

PLANNING COMMISSION

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

November 19, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alan Couch, Chairman	Aaron Galley
Terry Carter (by phone)	Alan Isaacson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

George Tucker, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Rose Goings

OTHERS PRESENT:

Logan Nicoll	Lisha Klaiber, Recorder	Ed McEneaney -Okemo Valley TV
Torrin Tofferi		

1. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Alan Couch called the meeting to order at 6:01 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. There were no changes.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

- A. The minutes to be approved are from the meeting of October 15, 2019.
B. **MOTION by Alan Isaacson and seconded by Terry Carter to approve the minutes October 15, 2019 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

5. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

- A. There were none.

6. PARKING

- A. Alan Couch said that this is about changing the requirements for parking in the village.
- B. Terry Carter said that there are conflicts in the zoning regulations regarding parking.
- C. Alan Isaacson said that the current regulations require 2 parking spaces for every dwelling unit. He suggested that one space may be enough.
- D. Aaron Galley agreed
- E. Terry Carter agreed.
- F. Alan Isaacson said that he and Rose Goings attended the Zoning for Great Neighborhoods seminar in Montpelier. He said that the other towns made well prepared presentations and that we were not aware that we would be expected to make a presentation. He said that he thought we would just give them copies of our town plan and zoning regulations and that they would review them and give us comments. He said that we have 33 spaces in the municipal lot. He said that signs were supposed to have been made showing where the lot is.
- G. Rose Goings said they are still working on the signs.
- H. Alan Isaacson said people at the seminar suggest no parking requirements and to let the businesses realize that with no parking spaces there will be fewer customers. If we remove the requirements, we may not get those spaces back. He is not in favor of removing parking requirements.
- I. Terry Carter expressed concern that if there were no parking requirements, the businesses would expand into the parking spaces and there would be fewer spaces.
- J. Rose Goings said that she agrees that they should not remove all parking requirements. She said that since Chaos closed, that could split into 2 businesses and with the existing requirements that would require additional parking spaces. It is difficult to say what works. We currently base parking spaces on seating, but that really does not accommodate parking for all customers.
- K. Alan Isaacson said the people at the meeting in Montpelier want walk-able downtowns.
- L. Rose Goings reminded them that the municipal parking lot is a year to year lease.
- M. Aaron Galley said his studies only looked at Main Street, from Mojo's to the light. He said that some of the parking spaces are too big and need to be redone. If the lines are redrawn, we may be able to squeeze in more spaces. He agrees that the downtown should be walk-able. He said that if new businesses want to come in to town, but there are not enough spaces, they have to go to the DRB. There needs to be more flexibility in the zoning for parking.
- N. Alan Isaacson said that legally, the DRB has to go by the zoning regulations regarding parking.
- O. Rose Goings said that if building exists, then it has to meet the parking requirements.
- P. Alan Couch said that if businesses want to expand into their parking that will decrease the total number of parking spaces in the village.
- Q. Terry Carter said they should have something in the regulations to keep them from expanding into their parking.
- R. Alan Couch said rentals also pose a problem.
- S. Alan Isaacson said affordable housing is also limited if there is not enough parking.
- T. Rose Goings said with affordable housing, the people may only have one car. She used Tuckerville and Black River Overlook as examples.
- U. Aaron Galley said that that is too broad.
- V. Alan Couch said the language needs to be more specific. It needs work.
- W. Terry Carter said we need to rework section 530.2
- X. Rose Goings suggested that the entire section be reworked.
- Y. Alan Couch said that there must be parking studies out there.
- Z. Rose Goings said the study said there are 150 spaces downtown. She is not sure if that includes the 33 in the municipal lot. She asked if they used Aaron Galley's study, would it increase the number of spaces.
- AA. Aaron Galley said only by a few.

- BB. Rose Goings said they don't know how many spaces there are by the Pot Belly, DJ's and Chaos. She added that Jason Rasmussen did a count.
- CC. Logan Nicoll said that 150 spaces seem really high.
- DD. Alan Isaacson added that there is no free land in the village to create more spaces.
- EE. Rose Goings said the parking regulations were written in 1990 and have never been updated. They need to do a total rewrite. We need to research this and look at other towns. She said she does not know how the calculations were made.
- FF. Aaron Galley said we need to promote on-street parking.
- GG. Rose Goings suggested that they look into leasing parking for off hours, she suggested 57 Pond Street. They could look into a shuttle from those parking areas.
- HH. Alan Isaacson said it's difficult to get people to use the municipal lot. He repeated that there were supposed to be signs put up. He suggested also talking to Heritage to use their parking after hours. If we make parking too discretionary with regard to the DRB, it may lead to lawsuits.
- II. Rose Goings said the DRB has to base their decisions on the regulations, not opinions. She explained that the DRB is a quasi-judicial board and on the record. They must base their decisions on facts. She said she will talk to Jason Rasmussen and Scott Murphy regarding the signs that they were supposed to get from the grant. She will look at other towns' regulations and numbers of spaces.
- JJ. Alan Isaacson said he would like to see the breakdown of spaces in Ludlow, including private spots. He said the Pot Belly's parking lot is dirt and has no lines. He said that when reading our existing regulations, they don't look unreasonable, except for the residential.
- KK. Logan Nicoll said there are no state regulations for parking. He added that he doesn't know where Ludlow's calculations come from.
- LL. Alan Isaacson said the board also needs to look at section 530.3.

