

Planning Commission Special Meeting Minutes
Friday., Feb. 10, 2023: 2:30
Twitchell Building

Committee Members Attending: Maryann Morris (remotely), Larry Gubb, Dick Dale, Elsie Smith, Sharon Crossman, Heather Stephenson, Mimi Lines

Attending: Shelly Handler, Paul Handler, Robin Key, David Key, Patricia Gagnon, Will Goodwin

1. Meeting was called to order at 2:40 PM
2. There were no additions or deletions.
3. Public Comment: was postponed.
4. The Planning Committee reviewed the multi-layered map prepared by Heather from several sources focusing on the five different areas designated as part of the Conservation District. The purpose was to better understand lands that were already conserved, lands that were in "current use" meaning that the owners had taken advantage of the tax deductions associated with forest land management, lands that were National Forest or State parks and forest land, town owned properties, lands above 1400 feet, and to understand which lands were not protected from development now. The Planning Commission came away with a much better understanding of properties affected by the creation of the new conservation district. Sharon reminded the PC of the stated purpose and mission creating the conservation district from the proposed Bylaws. It was agreed that if the altitude was increased from 1400 feet to 1600 feet, fewer property owners would fall within the boundaries of the conservation district. The PC acknowledged that the five areas of the conservation district were somewhat different in character. It was agreed that there was a need to protect against development in the future, but most of the current landowners were already dedicated to conservation at present. It was agreed that many owners of lands within the district really wanted to preserve the ability to create small acres so that children and grandchildren could erect their own houses which would not be possible under the rules governing the conservation district. Much time was devoted to trying to understand how to accomplish the purpose and mission of creating the district without limiting the possibility of smaller plots available for family home construction. It was agreed that incentives and education were needed to encourage conservation and timbering set-asides. It was agreed the Conservation Commission should be consulted with respect to how best to preserve animal corridors and contiguous forest given both the Conservation overlay which exists now, the difficulty building in wetlands and as the land becomes much steeper making it more difficult to provide appropriate wastewater and water issues, road maintenance, and other issues related to Act 250. It was agreed that thirty acres is too large a minimum lot size especially because all of the lands in question are currently R-3 zoned with much already conserved. There is agreement that the way lands are used at present works well and that the future needs to preserve that usage from developers. There is a need to not be perceived in creating the conservation district that punishes current landowners, but accomplishes the mission and purpose in creating the district into the future. The PC next took up Will's answers to four issues he was asked to weigh-in on. It was agreed that there needed to be a site plan review for two two-family homes for each of the districts especially with respect to conditional use. It was agreed that 3224 for festivals and outdoor concerts needed to add clarifying language for outdoor use with respect to one time use, noise generated, traffic, versus more frequent events. It was agreed that petting zoos and sleighrides be added to permitted uses in 3228.B. It was agreed that current signs above roof lines be grandfathered in as voted in the Nov. 2 meeting is appropriate. Much discussion concerning how to distinguish between what is normal maintenance and what happens when a foundation foot print is changed or more that fifty percent of the value is changed and if a permit is required. The concern is that the current language does not limit the scope of such a project which might be out of character of the surrounding buildings. Will Goodwin will consult the listers and prepare for the meeting on Feb. 22 appropriate language.
5. Public comment: Mr. Handler raised a number of issues related to the impact of Planned Unit Development and the number of dwelling units that could be by a careful reading of pages 3-88 and 3-92 especially in number of units permitted and how the lot coverage formulas covered in 3302 F and 3302 G would be applied. In studying the issue, the members of the PC were confused as to what is permitted and what is not. Mr. Handler suggested specific clarifying language with respect to the size of permitted housing, number of units permitted, and open space requirements that would limit the number of dwelling units in the residential zone that would specifically preserve the "current character" currently existing under the R-1 current zoning regulations and intended in the new one acre minimum size in the residential district. Patricia Gagnon is concerned about the rationale used to designate her property as residential, but not her immediate neighbors

who are designated as Village Residential especially with respect to differing road frontage requirement and lot coverage. She will send to the PC a letter with the five or six other objections with change in category from Village Residential in the current bylaws versus the new residential district especially in light of the money spent to get permits several years ago to allow her to subdivide her property. She was assured that her previous letter was read and that her concerns would be addressed before the draft goes to a hearing.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 PM.
7. The next regular meeting of the PC is Feb. 13 at the Town Office Building at 3:00 PM and a special meeting will be scheduled for the PC to meet with Brandy Saxton on Feb. 22, 2023 at 2:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dick Dale