

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of August 3, 2022**

The meeting was held at the Community Room of the Brown Public Library, and was also streamed via the Town GoToMeeting account for the benefit of those unable to attend in person.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Hill-Eubanks.

**Roll Call:** Present for the meeting were Commissioners Laura Hill-Eubanks, Ruth Ruttenberg, Aaron Rhodes and Chandra Blackmer, all attending remotely. Nancy Peck was absent. Clerk Mitch Osiecki hosted the meeting from the Community Room.

**Set/Adjust Agenda:** There are no new updates from JuliBeth Hinds, so she did not attend the meeting.

**Public Participation:** None.

**Zoning Regulation Updates:**

JuliBeth wants to host some visits to selected sites around town in order to help residents better visualize proposed changes in building setback regulations. The PC should help identify three or four properties for people to visit for this purpose. We will have to spend some time to identify good candidates for this.

Discussion ensued as to whether reducing setbacks would offer any meaningful opportunity for denser development in the village anyway. Does reducing setbacks do anything to promote increased development in the village?

Further discussion of minimum lot sizes, maximum allowable number of dwelling units on a lot, etc.

Potentially, members of the Select Board or other public bodies could be invited to these site visits in October. The event should be warned as a joint meeting if there's a possibility of a quorum of other public bodies being in attendance.

Laura asked members to think about properties that might be good candidates to be included for site visits.

Brief discussion of Air BNB rentals. The consensus opinion was that the PC does not wish to deter the usage of properties as Air BNB rentals. However, the zoning regulations should treat Air BNB and innkeepers equitably.

There was also discussion of the proposal to invite interested stakeholders to attend a workshop focusing on some particular sections of the zoning bylaws that might be of interest to those members of the community.

Some members of the PC voiced confusion about whether the PC should attend this workshop. A particular concern was raised about whether someone might speak to community members on behalf of the PC and offer assurances that the PC would then be unable to deliver on. The PC will have to discuss the format of this meeting in more detail with JuliBeth next month.

There was also some brief discussion of the Floodplain Regulations. The updated FEMA standards are quite a bit different from the current Northfield Zoning Bylaws. It will probably useful to invite Ned Swanberg to a meeting in the fall to discuss this topic in a little more detail.

Mitch asked on behalf of Jeff whether JuliBeth will be submitting any invoices for reimbursement of some of her work. Laura responded that JuliBeth has submitted some invoices, but they were sent to an email account that the PC does not use frequently. Laura will forward those invoices to Jeff.

Brief update from the Conservation Commission. There is a project in the works that will result in a number of new trees being planted around town this fall.

**Approval of Minutes:** Ruth moved to approve minutes of June 8; Aaron seconded. (One edit noted in regards to the Northfield BESS electric battery storage facility on King Street. Will add a sentence stating that the PC will issue a letter advising that the site should include plantings to screen the site to the extent practical. **Motion passed, 4-0.**

**Next Regular Meeting:** September 7, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** Ruth moved to adjourn; Aaron seconded. **Motion passed, 4-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm.