

**Town of New Haven Planning Commission Meeting**  
**Monday, July 13, 2020**  
**New Haven, VT Town Office**  
**DRAFT MINUTES**

**This meeting was held remotely via GoToMeeting. The video recording is available.**

**Planning Commission Members Present:** Benjamin (Benj) Putnam, Co-Chair, Rob Litch, Co-Chair, Bev Landon, Maggie Eaton, and Kathy Cahill

**Staff:** Zoning Administrator Aaron Brown

**Visitors:** Kathy Barrett, Jeffrey Glassberg, and John Mazzuchi

**I. Meeting Commenced: 7:02 PM**

- 1. Adjustments to the Agenda:** None
- 2. Visitors' Business:**

Jeffrey Glassberg encouraged the Planning Commission to revisit Anthony Stout's recommendations for planned unit developments, as well as more general language changes to the revised bylaws and the zoning map. The group acknowledged the difficulty of reviewing map revisions online, but Putnam said he is willing to try at an upcoming meeting. Landon agreed that mapping updates should be addressed at an upcoming meeting. Putnam encouraged members to revisit Stout's work before the next meeting. Brown agreed to re-send it.

**II. Standing Items**

**1. ZA Update**

Aaron Brown reported that building permit activity remains quiet. The Development Review Board has three upcoming hearings. On July 20, the Board will hear an appeal by a group of Sherman Lane neighbors to challenge a zoning permit issued to Maggie Eaton and Ron Yara to convert a former three-bedroom primary resident to a one-bedroom accessory dwelling, as well as a change to a building envelope for the Smith property on Helena Lane. August 3, the Board will hear a proposed site plan change to a building envelope for Ethan Allen Highway Storage. Refinancing remains steady, which has led to a number of certificate of compliance requests.

**2. Town Plan Update**

Energy Plan Update:

Maggie Eaton had hoped that the most recent draft would have been available earlier but the COVID related shut downs prevented some face to face meetings over various maps and websites that were going to inform about the natural resources and wildlife constraints that would assist in identifying areas

that would be inappropriate for large renewable energy developments. So instead, she attended several webinars, workshops, and conference calls (VT Fish and Wildlife, naturalists, VECAN, GMP, solar developers, mappers), and did mapping research on these and other topics. Plus, Aaron Brown assisted with identifying the various zones in town and their uses. At this point, Eaton has what is a mature draft ready for full review. She is seeking final input from ACRPC and, after that, she would like to propose a public meeting of the Planning Commission for a full review and discussion of this draft plan.

The group discussed whether the three-acre lot next to the Town office has been considered for community solar development. Brown responded that the Selectboard has discussed that possibility, but nothing formal has been proposed.

Eaton added that button-up and “window dresser” workshops might be difficult to host this fall due to CoVid concerns.

### **3. Waltham Town Line**

Putnam asked if there was any news to report. Brown said he kept this on the agenda from last meeting as a placeholder. Putnam agreed the town line should be kept in mind as zoning revisions move forward.

### **4. Workshops**

No new workshops to report.

### **5. ACRPC Activities**

The Regional Planning Commission and SE Group will present results of the Triangle Bike Loop study to the Selectboard July 21 a little after 7:00 PM. The Commission recently received a broadband planning grant, and it successfully had multiple towns, including New Haven, sign onto the concept of building a Communications Union District to deliver fiber optic service to Addison County. One model for this effort is EC Fiber, a group of nearly 30 towns in east central Vermont that banded together to deliver fiber optic service to rural communities in that part of the state. A representative from EC Fiber might present to the New Haven Selectboard at an upcoming meeting. Eaton said that Bristol recently got fiber optic service.

Landon asked who extended fiber optic service to Bristol. Eaton responded Waitsfield Telecom. Landon expressed hope that Waitsfield Telecom would extend service to New Haven since it also provides telephone service here.

## 6. Zoning Revisions

Brown reviewed language for affordable housing to be included in the zoning regulations, acknowledging that the group has repeatedly cited the difficulty in some areas to have adequate wastewater and water supplies. State statute calls for municipalities to provide incentives for affordable housing developments, which most likely would come through reduced zoning fees. Brown reviewed perpetuity standards for affordable housing and state goals for mixed income housing.

