

Monthly Director Report
Town of Richmond Planning and Zoning
November 18 15, 2023 – December 21, 2023

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, supports other boards and committees as needed and is the day-to-day public conduit for development, permitting, flood plain management and all items related to zoning.

General Report

NOTE: New comments in bold, germane comments recycled.

Planning Commission (RPC)

- Meetings attended: **Dec. 6, Dec. 20**
- Please see Chair update on Richmond Planning Commissions homepage.
- Zoning Amendments for the Industrial Commercial (I/C) District:
 - Public Hearing scheduled for December 6, 2023
 - Purpose is to reduce the regulatory barriers with regards to residential uses in the district for parcels that have a current residential use through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process.
 - **The Planning Commission has moved this forward to the Selectboard pending legal comment to revisions.**
- The recent focus is the incorporation of Act 47 (S.100) in the RZR. The Planning Commission has had four public meetings as part of the recurring agenda and has finished scheduled outreach. However, Act 47 will be refined over time and incorporated into the zoning amendments, necessitating additional public hearings.

Meetings:

- **RPC 12/6:**
 - **Public Hearing for amendment changes to the I/C District and language of §5.12 of the RZR.**
 - **Resistance and support voiced on the removal of the Conceptual Master Development clause in the Planned Unit Development language of §5.12 of the RZR.**
 - **Resistance voiced on piece-meal development. I deem this issue subjective and not based on the reality of what we're trying to accomplish here which is the removal of barriers to promote housing.**
 - **Noted that initial Public Hearing notice did not include language on changes to the Sub-Regs.**
- **RPC 12/20**
 - **Continued discussion on amendment changes and motion to move the amendments forward to the Selectboard without revisions to the Sub Regs. Note: There is continued resistance from individuals on Hillview that deem the removal of the MDP requirement not advantageous.**

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RPC 12/20 Continued:

- **Jolina Court/Buttermilk Density discussion.** This will be a continued focus of the PC in the months ahead. Director feels this is an opportunity to increase workforce housing here in Richmond. This will be a quid pro quo discussion, specifically along the lines of green infrastructure and quality of life issues in exchange for any consideration of density cap increases. I feel this is an opportunity but it is not lost on me that this has the potential to go off the rails based on past perceptions.
- **Continuing on this thread, the commission appears to be receptive to increasing density at Jolina Court with the knowledge that housing that is affordable and workforce housing is the focus of the developers.** This has not been specifically voiced in any motion but rather is my sole observation.
- **Please see past minutes and MMCTV archives for additional context.** I highly suggest this “portal” into this discussion.

Transportation Committee (RTC)

- **Meetings attended: Nov. 28, Dec. 12**
- **Share the Road sub-committee has been making great strides.** The committee anticipates a Spring 2024 launch for the campaign.
- **Annual Report approved at Nov. 28 meeting.**

Meetings:

- **RTC 11/28:**
 - **Discussion on the inclusion of speed tables and sidewalks for project.** It was noted that the town is awaiting traffic data from CCRCP and D&K.
 - **Once traffic data arrives, the location and type of traffic calming to be considered will coalesce.** The Committee fully supports the addition of speed tables on the approaches to Cochran and Bridge Streets.
 - **Cochran Road Corridor Study-WSP Scope of Work yet to be finalized**
- **RTC 12/12**
 - **THBC Intersection continued discussion.**
 - **The committee supports the development of a road striping schedule for safety purposes.**
 - **Upper Bridge Street Bike-Ped RFP update.**
 - **Budget line items discussed and committee is appreciative to the attention the SB has paid to the issue of reserve funding.** Director echoes this sentiment.
 - **Some issue with scheduling WSP on the Cochran Road Study.** For now, patience reigns in P&Z.
- **Please see past minutes and MMCTV archives for additional context.**

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Housing Committee (RHC)

- Meetings attended: **Dec. 13**

Meeting:

- **Jolina Court density discussion. Committee is generally supportive of additional density but would need data to make a decision to support.**
- **Acknowledges that the need is there and an opportunity exists to build workforce housing at Jolina Court.**
- **Browns Court housing discussion. Desirability and access issue discussed. Director to advise the committee of any outcome.**
- **The committee has no recommendation on this issue other than what was submitted in the housing report.**
- **Please see past minutes and MMCTV archives for additional context.**

Zoning Administration and Development Review Board (DRB)

- Meetings attended by Tyler Machia: **Dec. 5, Dec. 13 (DRB), Dec 13 (RHC), Dec. 18 (SB)**
- Since 1/1/23 (**Updated for annual report**):
 - 85 Zoning permits issued.
 - New Housing: **14** Single Family Dwellings (SFD's), **5** Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's).
 - DRB applications (Subdivision, Conditional Use Review and Site Plan): **22** to date.
- Enforcement Actions in progress: 0.
- Both the ZA and Director have actively engaged the DRB to solicit comment and increase involvement with the Planning Commission's efforts to update the RZR. Please note that this fundamental collaboration is critical and protocols are currently being developed.
- **Holt/Pellitier appeal to the ZA's extension of the Access Permit for Avonda property on Hillview Road heard on December 5. Both Director and ZA present and decision under legal review.**
- **Willis Farm PUD modification for a storage facility approved at the Dec. 13 DRB meeting.**

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRCP)

- Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) attended: **None**
- Planning Advisory Committee meeting attended: **None**
- FY25 UPWP to be considered in the coming weeks.
 - Official Map discussion in order, please see link below for additional information:
 - [Official Map \(vpic.info\)](http://vpic.info) (Press Ctrl and click mouse)

Additional Comments

New Comments:

- **Lower Bridge Street Project/Richmond TAP Grant TA-23(17)** – Consultant (VHB) and Project Management (CCRCP's Sai Sarepalli) has been chosen; process is now active for the Lower Bridge Street project between Jolina Court and Esplanade. **Walk through with consultant accomplished on December 20.**

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- **Upper Bridge Street RFP** – Potential consultant (VHB) meeting accomplished o Dec. 21 with Cathleen Gent, Town Manager and Director. Discussion on the RFP and clarity to questions the town has put forth.
- **Recreation** – See past reports

Past Comments (to be recycled and revised in time):

- **Digitizing Files** – This is an effort that the town should explore, not just for P&Z but for other town offices. The approach is to take the long view but planting a seed is the intent here. This will be a constant placeholder in my monthly report pending action.
- **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.
- Embedded Link to TOR A-250 permit database [Link Here](#) (Press Ctrl and click mouse)

Abbreviations used in this report: ARPA = American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; CCRPC = Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; D&K = Dubois and King; GMT=Green Mountain Transit; PPL = Project Pipeline Document; RTC = Richmond Transportation Committee; RVC=Riverview Commons; SB = Selectboard; TAP=Transportation Alternatives Program; THBC = intersection of Thompson Rd, Huntington Rd, Bridge St, and Cochran Rd; UPWP = Unified Planning Work Program; VDH = VT Dept. of Health; VTRANS=Vermont Agency of Transportation;

Respectfully submitted by Keith Osborne, Director 12/22/23