

**Westfield Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 18, 2023, 6:00pm
Westfield Community Center, 59 North Hill Rd., Westfield, VT**

Attendance:

Brian Dunn, Kitty Edwards, Ellen Fox, Loren Petzoldt, Pat Sagui
Will Young, Zoning Administrator

1. Call Meeting to Order

Pat called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

2. Additions/Changes to the Agenda

None

3. Approve Minutes

A. December 4 Meeting minutes

Brian made a motion to approve the minutes. Kitty seconded. Minutes approved.

B. December 5 Hearing minutes

Loren made a motion to approve the minutes. Brian seconded. Minutes approved.

Pat will ask LaDonna to post the Hearing minutes on the information page for the Bylaw revisions on the Town website.

4. Zoning Bylaw revisions:

•Public engagement

– Review comments received to date and draft responses

The Planning Commission reviewed all the comments sent by email. No member had comments that had been submitted to them directly. To respond to the comments, a list of topics raised in the comments was developed including the following;

-equity of limitations on development

-concerns about reduction in land value

-issues raised around the sale of development rights to a land trust or other easement

-questions about options if a landowner disagrees with the revisions

-short term rentals in the proposed conservation district

-suggestion that current use provides adequate deterrent to forest fragmentation

-parcels that straddle the proposed conservation and another zoning district

-differing estimates of land that could possibly be developed in the proposed conservation district

-question about notice mailed to owners with parcels extending above 1600 feet

-limitation of a camp of 900 square feet is overly limiting

-comments that oppose any and all limitations on development

-concerns about properties in Alpine Haven where existing infrastructure supports development

-conversion of seasonal to year round use

-ponds in the conservation district

Ellen will create a document listing these topics and read the comments again to add any additional topics. This will be reviewed at the next meeting.

– Revision options based on comments

The Planning Commission discussed options to allow development in areas that already have infrastructure such as Alpine Haven. They agreed to recommend defining the conservation district at and above 1600 feet with some exceptions. The language for this proposal will be discussed at the next meeting and forwarded to the Selectboard when the proposed revisions go to the Selectboard as a whole. The PC also discussed concerns about limitations on residential development in general in the proposed conservation district. Consideration was given to these concerns and the PC recommends that residential development and accessory structures be permitted with conditional use review in the proposed conservation district. In the current proposal, planned unit development is already proposed as a conditional use and home occupations are exempt in the proposed district.

ZA revisions recommendations/questions

Mention hydro generated power in the specific uses

Rearrange the specific uses to be in alphabetical order

Accessory dwelling definition- include 2 household dwelling, multi-household dwelling

Removal of a building in the river corridor requires a permit

Create a definition of destructive event

Remove the criteria of a “monthly” fee from definition of self storage

Subdivision- require a plat of only the affected area to record a subdivision in the town record

Will also requested that the Planning Commission decide and make clear the requirement (or not) of permit and a survey to convey a lot in a specific situation. The situation is when adjoining lots are owned in the same name and joined for tax purposes, and described as separate parcels in a deed, though there is no survey for the piece of land to be conveyed. The PC will edit the language in the proposed Bylaw to be clear that when a lot is subdivided, a permit is required and a survey is required to be recorded in the Town Records. This prevents boundary disputes and promotes accurate and transparent land sales. If a survey already exists, that survey may be used to make the permit application.

5. Village Wastewater Project

A zoom meeting for the consultant to present a Scope of Work is scheduled for January 19 from 2-3 pm.

6. Other Business

None

7. Next Meeting

January 8, 2024 at 6 pm

8. Adjourn

Kitty made a motion to adjourn. Ellen 2nd, motion passed and meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Meeting minute respectfully submitted by Ellen Fox