

PLANNING COMMISSION

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

June 28, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alan Couch, Chair
Terry Carter

Alan Isaacson
Logan Nicoll

Norm Vanasse

STAFF PRESENT:

Rose Goings

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jason Rasmussen

Ed McEneaney - LPC-TV

Lisha Klaiber, Recorder

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.

3. APPROVE MINUTES

A. The minutes to be approved are from the meeting of May 24, 2016.

B. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Norman Vanasse to approve the minutes May 24, 2016 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

A. There were none.

5. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

A. Alan Couch noted that at their last meeting, the board added the following language for district standards to the RC1 and RC2 districts of the town zoning regulations, as well as the Village RC district. The reason for this is to give more “teeth” to the regulations in trying to keep big box out of town and to protect the character of the town.

District Standards

The clear purpose and the desired character of this district is to encourage small business, locally owned that blend in with the current small town charm and preserve the vitality of Main Street businesses. Our town will not support businesses that draw away from the economy of our downtown. We want to maintain the character of district. The character is rural, quiet, with private homes, with a quality of life people have come to appreciate and expect.

Mountain District, Mountain Road, and Jackson Gore are exempt

- B. Logan Nicoll said that he supports the additions and added that it gives the DRB more discretion in the permitting process.
- C. Terry Carter said they should also put this in the town plan.
- D. Alan Couch said he likes the idea and hopefully, it will withstand challenges.
- E. Logan Nicoll said the language is non-controversial and not specifically anti big box.
- F. Alan Isaacson said the board also needs to go through the zoning maps. They should open up RC2 and close down RC1 a little.
- G. Terry Carter said she would like to pass this along to the Select Board.
- H. Logan Nicoll said they could pass along the Village regulations to the Trustees.
- I. Alan Isaacson said they should wait, until they are finished with the town regulations before going to the Select Board. They should not go to the Select Board several times.
- J. Terry Carter said she does not want to wait months to get this done. She knows that a gas station is looking to expand.
- K. Rose Goings asked if the board is happy with the village regulations.
- L. Logan Nicoll said he thinks that they have finished it and it is almost ready to send to the trustees.
- M. Terry Carter repeated that this language should also go in the town plan.
- N. Alan Couch said the character of the town is already described in the town plan.
- O. Alan Isaacson said there will be other changes they will also need to make to the town plan, including renewable energy changes. This is pending the new state regulation.
- P. The board included wording from the district standards paragraph in the Land Use section of the town plan.
- Q. Alan Isaacson said that they should wait until the Energy section revisions are complete before going to the Select Board for changes to the town plan. He asked if the board wants to add "restaurants" to RC2.
- R. Logan Nicoll said he thought RC2 was for Rural Commercial.
- S. Alan Couch said they also want to keep gas stations out of those areas.
- T. Alan Isaacson said the reason they wanted to add restaurants to RC2 was because Logan Nicoll suggested we change the area from the Village line, on the east end of Route 103, starting at Preedom Hill, to the end of town to RC2. Sam's and Mr. Darcy's are between the village line and Preedom Hill.
- U. Rose Goings said that the town/village line is just before Mr. Darcy's and the area is all in the flood zone. The field by Mr. Darcy's can be built on, but is limited because it is in the flood zone.
- V. Logan Nicoll said that it is probably not likely that anyone would want to try to build there, but the maps should match the character of the district.
- W. Terry Carter said she does not want urban sprawl at the edges of town on either end.
- X. Logan Nicoll said when you look at the map for RC1; you could also extend it to Fletcher. He also suggested why they should allow gas stations in town anywhere. They could just allow them in the village.
- Y. Alan Isaacson asked why someone should not put a gas station on Route 103; maybe some people would prefer them at the ends of town instead of the village.

- Z. Alan Couch said we don't want to be constantly changing the zoning. He said that between the zoning, topography and demographics, we have restricted some development and the zoning regulations have been pretty good.
- AA. Logan Nicoll said our job is to make people drive through the village (for gas) and stop at the local shops while they are there. If the gas stations are at the ends of town, people will go straight to the mountain. We need to set the regulations so we don't get sprawl at the end of town. We should get gas stations out of the town regulations.
- BB. Norman Vanasse said we have enough gas stations in the village already.
- CC. Alan Couch said leave well enough alone.
- DD. Terry Carter said she does not want to wait until it's too late.
- EE. Logan Nicoll, referring to the last meeting, noted that they are also changing a portion of the land on Mountain Road to be in the Mountain Recreation District. This was requested by Ted Reeves.
- FF. Alan Isaacson said that no one knows why it has not always been Mountain Recreation.

