

Meeting Notes
North Bennington Planning Commission
Wednesday February 22, 2023

The meeting was held at the Depot office and was called to order at 7:02 PM by Co-Chair, Kim Hall. Other Commission members present were Chris Damon, Bob Howe, and Mary Rogers. Members Matthew Patterson and Steve Lenox were unable to attend. No members of the public were present.

Kim Hall made a motion to accept the Minutes of the January 18th meeting. This was seconded by Chris Damon and so voted.

Mr. Howe asked if the current bylaw addresses whether short-term rentals are permitted. Mr. Damon explained that the bylaw states any use not specifically permitted is, by default, not permitted. This holds for any use in any district. Mr. Hall stated that the current review underway hopes to clarify the status of various use categories whether permitted, not permitted, conditional, and whether and what types of site plan reviews may apply.

The Commission had no update on recruitment efforts. Mr. Hall provided a brief but comprehensive status update to Village Trustees on February 7th regarding Commission activities and progress.

There was significant discussion about whether a text or tabular approach to Section 6 would be most beneficial to readers and Zoning Administrators. A text version would detail each type of district and various permitted or condition uses, and dimensional requirements. A tabular approach would present summary tables listing a host of potential uses in rows, with columns for each district. A coded legend for the various permitted or conditional uses, and dimensional requirements would be noted for each row and column. Descriptive text detailing the legend and conditions follow the chart. A similar chart would be constructed for dimensional requirements. Mr. Hall noted the ease of reading charts and motions to adopt a tabular approach to Section 6. Mr. Howe seconded the motion which was so voted.

Mr. Hall reviewed the current draft Index, noting a new Chapter 7 – Performance Standards. This follows a layout of logical progression of information segregating administrative procedures from individual district parameters from regulatory review criteria. The draft title, Development Performance Standards was misunderstood by some members and was changed to Project Review Criteria.

Mr. Hall proceeded with a page-by-page review starting with Section 4.3 of the latest draft document. The following edits were noted:

- 4.3.1 - Decision - will add major and minor classification criteria.
- 4.3.1 – Permit Expiration & Extension – add language to have DRB determine length of permit, whether 1, 2, or 3 years.
- 4.3.3 – Review Criteria – change figure reference to Section 7
- 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 – change references for holding of Village land records to the Town of Bennington

No other questions arose in Section 4 and none were previously submitted by email. Ms. Rogers made a

motion to accept Section 4 of the draft with the edits noted above and proceed to Section 5 review at the next meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Damon and voted affirmatively.

Mr. Hall conveyed to the Commission that Ron Hachey, Village ZA, was in favor of the Permitting / Inspections /Standards Checklist and would begin using it. The checklist was reviewed last month and appears in section 4.2.9.

The next meeting is set for Wednesday March 15, 2023. This is a departure from the meeting calendar currently posted on the website but is needed to accommodate member schedules. The Website Calendar will be updated. The annual municipal consultation with Planning Commissions and the Bennington County Regional Commission will be on the March agenda.

Mr. Damon motioned to adjourn at 8:40 PM, seconded by Mr. Howe and so voted.

Prepared by Mary Rogers

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