

PLANNING COMMISSION

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

February 25, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alan Couch, Chairman	Aaron Galley
Terry Carter	Alan Isaacson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

George Tucker, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Rose Goings

OTHERS PRESENT:

Eliza Greene	Lisha Klaiber, Recorder	Fred Marin -Okemo Valley TV
Justin Hyjeck	Recorded on tape	Recorded for TV
Ryan Silvestri		

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Alan Couch called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL BY RECORDING SECRETARY

A. All Planning Commission members present, except George Tucker, Jr.

3. CONSIDERATION OF ANY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR REMOVALS TO THE AGENDA

- A. Terry Carter requested that agenda item #9 be moved up as she has to leave by 7:00 p.m.
- B. Board consensus to move agenda item #9 to after item #5 – as item 5A.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

- A. The minutes to be approved are from the meeting of January 21, 2020.
- B. **MOTION by Alan Isaacson and seconded by Aaron Galley to approve the minutes January 21, 2020 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

5. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

A. There were none.

5A. NEW MEETING TIME & DAY DISCUSSION

- A. Alan Couch said that he and Rose Goings had discussed this and there is no conflict with Okemo Valley TV for coverage. At our last meeting we discussed changing our meetings from the 3rd Tuesday evening of the month to the 3rd Monday evenings of the month at 6:00 p.m.
- B. Rose Goings said that she does have coverage for the minutes. She added that Scott Murphy said they should wait until after the re-organization meeting in April to start.
- C. **MOTION by Terry Carter and seconded by Aaron Galley to change the meeting day and time to the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.**

6. ZONING AMENDMENTS

- A. Alan Isaacson said that Terry Carter has noted that some of the phrasing was not carried over from the Village to the Town zoning regulations. He had made the corrections. He said he had gone over the suggestions made by Zoning for Great Neighborhoods. He said that they had suggested that the maximum density cap be removed. Our maximum is 5,000 square feet per dwelling unit. He said there are no short term rental restrictions.
- B. Rose Goings said that Killington and Woodstock have different ways of handling these. She said that she had sent Scott Murphy a package about state septic regulations. The state regulations say 2 persons per bedroom for up to 3 bedrooms and 1 person per bedroom over 3 bedrooms. She said that some of the Air B&B listings say 3 bedrooms for 15 people. That is way out of line.
- C. Alan Isaacson said he is willing to consider changing the bulk standard. He said that the 5,000 square feet maximum is good, except for Air B&B. He said that he still does not know how to manage short term rentals.
- D. Aaron Galley said we need to change the zoning regulations to allow for more year round housing.
- E. Alan Isaacson said if a single family unit were split into 2 units, then they would need 2 parking spaces.
- F. Rose Goings said if an Air B&B unit accommodates as many as 15 people, you could have up to 15 cars.
- G. Alan Isaacson said even 6-month rentals would be okay.
- H. Rose Goings said that Ludlow has the most Air B&B rentals in the area.
- I. Justin Hyjeck said Ludlow is 3rd in the state for short term rentals.
- J. Rose Goings said it is impossible to count.
- K. Aaron Galley said some counts say Ludlow has 490 short term rentals.
- L. Alan Isaacson said he would like to change the zoning toward growing our year-round or 6 month rentals.
- M. Terry Carter said that Killington has a plan and people are responsible to make sure they have the correct fire and safety measures in their units.
- N. Rose Goings said they can talk to Jason Rasmussen about some wording for regulations for short term rentals. They do want to include wording that units should be 6 month or yearly rentals. They do not want short term rentals and how they would be able to police this. She asked about the response from the Select Board at their last meeting.
- O. Alan Isaacson said that item was removed from the agenda.
- P. Rose Goings said that she had done some research and given a packet to Scott Murphy. He will forward the information to the Select Board. They will let the Planning Commission know if they want us to go forward with this.
- Q. Justin Hyjeck said that Air B&B does work with municipalities.
- R. Terry Carter said there is a bill in the state Senate to increase local housing.