6. RENEWABLE ENERGY SITING BILL

- A. Jason Rasmussen said that aside from the Energy Bill, other changes at the state level include 8-year (instead of 5-year) town plan update cycles and a Forestry Bill that will have town plan requirements. Regarding the Energy Siting Bill (Senate Bill 260, Act 174), there is quite a bit that relates to town plans. After 7/1/16 any new town plans must address this bill and towns will need to identify suitable sites.
- B. Alan Isaacson asked if towns need to pick energy sites.
- C. Jason Rasmussen said you will need to be making progress toward a goal. The new law also lays out a plan for Regional and Town plans to obtain "substantial deference." If you meet data specific requirements, and specify where the town wants renewable energy projects, this will hold more weight. The Regional Plan will also have to be changed. But, it probably won't be until November when the PSB will come up with its rules and guidelines. That means that towns will not know what the rules are until after November. It may take a year. You may want to wait until Regional gets all of its information before changing your plan. There will be lots of data analysis.
- D. Terry Carter asked if sites would be allowed in flood zones or fluvial erosion areas.
- E. Jason Rasmussen said he is not sure.
- F. Rose Goings asked if the state will determine locations.
- G. Jason Rasmussen said they want the towns to do it. The state goal is for 90% renewable energy by 2050.
- H. Terry Carter asked if the state will put up its own energy grids.
- I. Jason Rasmussen said they will give incentives for private companies. He added that there is a lot to the bill and it is very detailed as to what towns will need to do.
- J. Terry Carter asked how a town could determine a location where land is privately owned.
- K. Jason Rasmussen said the town would note where winds are high and where there are transmission lines.
- L. Norman Vanasse said you will need to make measurements.
- M. Jason Rasmussen said realistically, it would be hard for a town to just say that they don't want a project.
- N. Alan Isaacson asked if this is voluntary.
- O. Jason Rasmussen said you don't have to go for substantial deference, but if you want the town plan to have some weight, do it,
- P. Terry Carter asked why they should measure privately owned properties.

- Q. Alan Isaacson suggested for future use.
- R. Logan Nicoll said that with the Coolidge Station where it is, North Hill is the best place.
- S. Jason Rasmussen said that the screening standards are still allowed.
- T. Alan Isaacson said this board has put them in the town and village zoning regulations; they are not in the town plan, yet.

7. IN PROCESS

- A. Grant Brook Reclassification
 - i. Rose Goings said that this is at a standstill and will remain on the agenda until resolved. It is a work in progress.
- B. Flood Resiliency Map
 - i. Rose Goings said this is in a statewide grouping and will take some time.

8. VILLAGE CENTER

- A. Alan Isaacson said that there were some changes to the map that were allowed.
- B. Jason Rasmussen said there is also a detailed application to be filed, along with the map, photos and a cover letter.
- C. Rose Goings said she has the SD card and will take care of the photos.
- D. Jason Rasmussen said they may need to tweak the map and that most of the work is done. He will resend the map and other information.
- E. Alan Isaacson asked about Benson's and Pleasant Street.
- F. Rose Goings said it could only include the "old" Benson's.
- G. Alan Isaacson said it could include Pond and Route 100 up to the trestle and Pleasant Street. He added that Frank Heald would like to include up to Mill Street.
- H. Jason Rasmussen said that the new Benson's does not fit into the Village Center definition.
- I. Rose Goings added that neither does Shaw's.
- J. Jason Rasmussen said that the big thing about this is the tax credits for businesses to fix up their buildings.
- K. Rose Goings said that some businesses, within the current Village Center designation, have already used the tax credits.
- L. Jason Rasmussen noted that this is just an expansion of the existing designation.
- M. Terry Carter asked who should write the cover letter.
- N. Jason Rasmussen said the Trustees or Select Board. The Planning Commission could draft a letter and forward it to the other boards.
- O. Rose Goings said there is a letter from the last time we did this and we sent it to the Trustees.
- P. Alan Isaacson said we should look for the old one and see if it still works.
- Q. Jason Rasmussen said he will look to see if he has it and will send it.
- R. Alan Isaacson asked if there is a deadline for the application.
- S. Jason Rasmussen said September.
- T. Alan Isaacson said we need to wrap this up at the July meeting.

9. NEW PROJECTS

- A. Alan Couch said completion of paperwork for expansion of Village Center Designation.

10. **OTHER BUSINESS**

- A. Food Carts
 - i. Terry Carter asked if food carts are allowed.
 - ii. Rose Goings said there is a Vendor Ordinance and people would have to apply for permits. She added that years ago, there were more of them, but there were too many complaints. Now, people can apply for a conditional use permit to put one on private property and then get a permit.
- B. Next Meeting
 - i. Alan Isaacson said the meeting will be on July 19, 2016.

11. **ADJOURN**

- A. **MOTION by Alan Isaacson and seconded by Logan Nicoll to adjourn this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Alan Couch, Chairman

Logan Nicoll

Terry Carter

Norman Vanasse

Alan Isaacson