

The meeting was held at the Depot office and was called to order at 7:00 PM by Co-Chair, Mary Rogers. Other Commission members present were Chris Damon, Kim Hall, Steve Lenox, and Joe Macbeth. Members Matthew Patterson and Bob Howe were unable to attend. Homeowners Sandra Magsamen and Mark Barry were in attendance.

Mr. Macbeth made a motion to accept the Minutes of the September 20th meeting with no corrections or revisions. This was seconded by Mr. Lenox and so voted.

Mr. Macbeth obtained photographer Mr. Schiffner's permission to use what will be the cover for the Zoning Bylaw final document. Mr. Macbeth will see if a higher resolution photo is available so as to have a better-quality reproduction when printed.

An appendix was added to the draft that aligns each titled section of the current draft with the same or similar section of the 2013 bylaw. It was noted that Section 7.3 of the 2013 bylaw will be added as a footnote in the current draft.

The commission discussed short term rental (STR) with Ms. Magsamen at length. Ms. Magsamen is supportive of limiting the number of short-term rentals in general but had several questions about the approach. She asked whether any survey has been done to quantify the number of rental units and STRs in North Bennington to identify such needs. Such data is not presently available. Ms. Magsamen also provided the IRS definition of an STR: the average rental period is 7 days or less per tenant and the owner provides substantial services to guests. Such services may include changing linens, providing fresh towels, cleaning the rooms during a guest's stay, providing conveniences such as a coffee maker and coffee, and providing vehicles, bikes, or excursion options. She suggested this definition is incorporated in the Bylaw.

Ms. Magsamen noted that current rules for listing one's property on STR websites prohibit parties or unruly behavior. She also noted the average stay is 2 – 3 nights and owner occupancy at time of rental is rare. She stressed the benefits to the Village of having a limited number of STRs that allow visitors to stay in the Village versus a Bennington hotel/motel for events such as weddings, graduations, college visits, family reunions and the like.

The Commission reviewed page by page questions and suggestions from members previously provided to Mr. Hall. Some further suggestions include:

- Repeating the text of section 4.1.8 in Chapter 6
- Reviewing the current Highway Department process for obtaining a curb cut and including a form on the website.
- Change 5.1.4 (g) to Bennington County Conservation District
- Changing the owner-occupied requirement for STR to Owner residency in the Village.
- A map is needed for Section 11
- Add text to address space between a fence or wall and sidewalk and visibility to the street regardless of whether a sidewalk exists.

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Ms. Rogers and Mr. Damon will suggest how our current application forms may be updated to revise applicable fees.

The next meeting is set for Wednesday November 15th at 7:00 PM at the Village Depot. Mr. Lenox made a motion to adjourn at 8:35, seconded by Mr. Macbeth and so voted.

Prepared by Mary Rogers

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