

## Notes from November 30, 2010 Planning Commission Meeting

There was a discussion of meeting dates for December through February. The Planning Commission hopes to hold a public Forum in February to obtain feedback on the draft suggestions for modifications to the districts in and around the downtown that the Commission has been working on for the past year. The goal is for the PC to go through each of the districts before this meeting. Thus, the dates suggested are:

- Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 7pm – PC Meeting
- Tuesday, January 4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm – PC Meeting
- Tuesday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 7pm – PC Meeting
- Tuesday, February 1st at 7pm – PC Meeting
- Tuesday, February 8th at 7pm – PC Meeting
- Saturday, February 12<sup>th</sup> at 7pm – Public Forum
- Tuesday, February 15th at 7pm – PC Meeting

The PC members will also be discussing and drafting a poll on what districts community members feel is appropriate for extraction.

Noelle asked if there were any comments or questions about the notes from the November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

- Ken noted that he wanted “parking lots” changed to “parking and traffic areas.”
- PC members discussed the 10,000 sq ft footprint suggestions. Some members felt this might limit what could be built on a larger property and others were concerned about this still being too large. This issue was flagged as something to specifically ask about during the public forum.

Noelle then reviewed the updated use chart that she handed out at the meeting. This updated copy is on the Bristol page of Smart Growth Vermont's website as are the meeting notes (<http://www.smartgrowthvermont.org/help/cpp/communities/bristol/>). She noted that she added quarrying to the list and will need to add the extraction and quarrying definitions to the list of definitions. These definitions were developed last year and are also in the town plan.

Noelle asked the PC and members of the public if they had other thoughts.

- Someone wondered if mixed use buildings – one apartment over a business would be allowed? Do we need a separate use definition?  
*Answer: The definition of multi-family covers this. We could drop the word “rental” from that definition to broaden it further.*

There was concern that the Commission had not made a decision on whether to do site plan review. After discussion, member decided to continue with the three categories – permitted, site plan and conditional – and make a final decision after completing all the districts in and around the downtown. This was also an issue flagged as an issue to discuss at the public forum.

### Village Mixed

Discussion then turned to the next district – Village Mixed. Under current regulations, this is the Residential Office Commercial (ROC) district. Noelle reminded everyone that we would discuss each district in the following order:

- Review objectives and guidelines for the district
- Determine if the boundary is appropriate
- Review the dimensional standards
- Update the use chart
- Discuss standards for the district

### *Objectives and Guidelines*

On page 13 of the handout titled "Proposed Zoning Districts, April 2010 Draft."

Generally, members liked the proposed language. However, they felt the last sentence was a bit too strong – "While moderate-scale and incidental retail uses will be accommodated in this district, retail development deemed to be potentially detrimental to the economic viability of the downtown business district shall not be permitted." They felt that this district was within walking distance to the downtown and expansion of retail would be logical in this area.

This is an area that could be discussed at public forum: Should the zoning restrict the amount of retail development that can occur outside the downtown business district? One of the reasons for the building footprint standards is to prevent large-scale retail development that could out-compete the existing downtown.

Updated sentence: While moderate-scale and incidental retail uses will be accommodated in this district, development that would increase the amount of retail square footage to a level not commensurate with the town's population and that could impact the economic viability of the downtown by redirecting customer traffic away from existing retail areas will be discouraged.

### **District Boundaries:**

John suggested that this district should be expanded to include some of the proposed "General Business" district nearest this area to the north and change the Lathrop property to residential. After much discussion, they determined that we would review both districts and come back to boundaries.

There was also discussion if the VM around the former Autumn Harp facility be a separate district because of the differences in these areas. Noelle suggested thinking about the goals of this district and what would be appropriate if this was to be redeveloped.

### **Dimensional Standards:**

On page 13 of the handout titled "Proposed Zoning Districts, April 2010 Draft."