7. AARON'S MAIN STREET TRAVEL PATTERNS DOCUMENT

- A. Aaron Galley said that he got some of his information from NACTO.org studies. He prepared a proposal for the board to review.
- B. Rose Goings said that she sent a copy of it to the town manager. She asked if they should also send a copy to Ron Tarbell (highway foreman.)
- C. Aaron Galley suggested that they send it to the Select Board and the Trustees.
- D. Rose Goings said that they should first get comments from Scott Murphy and Ron Tarbell.
- E. Aaron Galley said that there are only 3 crosswalks on Main Street between Elm and Depot Streets. That is not sufficient.
- F. Alan Isaacson said if we increase the number of crosswalks, it may decrease the number of parking spaces.
- G. Aaron Galley said we can put spaces up to the crosswalk. He said that according to VTRANS, an 11 foot travel lane in both directions is recommended. He said that by the light, the travel lane ranges from 11 feet to 14'9". It is excessive. If we narrowed the travel lane and the parking lane, it would allow a buffer. He added that narrower lanes slow traffic and encourages people to park closer to the curb.
- H. Rose Goings said that crossing between Aubuchon's and the Seven-Eleven is extremely dangerous.
- I. Aaron Galley said that some towns put up PEDESTRIAN signs at both ends of town. There are also speed tables that force you to slow down, but they are not really recommended. We should be repainting the lines every year.
- J. Alan Isaacson said that they should lower the speed limit to 25 MPH.
- K. Rose Goings said the curbs are 7".

- L. Aaron Galley said they should move the crosswalk from Big Eyes to Shell towards Main and Mountain crossing to Homestyle. He said that there are curb cuts already there.
- M. Alan Couch said they should also put one by Aubuchon's crossing to Seven Eleven.
- N. Aaron Galley said they always hear "state road" but VTRANS seems to think it is not a state road there. He said that Ron Tarbell said that it is confusing.
- O. Rose Goings said that the access into Shell is large, maybe to accommodate large trucks that need diesel fuel.
- P. Aaron Galley said that the Mobil station also has diesel. He said there are 2 parking spaces in front of Shell and they may be able to fit one more.
- Q. Rose Goings said they are planning a renovation of that area...Shell is coming to the DRB. She added that the sidewalks are not continuous on that side of the street.
- R. Alan Couch said they need to talk with Scott Murphy and Ron Tarbell and figure out how they can implement this.
- S. Alan Isaacson said this would be the Trustees.
- T. Alan Couch said we need to find out if Main Street is town or state.
- U. Logan Nicoll said that the Select Board paid for the last repaving because this section of the road was not on the state's schedule for last year. He added that VTRANS always picks up their plows when passing through town and drops them when they exit town.
- V. Aaron Galley said that according to state statute, we can post the road at 25 MPH.
- W. Terry Carter said we will also have to enforce it.
- X. Alan Isaacson suggested posting at 25 MPH at the radar signs. He said it would get people to slow down.
- Y. Aaron Galley said that the traffic study said that the posted speed limit as 35 MPH, its 30 MPH. It also listed the average speed as 28 MPH.
- Z. Alan Couch said we will need new signs.
- AA. Aaron Galley said that cross walks with curb bumps is moot if there is no buffer.
- BB. Terry Carter said that she likes the idea of crosswalks adjacent to driveways.
- CC. Rose Goings said they need something flashing by Aubuchon's across to Shell.
- DD. Aaron Galley mentioned double-sided crosswalk signs by the curb.
- EE. Rose Goings said that the traffic control cones take away parking spaces in the winter.
- FF. Aaron Galley said if they have a safety lane, as the snow builds up at the curb, you would have more leeway.
- GG. Rose Goings said the town does remove the snow.
- HH. Aaron Galley said that USLIMITS2 is a tool for calculating speed limits.
- II. Logan Nicoll said someone did a study of head in parking on Main Street several years ago.
- JJ. Torrin Tofferi said it would be dangerous to back out.
- KK. Alan Isaacson said there is some head in parking in Brandon.
- LL. Logan Nicoll said that the study showed that it does reduce speed.
- MM. Rose Goings said the legal size for a parking space is 9' x 22'.
- NN. Torrin said that when the snow falls, they get extra spaces because the lines are covered.
- OO. Aaron Galley said that the business owners don't have control over who uses their spaces. He said that they could put some pull-in parking on Pond Street.
- PP. Alan Isaacson said even head in parking would only give a few extra spaces.
- QQ. Alan Couch said they need to get input from Scott Murphy and Ron Tarbell.
- RR. Terry Carter said they should add parking on Pond Street.
- SS. Rose Goings said they should forward this to Ron Tarbell and Scott Murphy for input.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Zoning for Great Neighborhoods.

- i. Logan Nicoll asked about the event.
 - ii. Alan Isaacson repeated that it was disappointing. They were expected to make a presentation and did not know about it. Two other towns were well prepared. He said that he thought we would just give them copies of our town plan and zoning regulations and that they would review them and give us comments.
 - iii. Rose Goings said that Jason Rasmussen's presentation was weak. They did discuss walk-able downtowns, affordable housing, seasonal housing and removing all parking regulations. She said that they said that parking is a science and the town should not get involved. She said that she received an email from Faith today and it said we should be getting a recommendation in a month or so.
- B. December Meeting
- i. **MOTION by Alan Isaacson and seconded by Aaron Galley to cancel the December 17, 2019 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**

9. ADJOURN

- A. **MOTION by Alan Isaacson and seconded by Aaron Galley. to adjourn this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisha Klaiber

Alan Couch, Chairman

Alan Isaacson

Terry Carter

George Tucker, Jr.

Aaron Galley