

Town of New Haven Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, August 10, 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, John Mazzuchi, and Anthony Stout

I. Meeting Commenced: 7:04 PM

- 1. Adjustments to the Agenda:** Aaron Brown encouraged moving Anthony Stout's presentation before his ZA update. Stout's presentation to visitors' business.

- 2. Visitors' Business:**

Anthony Stout revisited a presentation he gave to the Planning Commission (PC) in March 2020 just prior to news of COVID-19 and the subsequent shutdown of in-person meetings. He advises decreasing the conventional zoning density requirements in the village area to allow more dense development under planned unit development review. He reminded the PC that he also provided a written edit of the planned unit development language in the zoning regulations.

Putnam invited questions from the group. Amanda Bodell suggested Stout can be made available to answer questions. Eaton asked Stout to explain how unlinking septic and zoning permits would work. Stout suggested that zoning permits should not be required for wastewater systems, even though state statute allows for setback and other concerns to be addressed. Stout said decoupling wastewater and zoning permits could allow more easy development of community mound systems in the village area. Brown said he has not required zoning permits for septic systems and has provided the PC with language explicitly exempting them from zoning. The group discussed whether community systems can lead to conflicts among neighbors. Stout said that isolation distances to wells can sometimes be a concern. Putnam expressed that the Town might want to balance preservation of prime agricultural soils with development of new septic systems.

II. Standing Items

- 1. ZA Update**

Aaron Brown reported that building permit activity remains quiet. The Development Review Board (DRB) had three hearings. On July 20, the Board heard 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 heard a proposed site plan change to a building envelope for Ethan Allen Highway Storage.

The DRB upheld Brown's issuance of the permit to Yara and Eaton and approved the applications from Smith and Ethan Allen Highway Storage.

2. Town Plan Update

Energy Plan Update: The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) needs more time to review the draft energy plan before submitting formal comments and recommended that the New Haven PC wait until their review before embarking on a major public outreach effort. This phased approach could avoid presenting the public with policies that the RPC might not support. Eaton would like to have a special public meeting after the RPC has made a final review.

Eaton has also received public comments from residents Margaret Bend, who encouraged stronger policies to promote energy efficiency within town buildings, and Bev Landon, who addressed issues of road damage and energy use, among other issues. Landon and Eaton agreed to meet about the issues raised in Landon's comments.

3. Workshops

No new workshops to report.

4. ACRPC Activities

The Regional Planning Commission and SE Group presented results of the Triangle Bike Loop study to the Selectboard July 21. Aaron Brown will work with residents Larry Buck and Doug McKain and regional transportation planner Mike Winslow on an application for a bike-ped implementation grant to build out some portion of the Triangle Bike Loop. Grants are also available for road equipment that can improve water quality.

5. Zoning Revisions

- i. Review of Adaptive Reuse Definition (Added to February 2020 Draft By-laws)

Brown reminded the PC that it had discussed having an adaptive reuse standard less restrictive than the 50-year requirement employed by the state to determine a building's status as an historic structure. The group asked Brown to draft language for a 25-year standard.

ii. Clarification of Sketch Plan Requirements

Brown explained that the definitions do not clarify when sketch plans are or are not required. Bristol's new draft regulations spell out the requirements well. Brown agreed to propose a standard for requiring sketch plan review.

iii. Temporary Signage/Signage for Charitable Causes

Brown said the United Way of Addison County recently applied for a permit for temporary signage for a charitable event, and the signage exceed what would normally be exempt from zoning. The Selectboard waived its fee, but Brown still requested a permit application. The PC agreed it needed more information before suggesting a change to the temporary sign provisions.

iv. Accessory Structure Size, RA-10 Zoning Standards, and Lot Coverage

Bev Landon brought this topic to Brown's attention based on a recent letter to the editor of the *Addison County Independent*.

v. Section 345: Appeals of the Zoning Administrator – Days to Render Decisions

Brown and Kathy Barrett noticed a discrepancy between state statute and local regulations regarding the time to produce decisions on an appeal of zoning decision. The state statute allows for 45 days. The current Town regulations impose a ten-day standard. The group agreed that a 45-day standard is more reasonable.

III. Review of Minutes

Landon moved to approve the minutes of July 13. Kathy Cahill seconded. Minutes approved.

IV. Correspondence

Brown reminded the group to review Bristol's draft bylaws.

V. Adjourn

Landon moved to adjourn the meeting. Cahill seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:45.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Brown

Approved on _____

Rob Litch

Benj Putnam

Beverly Landon

Maggie Eaton

Kathy Cahill

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