- S. Aaron Galley said according to VSA Chapter 24 §4325, this is within the purview of the Planning Commission and we don't need to wait for the Select Board or Trustees to pursue this and do some studies.
- T. Rose Goings said we can apply for grants to do studies.
- U. Terry Carter said she does not want this board to "step on other's toes."
- V. Aaron Galley said this board can get information out to the voters and businesses and get their support. We do not need to wait to start to research short term rental options.
- W. Alan Couch said that he concurs and we can do some research for next month.
- X. Alan Isaacson asked if they would like to him to talk to Jason Rasmussen about controlling short term rentals.
- Y. Alan Couch said yes.

7. TRUSTEES' MEETING - MAIN STREET TRAVEL PATTERNS DOCUMENT

- A. Alan Isaacson noted that the new signs had gone up. They are mounted about very far up on telephone poles and if he had not been looking for them, he would not have seen them. They are small banners. He also noted that only one of the crosswalk signs in town have flashing lights. He said that he had read the letter from Chief Billings and the letter from the state. The state wants the local government to say what they want.
- B. Aaron Galley said the town would need to submit a letter, on town letterhead to show their support to lower the speed limit on Main Street.
- C. Terry Carter suggested only lowering the speed limit from Walker Bridge to Shaw's.
- D. Alan Isaacson said the Trustees did not show much support of their suggestions, except for possibly considering lowering the speed limit on Main Street in the Village.
- E. Aaron Galley said we can get petitions or open letters from voters and businesses.
- F. Alan Isaacson said he feels that the letter from Chief Billings is not totally consistent with the facts.
- G. Alan Couch noted that if we lower the speed limits and it doesn't work, we can always raise them again.
- H. Aaron Galley said the trustees would not support doing anything that would lower the number of parking spaces.
- I. Alan Couch said that improving crosswalks would make it safer to cross the street.
- J. Rose Goings said that Ron Tarbell said that the state measures the lines for the crosswalks. She said that we could lose the leased parking lot at any time. She said that parking on Main Street is what it is. She said that businesses could ask their employees to park in that lot. She said there is a huge parking area by Ludlow Pharmacy and it is not used in the evenings. We could put a crosswalk in that area. She said that the owner of that plaza is great to work with. She added that they are talking about putting Tesla charging stations there.
- K. Aaron Galley said the Trustees don't think that there is a problem with the sidewalks and crossing.
- L. Terry Carter asked if we told the trustees that we got input on this at our public meeting.
- M. Alan Isaacson said we told them it came from the businesses.
- N. Rose Goings said the trustees said that this has all been brought up before, such as; crosswalks, parking on Pond Street, police traffic control and cones and it is not going to happen and that they have seen so many ideas not work.
- O. Aaron Galley said he wants to improve the sidewalks, crosswalks and parking.
- P. Rose Goings said we have sidewalks. She said this board needs to come up with ideas for parking in other areas. She said there is a sidewalk by Killarney's and they could put a crosswalk there.
- Q. Terry Carter said we have discussed a 25MPH speed limit in the village several times and were always told the state would not allow it.

