

WATERBURY PLANNING COMMISSION

Approved Minutes

Monday, May 10, 2021

Planning Commission: Mary Koen (Vice Chair); Eric Gross; Steve Karcher; Alyssa Johnson

Staff: Steve Lotspeich, Community Planner; Patti Martin, Secretary.

Mary Koen, Vice Chair, opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m. The Planning Commission (PC) members and staff participated via Zoom.

AGENDA REVIEW AND MODIFICATIONS

The agenda was reviewed. Mary recommended we postpone the discussion to elect the chair and vice-chair for the upcoming year until a meeting when all members can attend. Mary also suggested we save 10 minutes at the end of the agenda to discuss a couple of items under other business.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no members of the public attending and no announcements were made.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION:

Steve Karcher moved and Eric Gross seconded the motion to approve the minutes of April 12, 2021, as drafted.

VOTE: The motion was approved 4 - 0.

MOTION:

Steve Karcher moved and Alyssa Johnson seconded the motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes of April 26, 2021, as amended.

VOTE: The motion was approved 4 - 0.

DISCUSS AN UPCOMING MEETING WITH CLARE ROCK, SENIOR PLANNER WITH THE CVRPC

Steve Lotspeich explained that twice every eight years, the staff of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) need to meet with the PC for a consultation. This is a requirement of both the state statute and the contract that CVRPC has with the state Agency of Commerce and Community Development. This consultation should be done relatively soon based on Clare's request that was initially made several months ago. The last consultation was about four years ago when Eric Vorwald with CVRPC assisted with drafting the 2018 Energy Plan and other aspects of the preparing and reviewing the draft 2018 Municipal Plan.

Clare Rock suggested the discussion items for the consultation via e-mail including the following:

- to share some background info on CVRPC services (for any new members) and share any recent relevant projects which may be of interest to Waterbury;
- to hear about what the PC has been working on including the recent interim zoning bylaws that were just adopted;

- to ask if there are any needs which can be met by the CVRPC such as suggested trainings. As an example, CVRPC recently went to the PC with the Town of Cabot for a consult. Since they have some new members they requested a training on the Essentials of Land Use Planning, so that assistance was subsequently organized.

Alyssa suggested getting some specific questions for Clare prepared in advance. She is interested in discussing the requirements of the state Open Meeting Law. Also, the housing chapter in the Municipal Plan should be discussed but Alyssa suggested we may want to further access our planning efforts on housing prior to meeting with Clare on that issue.

Eric would like to be more prepared and identify the needs that the PC has for assistance prior to meeting with Clare.

Mary expressed that the training aspect would be useful to discuss and get additional information on. We have new members that may find training on essentials of land use planning to be worthwhile. In addition, the PC hasn't discussed the Municipal Plan in some time so would need to be more prepared on that topic. It was recommended to have two meetings with Clare that would be in order, the first being a general consultation and the second being a training. Steve will check with Clare to see if there is any cost associated with the training.

The consensus was to check with Clare to see if she is available to attend the PC meeting on June 28th.

DISCUSS THE REVISIONS TO THE INTERIM BYLAWS FOR THE DOWNTOWN ZONING DISTRICT ADOPTED BY THE SELECT BOARD ON APRIL 26TH.

Steve reviewed the main changes that were made by the Select Board, as documented in the minutes of their public hearing and meeting on April 26th:

1. There was discussion about the possibility of taking the three Foundry Street properties out the proposed Downtown zoning district and put them back in the current Industrial District to address the issue of the maximum size for the industrial uses and the maximum building footprint. After discussing this option, the Select Board decided to keep these parcels in the Downtown zoning district and go to a 10,000 square foot maximum building footprint.
2. After discussing the comments at the public hearing the Select Board decided to change the upper limit for the size for the Food and Beverage Manufacturing, Light Industrial, and Specialty School uses to 10,000 sq. ft. to match the 10,000 sq. ft. maximum building footprint to allow one of those uses to fill the entire space in an existing or new larger building.
3. The definition of Restaurant/Bar was simplified, taking out the sentence regarding the percent of the floor area that could be dedicated to on-site seating to meet the definition.

Mary expressed concern with the increase to a 10,000 square feet maximum building footprint in this district. She is very concerned about the impact of a large building that could be constructed near existing residential buildings. Alyssa offered her perspective that new buildings could be designed to be "in character" with the area. She is concerned that a worthwhile commercial or residential project would not be allowed if the footprint were to be limited to 5,000 square feet. Steve confirmed the input from the Select Board and some community members that the PC recommendations for limiting the square footage of certain uses and the maximum building footprint were too restrictive for the proposed industrial and residential uses in the Downtown Waterbury area.

Alyssa commented that a member of the public asked for some comparisons between the proposed interim bylaws and the requirements in the current zoning regulations. Alyssa hoped that this was something that could be created. An example of the comparison is, currently there are no restrictions on maximum building footprint in the Downtown area.

CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS AND POSSIBLE PHASING FOR THE DRAFT UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT BYLAW

Steve reviewed the recommendations in his document “Proposal for the First Phase of Implementing the Unified Development Bylaw”.

He reviewed the Base Zoning District Map from the draft Unified Development Bylaw that shows the municipal wastewater district. This map reflects the Future Development Study that the Planning Commission did in about 2017. Steve offered to provide additional documentation and details on the draft base zoning district map (revised 30 May 2018) especially for those areas where higher density is proposed beyond the current municipal wastewater service area. Steve also reviewed a map that he generated that shows parcels to the north of Colbyville that could be included in the proposed Tourism Business zoning district that has been discussed by the PC previously.

Alyssa recommended limiting the focus of the first phase of “permanent” bylaws to the area of Waterbury Village between the I-89 and the Winooski River. This would involve about five new zoning districts including the Downtown zoning district. Mary expressed concern that this was too many districts to include in the first phase.

Mary proposed and it was agreed to focus on the three to five zoning districts to possibly include: Downtown, Mixed Use, Residential 10, Industrial, and Institutional. It was agreed that this would be a more manageable approach.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Steve L. reviewed the next steps for hiring a new Zoning Administrator (ZA) in light of Dina Bookmyer-Baker’s retirement in early July of this year. For the Town of Waterbury, the hiring process is in accordance with state statute:
 - a. The PC conducts interviews and nominates the ZA, Acting ZA, or Assistant ZA as part of the hiring process.
 - b. The nomination(s) goes to the Select Board and they interview and appoint the candidate for a three-year term.
 - c. Models for the positions other than the one currently being used in Waterbury may be considered by the municipality.
 - d. The PC would like to meet with Dina at the next PC meeting on May 24, with a goal to get her perspective on her tenure with the town and the ZA position.
2. The municipal manager is recommending that the Town boards and commissions can meet in person again in June. They will be hybrid meetings using the new OwlPRO camera so people can still participate remotely if desired.
3. The Zoning Administrator’s report was distributed prior the meeting by email. The format changes requested at the last meeting have been made.

4. It was suggested to have an agenda item similar to the Select Board that would be “Topics for future discussion”. This would be added to the agenda for future meetings, so these topics can be discussed and identified in writing in the minutes.
5. The future meeting schedule for the PC was discussed briefly in terms of possibly changing the evening of the week when the meetings occur. This topic will be added to the agenda for the next PC meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be held on Monday, May 24, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Martin

Patti Martin, Secretary