- The *Density* standards were acceptable
- The *Lots* standards were acceptable
- There was discussion about several of the *Principle Building* standards.
  - There was discussion again about how road setback was measured. Noelle noted that it was measured from the right-of-way and we had provided various ways for the right-of-way to be measured depending on the information available.
  - See diagram attached
  - Ken was concerned that these standards could be detrimental to an existing building if a new principle, or accessory structure was built this close to the property line. He wondered if there could be different requirements for the "next building to build?"

Answer: Could add a minimum separation distance between buildings if there are concerns about buildings being too close together (20ft?). The fact that a neighboring property owner can build something on their land that blocks your view is just a fact of life, particularly if you live on a small lot.
  - Members felt comfortable with the 10ft minimum road setback but the 40 ft maximum was not agreed upon. Noelle noted that maximums are often set in these more "urban" zones to maximize development, move buildings close to the road, and encourage side and rear parking. Some felt that a maximum was not needed, while others felt that it should be 40 or less. So this is an area for future discussion.

Answer: Another approach to this is to require new buildings to match the average setback on the block.

- Height was changed to a minimum of one story and a maximum of three stories of no more than 35 ft tall. Also add the note included that 1 stories needed to have a footprint of less than 3.000 sq ft.
- Ken had the same concern about height impacting an existing property if a three story building was built next door.
- Discussion on Footprint returned again around if there was a large property, would you be limiting the development potential. The questions – how many “principle building” and accessory structures could be allowed. Or could this only be done via PUD?  
*Answer: Through PUD you can allow multiple buildings on a site (principal and accessory) – also depending on what the final wording is two attached, but internally separated buildings might be possible even without a PUD. The town can also allow for multiple buildings on any lot, but this can become problematic if at a later point the owner wants to sell the buildings separately and due to their placement & zoning requirements the land cannot be subdivided onto separate legal lots for each building. So generally, planners discourage this practice.*
- Final decision on the Accessory Structure would be determined after more input from Noelle and Brandy on PUD and the multiple building discussion.

## **Proposed Uses:**

Review to Use Matrix – Updated November 2010

Under Household, Group Living, Healthcare and Daycare Uses the following changes were made:

- Dwelling, Multi-Family – C to SP
- Boarding House – C to SP
- Retirement Community – not allowed to SP
- Accessory Use or Building – P to C (*Noelle and Brandy had a question - What is is the reasoning behind this?*)

Under Civic, Cultural, Religions, Communication Uses, the following changes were made:

- Police Station, a use added from the last meeting, was a C
- Public Works Facility – not allowed to C
- Ken asked about “Government Offices” and the current language on page 21 in the current bylaws: “Except for Section 4413 of the Act and where, in these regulations, specifically provided to the contrary, it is no intended by these regulations...”  
*Answer: The state provision could take precedence, but by including these public uses it shows the community has thought about them and where they are most appropriate – gives town a stronger position to fight something they don’t want (such as state highway shed in a residential area). You are basically setting the town’s policy. You could be trumped by state law (or federal law in the case of religious uses particularly), but you are letting these agencies know up front what the community thinks is appropriate.*

Office and Service Uses remained the same.

Food, Lodging and Entertainment Uses, the following changes were made:

- Retreat Center – not allowed to C

Sales Uses, the following changes were made:

- Lumberyard – not permitted to C
- MC members would like to see a corner store/ convenience store allowed in this district that could sell grocery items. Another alternative was to allow a smaller-scale definition of a grocery store.  
*Answer: Could add the following use and definition – “Convenience Store. A retail establishment not greater than 5,000 square feet in area selling primarily food products, household items,*

newspapers and magazines, candy, beverages. A convenience store may offer freshly prepared foods for on-site consumption or take out, but the food preparation and dining space shall not exceed 20 percent of the store's gross floor area."

Or Class 1 Retail could specifically include a convenience store as defined above, so another use would not need to be added to the list.

Automotive Uses, the following changes were made:

- Vehicle Service – not permitted to C
- Car Wash – not permitted to C

Industrial Uses and Agriculture-, Forestry-, and Resource-Based Uses remained the same.