- R. Alan Couch said they should lower the speed limit on Main Street to 25 MPH all the way through the village.
- S. Eliza Greene asked if the flashing, radar speed signs are effective.
- T. Rose Goings said we need more police presence.
- U. Justin Hyjeck said that at night, the tractor trailers are really moving from Walker Bridge through the village.
- V. Alan Isaacson said that this board needs to get the village residents and businesses in the village to write letters to the trustees.
- W. Terry Carter said letters and Facebook can be effective.
- X. Ryan Silvestri asked if they have any leeway with signage and getting more signs up.
- Y. Terry Carter said this board has not asked.
- Z. Alan Isaacson said that at their meeting, the trustees had some objections to signs because of plowing.
- AA. Rose Goings said the flashing, radar speed limit signs may cost about \$20,000.
- BB. Aaron Galley said, for the record, that he never advocated narrowing the curb to curb width of the road. He was referring only to the marked travel lane lines.
- CC. Alan Isaacson said that Earl Washburn said that the road, by Mojo's, if people are parked there, is really tight.
- DD. Aaron Galley said it is 38 ½ feet by Mojo's across to the Black River Good Neighbor's furniture store.
- EE. Alan Isaacson said there is only parking on one side of the street there.
- FF. Rose Goings said there is not supposed to be parking in front of Attorney Fink's office. She suggested they apply for a grant to work on zoning requirements for parking. She said that she and Jason Rasmussen could work on the grant. She said that we (Ludlow) pay the Regional Planning Commission \$2,500 per year for occasional advice and questions. When we get grants, we pay them for Jason Rasmussen's services.

8. SIGN REGULATIONS - CONCERNS

- A. Rose Goings said that Justin Hyjeck installed a nice sign that is not in compliance with our sign regulations. She added that our sign regulations are very common with other areas. We do not allow any new internally lit signs. We do have some preexisting internally lit signs, but if the businesses ever want to change those signs, the new signs may not be internally lit. She said the sign regulations were set in 1989-1990. It is okay to have internally lit signs inside a window.
- B. Justin Hyjeck apologized for the sign. He had seen one, when travelling, and had a 3-sided sign made. He said that his hope is not to reverse the sign regulations, but to amend the restrictions on internally lit signs. He suggested that if the main sign is less than 30 square feet, there could be an auxiliary, smaller sign that is internally lit. He said that his other signs are illuminated, but not as easily visible if you are driving through town at night. This secondary sign would be less than ½ or ¼ the size of the main sign.
- C. Eliza Greene said they could have a color component in the regulation.
- D. Alan Couch said the board could see if they can work it into the regulations.
- E. Alan Isaacson said Vermont does not allow billboards. We should leave the regulations as they are.
- F. Aaron Galley said a small internally lit sign would be okay. It would be no more brilliant than the main sign. He added that he despises blue LED lights. He said that he agrees, overall, but added that externally lit signs are nicer for the character of the area.
- G. Rose Goings cautioned that as soon as people see one sign, they will be coming into her office to complain.

- H. Alan Isaacson said that before we make any changes, we need to think of possible, unintended consequences.
- I. Rose Goings said we may have one good sign, but how does she explain when she removes other signs. She does not want to get into design standards.
- J. Justin Hyjeck they could ban neon signs. He said that their sign is not neon.
- K. Rose Goings said some regulations specify light wattage. Some standards say no internally lit signs. Manchester has design review for signs.
- L. Alan Isaacson said the Select Board does not want design review and does not want anything that “smacks” of design review.
- M. Justin Hyjeck said that once they got that sign, it changed their business.
- N. Alan Couch said this board will consider this.
- O. Rose Goings said that to allow that, we would have to increase the maximum allowable sign square footage.
- P. Justin Hyjeck said that Rose Goings had told them the sign could go inside, but that doesn’t work.
- Q. Alan Couch said they will put it on the agenda for next month.
- R. Alan Isaacson noted that the process could take at least 6 months. The Planning Commission would have to write the regulations. We would have to advertise a public hearing, then hold the public hearing. We would then send the draft regulations to the Trustees for their review. They would have to warn their public hearing and have their public hearing. The Trustees would have final approval – or not – of the regulations.
- S. Justin Hyjeck said it is worth discussing and pursuing.

9. **OTHER BUSINESS**

- A. There was no other business.

10. **ADJOURN**

- A. **MOTION by Alan Isaacson and seconded by Aaron Galley to adjourn this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisha Klaiber

Alan Couch, Chairman

Alan Isaacson

Terry Carter

George Tucker, Jr.

Aaron Galley