” in several zoning districts, including these two districts and our two R/C districts)

Submitted by Virginia Clarke