

PLANNING COMMISSION

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

April 20, 2021

**6:00 PM
Zoom Meeting**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87387936899?pwd=eG5DTUFENjd3Tyt0T2ZPdWc3bW9zQT09>

Meeting ID: 873 8793 6899

Passcode: 583569

Dial by your location+1 929 205 6099

Meeting ID: 873 8793 6899

Passcode: 583569

Outside the area, find your nearest regional number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kxN8HhoKf>

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alan Couch, Chairman

Terry Carter

Ted Stryhas

Phoebe Tucker

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ryan Silvestri

STAFF PRESENT:

Rose Goings

OTHERS PRESENT:

Eric Alden

Logan Nicoll

Melissa Dee Phipps

Jason Rasmussen

Eric Chattergee –OV-TV

I. CALL TO ORDER – ELECTRONIC MEETING GUIDELINES

1. Alan Couch called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. He advised that the Electronic Meeting Guidelines, previously discussed are still in effect.

II. ROLL CALL

1. Alan Couch did a roll call of the board. All members are present, except Ryan Silvestri.

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

1. None were needed.

IV. **APPROVE MINUTES**

1. Alan Couch advised that the minutes to be approved are from the meeting of March 16, 2021.
2. **MOTION by Terry Carter and seconded by Phoebe Tucker to approve the minutes March 16, 2021 with change noted. Motion passed unanimously.**

V. **COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS**

1. Eric Alden asked how often and what is the procedure for the Planning Commission to review the zoning regulations for possible risks to the town, like Fox Run.
2. Rose Goings explained that that is an open hearing with the DRB and should not be discussed at this meeting. She said that should that hearing go further, there should not be any discussion on this record.
3. Alan Couch said that the Planning Commission is required to update the Town Plan every 8 years. The Planning Commission tries to make changes to the zoning regulations to help us attain the goals set in the town plan. We have been reactive in the past and don't want to continue that way. He said that the Select Board, the Village Trustees and the DRB alert us to possible issues. We regularly address the zoning regulations to coincide with the town plan.
4. Eric Alden said that his question was not based on Fox Run.
5. Terry Carter said that the Planning Commission usually reviews the zoning regulations right after we update the town plan. We go through every section of zoning. This past year was different with COVID.
6. Rose Goings said that the work we are doing for this grant will include work on the zoning regulations for the Village Center. We have to keep the focus on the grant and have a time line for the grant. We will work on it, hold a public hearing, go to the Trustees, they will hold a public hearing and we will possibly incorporate changes from comments at the public hearings. She added that there are also items that she is working on with Jason Rasmussen and Scott Murphy.

VI. **REVITALIZE THE VILLAGE OF LUDLOW – ZONING CHANGES & TIME FRAME**

1. Jason Rasmussen said that he thought that he has emailed out the suggested time line for work on the grant. He said that he had met with Rose Goings and Scott Murphy and the intent is to expedite work on this to have much of it finished before the end of the year.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

- April 2021 – finalize schedule for preparation of zoning updates
- May 2021 – Dimensional Standards and Uses – review procedures (streamline review process for housing)
- June 2021 – Continue review of refinements from May meeting
- July 2021 – Work on Supplemental Standards (outdoor seating pick-up windows)
- August 2021 – Continue review of refinements from July meeting
- September 2021 – Work on Parking and signage
- October 2021 – Review draft on zoning changes – all combined
- November 2021 – Public meeting

