

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of January 11, 2023

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 6:18 pm by Chair Laura Hill-Eubanks.

Roll Call: Present for the meeting were Commissioners Laura Hill-Eubanks, Nancy Peck, Ruth Ruttenberg, Chandra Blackmer, and Aaron Rhodes. Laura Hill-Eubanks, Ruth Ruttenberg, Nancy Peck, Aaron Rhodes attended the meeting from the Community Room, along with Clerk Mitch Osiecki. Economic Development Director Tom Davis participated remotely, as did Chandra Blackmer, who joined the meeting in progress (*Edit: time?*)

Set/Adjust Agenda: No adjustments to the agenda.

Minutes: Ruth commented that several items in the minutes read as though the decision has been made to change language in the regulations (noting, for instance, the use of the word “should” rather than “could.”

Mitch responded that he would take another look at the minutes to ensure minutes reflect whether or not decision to change regulatory language has been made.

Nancy Peck commented that the minutes are too detailed.

Mitch responded that he attempted to have minutes reflect all significant discussion points. The December meeting was long and we covered a lot of ground.

Zoning Regulation Updates:

Ruth commented that it is her desire that the zoning regulations be readable by the average person.

Is it possible to cite state statute, perhaps in an appendix to the regulations? One challenge is that state statutes are amended or revised from time to time. If our regulations copy statutory language, we run the risk of seeing our regulations become obsolete if a statute is updated.

The group reviewed comments embedded in the shared zoning reg document, clearing those comments that have been resolved.

Completed this work through Article 2.6.10 (Lot Line Adjustments).

Laura asked members to review the "To do list" document.

Also asked members to think about whether we should try to schedule an additional work session like tonight's meeting. If so, think about dates that could work.

Future discussion item: Town has petitioned the powers that be to consider expanding the defined Designated Village Center area to also include the Freight Yard Way properties. Update PC on status of that project. Having Freight Yard Way properties designated as being part of the Village Center would allow additional development uses for this property beyond simply Industrial ones.

Proposed Use Table

The Proposed Use Table JuliBeth shared with the PC was one example of many – it is the uses allowed under Middlebury's regulations. Th PC will need to discuss their comfort level with "Middlebury-style" uses.

Northfield could approve a set of uses much like Middlebury's or alternatively, could approve a set of uses slightly or even vastly different.

Other Business

Housing Task Force meets Friday, January 13 at 2:00pm. PC members are welcome to attend. Will share meeting minutes for the benefit of those who do not.

Ruth Ruttenberg asked that Tom Davis share any comments he has to offer on the current draft zoning regulations.

Also, Charlie Morse was unable to attend tonight, but submitted a set of comments. Mitch will pass those comments along to Chandra.

Approval of Minutes: Ruth moved to table approval of minutes of December 4; Aaron Rhodes seconded.

Vote to approve: 5-0.

Adjournment: Nancy Peck moved to adjourn; Ruth Ruttenberg seconded.

Vote to approve: 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm.