

WATERBURY PLANNING COMMISSION
Draft Minutes
Monday, March 26, 2018

Planning Commission: Ken Belliveau, Chair; Mary Koen, Mark Ray, Eric Gross

Staff: Steve Lotspeich, Community Planner; Patti Spence, Secretary

Consultant: Brandy Saxton, Place Sense

Public: Alyssa Johnson, Economic Development Director; Martha Staskus, Resident; Gunner McCain, McCain Consulting; Lefty Sayah, Village Trustee

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m. at the Municipal Center at 28 N. Main Street

AGENDA REVIEW AND MODIFICATIONS

Steve had an additional item (VCDP Planning Grant application) that will be discussed under the Planner's Report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were none.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mary Koen moved and Eric Gross seconded the motion to approve the minutes of March 12, 2018, as submitted.

Vote: Approved 3 - 0

WATERBURY ZONING REGULATIONS – RE-WRITE

4.3.6 Signs

Municipalities can regulate the time, place and manner of a sign. The content cannot be regulated based on case law.

The following comments were made on the tracked changes version of the proposed sign regulations:

Page 191 – 4.3.6 I - Brandy included a draft chart showing the dimensional and location standards for signs. Ken felt the heading row does not need to be repeated three times and the chart would be more readable if it is all on one page in the final draft. Mary asked that the 1st row in the chart not be repeated at each new type if the chart could be done so that that information is only there once and be bolder or a larger font. The chart should specifically address the combination of types of signs on a property. It needs to be more clear as to how many types of signs you can have, under what conditions, and what the total allowable square footage is for a given parcel and building.

Page 184 – The language in section 4.3.6 C (15) should be clarified to make it clear there is regarding open flags. The language regarding open signs needs to be separated into its own sub-section..

Page 184, 4.3.6 C (16) – This section is regarding free-standing signs or sandwich boards that are considered exempt and can be located on the sidewalk as long as they don't block pedestrians flow.

Page 186, 4.3.6 F (2) - Theater marquees should not be a specific category. Consider the size of the community and the theatre that currently exist here (Grange Hall, Waterbury Festival Playhouse).

Page 188, 4.3.6 G (3) – It needs to be stated that the maximum sign size is 40 sq. ft. and then the total allowed signage for a building should be based on the total square footage of the building. This needs to be included in the draft to give a maximum limit of the amount of signage allowed for one parcel and a given building. Using the linear footage of the front of the building as noted in the chart on page 191 should be discussed more as an alternative to using the total floor area of a building and the basis of a formula to determine the amount of allowed signage.

Page 188, 4.3.6 G (3) (a) The full intention of the 2nd sentence, “If the support structure will be visually prominent ...” was questioned and it was agreed to take out it out.

4.3.6 G (2) (c) – It was agreed that it would be very difficult to enforce turning off sign lights when a business is closed and should be taken out.

Page 185 4.3.6 D (12) – It was suggested to delete the language prohibiting the use of obscene, lewd, vulgar or indecent words or images. Steve suggested reviewing this language with our attorney to see it can be retained to help prevent these messages from occurring.

Page 189, 4.3.6 G (4) - This section regarding Sign Removal should be moved down with the Non-conforming signs subsection and 4.3.6 G (4) (a) should be deleted. The length of time a sign can remain after a use is discontinued (180) days may be too long a period.

Page 185, 4.3.6 D (11) – This sub-section is under Prohibited Signs. It was agreed that “feather signs” should be allowed as temporary banners. Temporary banners should be allowed with a provision similar to Sub-section 801.5(c)(1) in our current regulations.

Page 182, 4.3.6 (C) (2) – Political campaign signs were discussed. They may be addressed as exempt under state statute. Steve will follow up on this. It was recommended by Ken that Waterbury should not try to regulate political signs and any provisions should be deleted from the draft.

Page 181, 4.3.6 (d) – In this Purpose section, it was recommended that the current language that is “ensure that signs aid orientation” should be changed to some other wording option. However it was agreed that this is an important function of signs that should be mentioned in the Purpose section.

The discussion shifted to which sections need policy level discussion, and which sections need to be returned to Brandy with the Planning Commission and staff comments in order to create a 2nd draft of those sections?

Steve distributed a copy of the Table of Contents for the draft zoning re-write with sections and sub-sections highlighted for further consideration over the next month. The yellow shaded sections are those that Steve reviewed with Bill Shepeluk, the Municipal Manager, and Bill Woodruff, the Public Works Director. These sections relate to both the administration of the zoning regulations by municipal staff and municipal infrastructure such as water and sewer utilities, stormwater management, and roads. Some of these items, such as requiring Certificates of Compliance for projects going through site plan review, involve policy issues. The blue highlighted sections are those that deal with both technical and policy issues that Steve recommends the Planning Commission discuss and make recommendations in conjunction with the zoning re-write.

The next Planning Commission meeting on April 9th was discussed. The following outline for that meeting was agreed on:

1. Focus on what the changes and edits that we need Brandy to do prior to the end of her contract on April 30, 2018.
2. Prioritize which sections to discuss since the Planning Commission does not have time to get to all of them. The following priorities for the meeting on April 9th were agreed on:
 - a. Chapter 3 - Zoning Districts - the proposed zoning maps, and dimensional and density standards.
 - b. Design Review, and Ridgelines, Hillsides and Steep Slopes Overlay Districts.
3. Ken would like to have a statement drafted and added indicating what the overall intent of the new regulations is.
4. Mary wants the minutes that include specific comments, including those for the upcoming meeting on April 9th, be sent to Brandy since the Planning Commission is not able to find a time when the Commissioners are available to meet with her again. Steve agreed to meet with Brandy in mid-April to review the Planning Commission's comments and edits to be incorporated in the draft re-write by her.
5. A request was made that Brandy provide the GIS data that she compiled in association with the proposed zoning maps. Steve will follow up with Brandy to get this data. The data deals with comparing the existing conditions to the changes proposed for the districts, especially those in the Village of Waterbury. This relates to what how those districts will change and what they may look like as a result of the new zoning requirements.

OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION BUSINESS:

Planner's Report:

1. Steve distributed a draft letter addressed to the Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) to support the application for a planning grant to do a feasibility study for a possible Community Center in Waterbury. The letter is from Ken as the Chair of the Planning Commission.

Eric Gross moved and Mary Koen seconded the motion to authorize Ken Belliveau to sign the letter of support on behalf of the Planning Commission for the VCDP planning grant application to study a Community Center.

Vote: Approved 3 - 0

2. Floodplain Management Working Group update: The next meeting is on May 15th and will include a review of the draft River Corridor map being revised by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and the state Dept. of Environmental Conservation.

3. Update on State permitting activity. There is an Act 250 hearing on Tuesday, 3/27 on the proposed Parro's gun shop and indoor shooting range on U.S. Route 2.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Spence
Secretary