

Meeting Notes
North Bennington Planning Commission
Wednesday August 17, 2022

The meeting was held at the Depot office and was called to order at 7:10 PM. Commission members present were Chris Damon, Kim Hall, Bob Howe, and Mary Rogers. Matthew Patterson was unable to attend. Jim Sullivan, resident and BCRC representative attended.

Before the meeting began, resident David Post stopped in with questions. He was referred to the ZA for process information concerning variances.

A motion was made by Kim Hall to accept the minutes of the July 17, 2022 meeting. Chris Damon seconded the motion which was so voted.

The Rules & Procedures discussed at the July meeting were revised to note that Planning meetings will regularly be held the third Wednesday of the month. Mary made a motion, seconded by Kim, to adopt the Rules & Procedures. The motion was voted unanimously. The Rules and Procedures were signed by those in attendance and will become part of Village records and publicly available.

The matter of recruiting new members to the Planning Commission was postponed until the next meeting. Members want to hear from Matthew Patterson since he has significant experience both as a commission member and Trustee. Jim Sullivan confirmed that names are submitted to Trustees and appointed by that body.

Kim distributed a copy of the draft Contacts and Roles list. Several updates were made to the contacts. Roles need to be identified before the next meeting. Once completed, the list will be distributed to each Commission member and posted on the website. It will be an active document and updated as changes occur.

Bob Howe asked how potential changes to zoning bylaws will be reflected in the Village Plan. Jim remarked that some municipalities update the Plan first and then revise bylaws if needed. However, potential bylaw changes cannot be adopted if they conflict with the current Plan. The Commission will work simultaneously on the Village Plan as the bylaw review ensues and discrepancies are noted. Both document drafts will synchronize before suggestions are presented for public comment.

Kim distributed a proposed alternate Zoning Bylaw Table of Contents. The purpose of the revision is to present a more logical organization of contents. The current bylaw was compiled over some years from other documents and can be confusing to a reader. Changes to existing language were not presented, however, some new content was proposed such as sections on Purpose, Authority & Enactment, Appeals to Environmental Court, Planned Unit Developments, and others.

Jim Sullivan suggested proposed sections 4.12, 4.16, 4.17, and 4.18 belong together towards the end of the Administration & Enforcement section, 4.14 goes after 4.11, and 4.13 is the very end of the section.

The structure of the proposed Table of Contents was favorably received by those in attendance. No Motions or votes were taken. Attachment 1 shows the document discussed.

Kim distributed by email a proposed revised Bylaw with suggested changes clearly noted. The document is in the order of the proposed revised Table of Contents. Time did not permit page by page review of Sections 1 – 3 as hoped. This review is postponed until the September meeting.

Kim provided a third document for consideration. This is a draft of a proposed bylaw addition titled Cottage Court Developments. Cottage Courts are a specific type of planned unit development with intentional density including components of both affordable and single family units, ultimately intended for people who work in the community. A copy of this document follows as Attachment 2.

Bob questioned whether the current North Bennington map could accommodate such development. This was confirmed with several examples. Discussion was had on a variety of alternative housing options.

Mary motioned to adjourn at 8:35 PM, seconded by Bob and unanimously voted.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday September 21st at 7:00 PM, meeting room #2 at the Depot.

Prepared by Mary Rogers