- December 2021 - Finalize draft of zoning changes and discuss adoption process and next steps
2. Alan Couch said it is a logical time line.
 3. Jason Rasmussen said they need to keep this moving forward. He would like to have most of the possible changes drafted by October and have formal adoption over the winter.
 4. Rose Goings said there may be changes as a result of Planning Commission public meeting. She said that there are other items that she is working on with Jason Rasmussen and Scott Murphy. She said that signage make take a long time and be very controversial. She said that she is concerned about time allotted for working on parking and signs at the same time. She reinforced that this grant is for the Village Center only. She said that they may have to reduce dimensional standards. She said that at their recent public meeting, people seemed to be okay with exemptions for parking. We should be proactive and think about these before the September meeting.
 5. Alan Couch said that the board can also discuss parking while it is working on other topics.
 6. Jason Rasmussen said they may need to spend more time on signs.
 7. Terry Carter said the schedule is doable and well organized. She said that some of these topics had come up at past public meetings.
 8. Jason Rasmussen said that should look back at the town plan as it will inform ideas for changes to the zoning regulations. He said that in 2018, the Congress of New Urbanism had made some suggestions for zoning for new neighborhoods, and made some suggestions for Ludlow, specific to housing. He will send that information to board members.
 9. Terry Carter said that some of their ideas were crazy.
 10. Jason Rasmussen said they would be able to look at those crazy ideas as things to avoid. He said that he is concerned about lot sizes.
 11. Terry Carter said that they had also suggested having no parking regulations.
 12. Rose Goings said we don't need to exempt parking to allow building. She said that, at their last meeting, they discussed parklets. She said they might be more feasible on the side streets. She said that some buildings like the King Fisher location are grandfathered and can change their use.
 13. Jason Rasmussen said that with the current regulations, businesses in the Village Center have to provide parking. We possibly could change the ratios, on street and off-street parking or shared parking and allow fewer spaces. He asked to what extent were there problems with outside eating, curbside ordering, deliveries, drive-in, drive-through and drive-up windows and noise.
 14. Rose Goings said noise never came up. She said that drive-in, drive-through and drive-up windows were not an issue – it was all walk-up.
 15. Alan Couch noted that Killarney's, Darcy's and Sam's are investing in improvements for outside dining. He said that there is an ordinance for no noise after 10:00 p.m., so there is no outside dining after 10:00.
 16. Terry Carter asked where we would add outside dining to the zoning regulations.
 17. Rose Goings said that outside consumption is under the purview of the Select Board. She said that outside dining could be a permitted use. She said that it is based on the number of seats allotted to a restaurant. You are allowed a specific number of seats and they can be inside, outside or a combination of both.
 18. Terry Carter said there is no prohibition now.
 19. Rose Goings said in the zoning, you couldn't do it on the sidewalks or driveways in the Village Center, but we allowed this to happen during COVID.

20. Eric Alden suggested that if a change of use is not permitted in the zoning regulations, what about a variance. He said that Rose Goings has told him that variances are not allowed. They should look at a mechanism to issue a variance for parking based on a change of use. They could look at it on a case-by-case basis.
21. Jason Rasmussen said that Rose Goings is correct – variances are difficult to obtain based on the 5 criteria. They can re-evaluate parking standards. Other towns have parking plans. There could be more flexibility.
22. Terry Carter asked if food trucks were allowed.
23. Rose Goings said there is a vendor ordinance that is issued by the town manager and not a zoning issue.
24. Alan Couch asked if they have to be on private property.
25. Rose Goings said yes, they are not allowed on streets. She said that she can't think of anything enacted during COVID that has been problematic.
26. Jason Rasmussen noted that Section 520.3 of the zoning regulations deals with one principle use per lot. He said that some towns allow multiple uses.
27. Rose Goings said that is fine with her.
28. Terry Carter said we need to be more flexible with the zoning regulations.
29. Rose Goings said that she thinks that Section 520.3 had been changed in the town zoning regulations and should be changed in the Village regulations. She said that some lots already have more than one use.
30. Jason Rasmussen said we can come back to that next month.
31. Rose Goings said that when we submit these to the Trustees or for public hearings, they will be marked up with highlighting and strike outs.
32. Jason Rasmussen asked the board if they would look at Permitted Uses vs. Conditional Uses and suggested that they may want to consider moving some of the Conditional Uses to Permitted Uses. He asked them to also look at lot dimensions, standards and frontages. He said that if made too small, they may be creating non-conforming lots.
33. Rose Goings repeated that this only pertains to the Village Center.
34. Jason Rasmussen said he will email some suggestions for wording, uses and dimensions.
35. Rose Goings asked board members to look around the Village and think about being proactive, what should the Village look like what should signs look like.
36. Alan Couch described to the board the clock the Rotary will install at the corner of Elm Street and Main Street in honor of Robert Mc Bride. He asked board members to think about what the village should look like, to think about food trucks and wording for primary uses on lots.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD)
 - i. Rose Goings said that Alan Couch needs to write a letter to the Select Board and Scott Murphy requesting to put on the agenda along with a representative from VCRD.
 - ii. Alan Couch asked Phoebe Tucker to email him with information to be included in the letter.
2. Broad Band Discussion.
 - i. Terry Carter said that at the Regional Planning Commission meeting, they indicated that discussions about Broad Band should happen at the Select Board.
 - ii. Rose Goings said that Rachel Scudder is scheduled to be at the June Select Board meeting and suggested that Planning Commission members may want to attend.
 - iii. Terry Carter said that it seems clear that if you are not part of a Cud (Communications Union District) that is may not be worth spending COVID money on it.

3. Mill Clock Tower
 - i. Eric Alden said that he is working at restoration of the Mill Clock Town (1860.) He said that it is still intact. He is working on getting funding for the project. He asked if anyone has any suggestions to let him know.
4. Next Meeting
 - i. Alan Couch said that the next regular meeting will be on May 18th at 6:00 p.m.

VIII. **ADJOURN**

1. **MOTION by Terry Carter and seconded by Ted Stryhas to adjourn this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
2. Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Alan Couch, Chairman

Ted Stryhas

Terry Carter

Phoebe Tucker

Ryan Silvestri