

Monthly Director Report
Town of Richmond Planning and Zoning
July 15 -August 18, 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, flood plain management 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: July 5, July 19, August 2, August 16
- Not much has changed with regard to the commissions focus on updates with the exception that Act 47 (S.100) is now law as of July 1, 2023.
- Continued work 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 as a reminder.
- The recent focus is the incorporation of Act 47 (S.100) in the RZR. This begins with a thorough understanding of all aspects of the statute, something that will take time.
- Public Workshop concerning the mandated changes due to the passage of S.100 will be scheduled in the near future.
- Work has begun in earnest on what will be known as the Village Residential Neighborhood North (VRNN) and Village Residential Neighborhood South (VRNS) Districts within the village. The North District will/may encompass most of the parcels currently in the HDR district within the village that are served by sewer and water. The South District will/may encompass those parcels south of the river that are served by water and sewer.
- Please see past minutes for additional information

Transportation Committee (RTC)

- Meetings attended: July 11 (Cancelled due to flooding), July 25, August 8.
- 2023 Ped Grant (Jericho Road West Sidewalk) was denied by the state. Director will follow-up with additional information.
- Route 2 Pinch-point study reaching the final stages. Stay tuned for additional information.
- FY 24 UPWP Grant Award for Cochran Road Corridor Study has landed, please see document located on the RTC June 13 webpage. We are currently working with CCRCP on procuring a project management firm.
- Cumberland Farm pedestrian safety issues review indicates that the parcel is solely owned by Cumby's and little can be done to improve safety without buy-in from them. This appears unlikely based on the history, but attempts are forthcoming.

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- The THBC intersection (Thompson, Huntington, Bridge and Cochran roads) is reaching the point where the committee will be choosing a preferred alternative in September or October and will be making a presentation to Selectboard.
- Western Gateway Scoping Study continued with a public outreach meeting on August 10.
- Please see past minutes for additional information

Housing Committee (RHC)

- Meetings attended: July 26
- RHC is finishing up the report for the SB on Affordable Housing Research. This is targeted for an September presentation.
- Please see past minutes for additional information

Development Review Board (DRB)

- Meetings attended by Tyler Machia: July 12 (Cancelled due to flooding), July 26.
- DRB has been busy with multiple development reviews. Recent reviews of note: Jolina Court PUD (Buttermilk) **Approved**, Hillview Subdivision Preliminary **Approved (Under litigation, stay tuned)**, Depot Street PUD **Approved**.

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRCP)

- Planning Advisory Committee meeting attended: July 20, August 17
- This agency is our main resource for mapping and planning support.

Additional Comments

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 soon prior to sitting for the test. **Update: Tyler sat for the test on August 16 and did not pass this time around, stay tuned. This is not surprising as the accreditation test is extremely difficult. I will be seeking accreditation hopefully before the end of the year or when time permits.**

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. This will be a constant place holder in my monthly report.

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. Much of our time in Mid-July was taken up with flood response and continued day to day functions.

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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 47 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 and Planning Commission members.

Embedded Link to TOR A-250 permit database [Link Here](#) (Press Ctrl and click mouse)

Respectfully submitted by Keith Osborne, Director 8/18/23