

WATERBURY PLANNING COMMISSION
APPROVED MINUTES
Monday, July 27, 2015

Planning Commission: Rebecca Washburn, Chair; Ken Belliveau; Mary Koen; Judi Kamien

Staff present: Steve Lotspeich, Community Planner

Public Present: Don Schneider, Select Board; Kathi Grace, resident

Rebecca Washburn called the Planning Commission (PC) meeting to order at 7:00 pm

AGENDA REVIEW

No changes to the agenda were made.

COMMENTS FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC

No members of the general public were present.

DISCUSS WATERBURY FLOOD HAZARD AREA REGULATIONS

Becca gave a summary of what was agreed to at the last meeting:

1. No net rise in BFE was agreed to.
2. Historic structures: If partial exemption approved by FEMA then we would go with that. FEMA has given Rebecca Pfeiffer their concurrence that this is a viable option. We are still waiting on written confirmation. The fall back is a complete exemption.
3. For elevation of non-historic structures, a two part recommendation would be as follows:
 - a. Substantially improved structures - two feet above the 1% (100 yr.)
This would give extra protection, but not total protection for an event such as Tropical Storm Irene that exceeded the 1% flood by approximately 2½ feet. The cost benefit data from the Milone & McBroom study supports this option.
 - b. New construction would be either:
 - a. one foot above the .2% (500 yr.) flood level
 - or if a. is not excepted then , b. two feet above 1% (100 yr.) flood level

There was discussion of the need for a written guide to permitting under the Flood Hazard Area Regulations that is a companion to the regulations. The Town of Richmond, Vermont has developed this type of guide.

The date of a joint meeting with the Select Board and Trustees to present the revised draft amendments was discussed. The Select Board meets on Monday, August 17th and the Trustee and Trustees may be available to attend as well. Dates that are not good for the Planning Commission were discussed. Mary will not be attending the Planning Commission meeting on August 10th. The other Mondays in August look fine.

In terms of a document to present to the Select Board and Trustees, the Planning Commission would like it to be in an outline form with options spelled out. The draft of the amendments to

the Flood Hazard Area Regulations would then be prepared based on the input from the elected officials taken into consideration. The Planning Commission would then schedule a public hearing on this revised draft of the amendments.

DISCUSS DEVELOPING A WORK PLAN FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

The following items of a work plan for the Planning Commission for the upcoming year were discussed:

1. Consider applying for a Municipal Planning Grant to fund a study for Waterbury to identify non-floodplain areas for future higher density residential and commercial development and possibly serve those areas with the Village's public water and wastewater system. The community is growing and many of the areas that are zoned for higher density development are becoming built out. A study would help determine where future growth would take place. There would be a public visioning process regarding what people want their community to look like in the future. The fact that Route 100 is being re-paved is helping to drive interest in this issue including where the Village's sanitary sewer system might be extended in the future.
2. Initiate a comprehensive re-write of the Zoning Regulations. Pieces of the Municipal Plan that could be reflected in a comprehensive re-write of the Zoning Regulations were discussed. This could include consideration of Form Based Code. It would be helpful to have a guidance document that would outline the process of revising the Zoning Regulations that would start with a public input process.

It may be better to do a planning effort that focuses on a community land use study that doesn't use buzz words such as "growth center" but would focus more on specific goals for the community. The scattered development criteria in Act 250 that was recently amended by the state Legislature should be looked at. A proposal should be run past partners such as Revitalizing Waterbury that would be part of a visioning process. This study would start with a community conversation about planning. It would incorporate some of the goals in the Municipal Plan such as developing siting standards for renewable energy facilities. Some of these provisions would not be reflected in amendments to the Zoning Regulations because these facilities are exempt from local zoning. Other goals would be reflected in amendments to the Zoning Regulations.

It will be helpful to know about issues such as water and sewer and how they impact land use. Sanitary sewer tends to be a much greater constraint or opportunity for development than public water availability. Higher density development generally requires a large amount of sewer capacity.

Steve offered to put together a project description for the next meeting that could become the basis for a grant application for the Municipal Planning Grant program. The deadline for that program is in September. This could be a two phase project that would start with a planning component and lead to a second phase of amending the Zoning Regulations. Once a project is defined a budget can be developed as well.

It was recommended to get the minutes from the last time this topic was discussed by the Planning Commission and find the list of tasks that were identified at that time. The task list

should be put in a document that can be made available and modified/updated over time.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

The draft minutes of July 13, 2015 were reviewed.

MOTION:

Mary Koen moved and Ken Belliveau seconded the motion to approve the minutes of 7/13/15.

VOTE:

The motion passed unanimously.

PLANNER'S REPORT

A grant application will be submitted to the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund to print and distribute the 4th Anniversary Tropical Storm Irene leaflet. This will include interviews of people who were impacted by Tropical Storm Irene.

Next PC meeting: Monday, August 10th, 2015, at 7:00 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Addressed at 7/13 and/or 7/27 meeting

1. Schiff to the next joint meeting
2. Bring some specific examples of existing and proposed residential and commercial building elevation projects. Status: Rebecca has, to be presented at future meeting.
3. Find out about partial exemptions from the substantial improvement requirements and if FEMA allows them. Status: R Pfeiffer to submit to FEMA for reply.
4. Determine some additional educational opportunities.
5. Prepare draft amendments to present. Status: Presented 7/13/15
6. Find pictures of communities/neighborhoods where one house may be elevated but the neighboring home is not elevated.
7. Research communities that may have more aggressive regulations since Irene or Sandy in both Vermont and out of state, such as Sea Bright, NJ.
8. Get a legal opinion on whether a partial exemption from substantial improvement definition is a possibility. Status: Legal opinion obtained, waiting on FEMA opinion
11. After we hear back from FEMA, get this draft of the regulations with the changes discussed tonight, on the agenda for the Select Board and Trustees, preferably as a joint meeting, date to be determined
12. Warn a Public Hearing on the new Planning Commission draft amendments, at a date to be determined.
14. Advertise the open position on the Planning Commission.

The PC meeting was adjourned a 9:25 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen Lotspeich
Community Planner

These minutes were approved on * August 24, 2015 *
Planning Commission Approved Minutes, 07-27-15