

Monthly Director Report
Town of Richmond Planning and Zoning
May 15 -June 15, 2023

Background

The following report recaps the various responsibilities and duties carried out by the Town of Richmond Department of Planning and Zoning for the dates listed above. The Director staffs three committees (RPC, RTC, RHC) and supports other boards when needed (RCC, SB, etc.). The Zoning Administrator staffs the DRB and is the day-to-day public conduit for development, permitting and all items related to zoning. The board can expect a monthly report for their 2nd scheduled monthly meeting.

General Report

Planning Commission (RPC)

- Meetings attended: May 17th, June 7th
- Continued focus on updating the Richmond Zoning Regulations (RZR). On June 5 the Selectboard approved the update to the Gateway and Village Residential/Commercial Districts regulations and official Zoning Map.
- The focus will now be on the Industrial/Commercial District as well as technical/housekeeping re-writes of the RZR. With the passage of S.100, technical re-writes, specifically to those districts that have water and sewer infrastructure, will also need to be pursued.
- Public Workshop concerning the mandated changes due to the passage of S.100 in the planning stages.
- The RPC has requested that the committee be reduced in size from 9 to 7 members. This is the result of scheduled meetings not being able to muster the needed 5 members for a quorum.
- Please see past minutes for additional information

Transportation Committee (RTC)

- Meetings attended: May 23rd, June 13th
- 2023 Ped Grant (Jericho Road Sidewalk) submitted on June 9 with the committee's input; props to committee member Jon Kart and Chair Cole as well as the folks at CCRCP for assistance.
- Pinch-point walk about on Route 2 accomplished on May 19, please see Stantec meeting notes located on the RTC June 13 webpage.
- Walkability report to be presented at SB meeting
- FY 24 UPWP Grant Award for Cochran Road Corridor Study has landed, please see document located on the RTC June 13 webpage.
- Cumberland Farm pedestrian safety issues under review, specifically the lack of sidewalks.
- Please see past minutes for additional information

Housing Committee (RHC)

- Meetings attended: None, schedule has been updated to the 4th Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm
- RHC is finishing up the report for the SB on Affordable Housing Research. This is targeted for an early August presentation.

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Development Review Board (DRB)

- Meetings attended by Tyler Machia: June 14th
- DRB has been busy with multiple development reviews. Recent reviews of note: Jolina Court PUD (Buttermilk), Hillview Subdivision, Depot Street PUD
- RZR updates to be forwarded to board once completed

Additional Comments

Flood Resiliency grants – In active discussion with the Richmond Conservation Commission (RCC), specifically Chair Rosovsky. Friends of the Winooski as well as Jon Kart will be wrapped into any conversation. This all stems from the states Flood Resilient Communities Fund which could potentially help with focusing on buyouts of flood-vulnerable properties and floodplain restoration.

Certified Floodplain Management accreditation – Renewed focus for P&Z as both myself and Tyler attended a weeklong training course in Waterbury in March to help prepare. This is a very complicated accreditation that will require study time in the near future prior to sitting for the test.

Digitizing Files – This is an effort that the town should explore, not just for P&Z but for other town offices. We have a large-scale plotter but may require a consultant at some point to guide us in this endeavor. The approach is to take the long view but planting a seed is the intent here.

Day to Day - Generally the office is quite busy, and our door is open during office hours with few exceptions. Permitting, timely zoning inquiry response, and professionalism continue as a priority and has clearly been so prior to my arrival.

Long term – The zoning regulations are in need of updating with concern to a technical and housekeeping point of view. Technical fixes such as state statutes (see: Act 164 Cannabis, Act 179 Affordable Housing, Act 143 - Accessory On-Farm Businesses, Act 151 or S.100, etc.) are required and along with general housekeeping (typos, duplicate definitions, format, etc.) these issues can be addressed separately from zoning amendments. The process is the same for both amendments and technical fixes, but the subject matter is not.

The need for the ZA to continue additional training is understood and targeted planning and zoning conferences as well as state offered opportunities to be explored. This would also hold for all DRB members.

Respectfully submitted by Keith Osborne, Director 6/14/23