Lot size would be no less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre. State law allows developments up to 10 units in the RA-10 district. State statute requires 75% of units to be affordable. Design requirements exist. The DRB has discretion over setbacks, design standards, site plan and conditional use standards, etc.

Putnam asked what districts would be affected by affordable housing standards. Brown said that it is up to the Planning Commission. However, he said it would be undesirable to locate affordable housing units way out in the middle of the woods. Cahill asked whether the small lot size would allow for adequate septic. Brown said any approval would be predicated on proper septic permitting. Landon added water supplies as well. Eaton added that many affordable housing developments are intended to be sited with existing public transportation routes and amenities. Landon said the area near the town office might be better for affordable housing than solar development. Putnam added that solar could be a feature to incorporate into such development. Putnam added that the language should be updated to include what districts would accept affordable housing.

The group then reviewed existing language around home occupations and home businesses. Brown highlighted the problem that the regulations do not clarify which districts allow home businesses. Rob Litch said the group visited that issue not too long ago and thought that any district should allow home businesses. Putnam agreed that any district that allows homes should allow home occupations and businesses after proper review.

Brown highlighted that the existing language allows *historic* accessory structures over 1,200 square feet to be used for home businesses as an adaptive reuse. He asked if the group wished to apply a 50-year standard or grant more leniency. Putnam said he didn't think 50 years needs to be the standard. He said a 20- or 25-year standard could work. Putnam added that what the town would want to avoid is having someone build, for example, a large garage for personal use and then two years later claims it's historical and attempt an adaptive reuse.

Litch agreed that the original thinking behind allowing use of existing buildings is to preserve former agricultural structures.

Landon suggested that any outdoor displays should be reviewed by the DRB. Litch said home occupations and businesses currently do not allow any outdoor display. The intent is to keep business activity inside and, if the business grows, that business should find a place located in a commercial area.

Putnam asked Brown if he has enough feedback going forward. Brown said mostly yes. He said it will be important to clarify what districts are appropriate for home businesses. Cahill and Eaton said small, internet-based only businesses are common, and Brown said those businesses do not require a permit. Those that do are ones with outside visitors and employees. Putnam said zones where residences are allowed should allow home businesses, except for flood zones.

Brown went on to discuss highway commercial zoning on Route 7. An unpermitted home business located there was led to believe – perhaps by a realtor – that all areas on Route 7 are zoned commercial, which they are not. He asked if there's a desire to expand commercial areas and reminded the group that the point of maintaining rural zoned areas on Route 7 is to preserve scenic viewsheds and to avoid strip development.

Landon said the corner of Campground Road and Route 7 had, many years ago, a house with a real estate office connected to it. It then became a log home sales business. A large farmstand existed just to the north. That area west of Route 7 is zoned commercial because of this history.

Eaton suggested driving down Route 7 to see if some areas might be considered valuable scenic vistas. Putnam said a group site visit might be difficult but encouraged individual members to drive by and look. Putnam said he's sorry if a property owner were misled, but that's why title searches exist. Putnam added that some commercially zoned areas have been very slow to build out, such as the southwestern corner of Campground Road and Route 7. He said the group has historically wanted to see whether those areas get developed, and Litch agreed.

Litch asked about the area south of Belden Falls Road on Route 7. Some is zoned commercial. Landon said some of that land was once zoned residential and had some farming, but the soil wasn't productive.

Bev urged the group to review accessory structure sizes and setbacks at the next meeting. Eaton said the Commission should also send Dan Monger and thank you letter for his service for the Town.

**III. Review of Minutes**

Cahill moved to approve the minutes of April 20, 2020. Putnam seconded. Minutes were approved 5-0.

Landon moved to approve the minutes of May 11, 2020. Litch second. Minutes were approved 3-0.

**IV. Correspondence**

None

**V. Adjourn**

Landon moved to adjourn the meeting. Eaton seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:15.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Aaron Brown

Approved on \_\_\_\_\_

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Rob Litch

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Benj Putnam

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Beverly Landon

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Maggie Eaton

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Kathy Cahill