

WATERBURY PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING

Approved Minutes
Monday, January 27, 2020

Planning Commission: Ken Belliveau, Chair; Katya D'Angelo; Eric Gross; Martha Staskus

Staff: Steve Lotspeich, Community Planner

Public: Lefty Sayah; Alyssa Johnson, Economic Development Director; Judy Foregger; Rob Foregger; Dave Lachtrupp

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m. in the 2nd floor conference room in the Steele Block located at 46 N. Main Street.

AGENDA REVIEW AND MODIFICATIONS

There were no modifications to the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Ken Belliveau announced that he is running for the Select Board. If elected, his position on the Planning Commission will be open.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

The minutes for the Planning Commission Special Meeting held on January 6, 2020 were reviewed.

MOTION:

Eric Gross moved and Katya D'Angelo seconded the motion to approve the minutes of January 6, 2020 as amended.

Vote: The motion was approved 4 – 0.

DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION FUND GRANT APPLICATION

Steve Lotspeich reviewed the memo that he and Barb Farr sent to the Planning Commission on January 24th regarding the Town applying for additional state Downtown Transportation Fund money to support streetscape amenities associated with the reconstruction of Main Street. Steve explained that the bid for the wayfinding kiosks and signs exceeded the budget in the first Downtown Transportation Fund grant so additional funds are necessary to pay for those kiosks and signs as well as other items. The other items include benches, hanging basket infrastructure, and trash/recyclable receptacles.

The resolution that authorizes the submittal of the grant application requires a positive recommendation by the Planning Commission so the resolution and grant application can be reviewed and approved by the Select Board.

MOTION:

Eric Gross moved and Katya D'Angelo seconded the motion that the Planning Commission recommends that the Select Board members sign and approve applying for the Downtown

Transportation Fund Grant.

Vote: The motion passed 4 – 0.

DISCUSS THE DRAFT HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT BYLAW AMENDMENTS

The Planning Commission discussed the public hearing on Draft #1 of the Historic Overlay District Bylaws dated January 6, 2020, that is scheduled for February 10th starting at 7:15 p.m. The Planning Commission asked Steve Lotspeich to give a brief overview of the bylaw amendments at the hearing. It is anticipated that there will be plenty of questions and comments from the owners of the historic properties. Steve offered to give some of the history of the six existing historic districts and how the concern was raised about the demolition and replacement of historic buildings as well as additions to existing historic structures. The presentation should address what the bylaw amendments will and won't impact for the property owners. Exemptions should also be addressed including the replacement of windows and doors. Ken recommended we schedule an hour for the public hearing.

Section 1610, Administrative Approval, was discussed. The issue is whether the Development Review Board can serve in an advisory capacity to the Zoning Administrator and recommend approvals for applications involving one- and two-family dwellings. Steve is going to get a legal opinion regarding this issue. The Stowe Historic Overlay District bylaw regarding Administrative Approval requires that their Historical Preservation Commission advise the Zoning Administrator which is in conformance with state statute. If this is an issue we can still hold the Planning Commission public hearing then this section of the bylaw amendments can be discussed further and a resolution can be worked out.

After the public hearing is closed, the Planning Commission can have further discussion of the draft bylaw amendments and decide how to proceed.

DISCUSS DRAFT UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT BYLAWS

The Planning Commission resumed the discussion of Section 3.3.2, the Dimensional Table and the proposed zoning maps. Ryan Darlow, the consultant that did the GIS analysis of the existing and proposed zoning districts on a pro-bono basis, is out of town and was not available to attend the Planning Commission meeting. The Planning Commission decided to invite Ryan and his colleague John Zimmerman to the second Planning Commission meeting in February that is scheduled for the 24th. Steve will confirm whether they can attend that meeting.

The single location map showing the four large parcels off Loomis Hill Rd. and Sweet Rd. that Steve presented at the last Planning Commission meeting, was distributed. Steve will prepare a map for the meeting on February 24th that will show the constraining natural resources such as wetlands, prime agricultural soils and steep slopes in these rural areas. It was noted that the mapping on the state's Natural Resource Atlas is broad brush and generally needs to be ground-truthed if it is to be used in a regulatory setting.

The density analysis comparing the existing and proposed zoning for rural areas was discussed including the possibility that the potential number of dwelling units for the larger parcels in these areas would be reduced significantly. Rob Foregger asked why the density changes in these areas might be required. He feels that it would be unfair to the owners of large parcels, especially considering that many of those landowners have not been subdividing and developing most if not all

of their property. He commented that reducing allowed density could take away potential value from the owners of these properties. Rob feels that the large landowners have been singled out in this proposed zoning. Ken Belliveau commented this is part of a compromise to reduce density in rural areas while adding allowed density in our village areas. This issue was brought to the Planning Commission's attention in conjunction with the last re-write of the Municipal Plan in 2017-2018. Ken commented that down-zoning large areas of a municipality is difficult and controversial. The Planning Commission wants to see how parcels of various sizes will be impacted by the proposed bylaw amendments. Increasing density within and nearby village areas where public utility infrastructure is available was also discussed.

Dave Lachtrupp commented that the proposed zoning for rural areas doesn't take duplexes into consideration. A duplex or a single-family dwelling should be allowed on a lot of the minimum size. The current Dimensional Table only takes into consideration the area needed for single dwelling units and not duplexes.

The action items for the meeting on February 24th include the following:

1. Invite Ryan Darlow and John Zimmerman to attend to discuss their GIS analysis work.
2. Review the analysis prepared by Steve Lotspeich for several large lots on Blush Hill Rd. comparing the allowed density under the existing and proposed zoning.
3. Review the available natural resource data for the rural areas of Waterbury as they relate to allowed density.

Concern was expressed regarding the long, extended time frame for completing the review and modification the draft Unified Development Bylaws. It was agreed to discuss options for how the drafting of the bylaws should take place. For instance, should we consider breaking down the project and bylaws into more manageable parts or phases as opposed to one very large project. Could the proposed zoning districts be simplified in different way? This topic will be scheduled for discussion at a future Planning Commission meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Planner's Report:

1. The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Preparedness/Management Plan is being prepared by the consultant, Redstart Natural Resource Management from Bradford, Vermont. The Town Tree Committee completed the roadside ash inventory last fall and that data is being incorporated into the Plan. Specimen ash trees such as those in our cemeteries and along streets can be treated systemically with insecticide to prevent infestation by the EAB.
2. The Design Committee for Revitalizing Waterbury is working on a public art project in conjunction with the Main St. Reconstruction project. Regarding the reconstruction of Main St., parking will be better delineated by the new granite curbing which will be beneficial to Waterbury village.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Steve Lotspeich, Acting Secretary