



RUTLAND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

City Hall – 52 Washington St. – Rutland, VT 05701
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 969 – Rutland, VT 05702
Phone: 802-773-1800

Minutes May 12, 2021

The meeting was held by teleconference due to COVID-19 protocols.

Present: Patrick Griffin (PG), Alvin Figiel (AF), Rebecca Mattis (RM), Sarah Roy (SR) and *Dave O'Brien (DO).

Also Present: Alderman Doenges, Andrew Strniste, Planning and Zoning Administrator, Brandy Saxton, Dave Cooper, Mike McClallen and Barbara Spaulding, recording secretary.

RM, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

- I. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS** – RM asked to add a discussion of resuming in-person meetings as New Business at the end of the meeting.
- II. PUBLIC COMMENT** – None.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 28, 2021.**

AF moved to approve the minutes of April 28, 2021 with the following change to the meeting schedule on page 2 from the first and third to the second and fourth Wednesdays. RM seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. OLD BUSINESS – Draft Zoning Bylaws Review with Brandy Saxton.

Brandy prepared a slide presentation for the Commission regarding the history and timeline of the draft zoning bylaws. Before starting the presentation, she introduced herself and asked the new Commissioners to introduce themselves. The presentation was in two parts starting with background and summary and concluding with picking up where the Commission left off in the Rutland City Residential Zoning Analysis and Recommendations.

Alderman Doenges asked if the site plan review could be refined now or at the end. Brandy explained that site plan review is the underpinning of multi-family housing and the gateway zoning. The review includes a broad set of standards providing for all options and all of the track changes will be available once the Commission gets through the first draft.

*Dave O'Brien arrived.

RM asked about the projected timetable. Brandy said the timetable has been revised with Chapter 3 being reviewed in early July. Chapter 3 review will provide a further understanding of the site plan review and alleviate some concerns. She said the Zoning

District chapter will be a simpler review with the need for Architectural Review of the gateways lessened. Brandy said Chapter 4 Administration is mostly dictated by state statute and Chapter 1 is the legalese, both have been previously reviewed by the prior Commission. There was further discussion regarding whether the revised timetable will provide the City with a draft necessary to satisfy the Municipal Planning Grant which has a hard deadline of September 30. Brandy believes that a draft will be created provided the schedule is followed that will satisfy the grant. The schedule calls for a minimum of two meetings per month.

Andrew added that additional changes to the draft can be made in November. Brandy said she could start a new contract with the City if the City wanted to continue paying for her services after the grant.

RM asked if the required public engagement and outreach required by the grant will be conducted within the timeline. Brandy said there may not be the ability to schedule community meetings until late August or September and that a change in the scope of work for the grant was discussed with the funder. She added that a walking tour in some neighborhoods might be feasible.

Dave Cooper asked if it is possible to start with a simpler document that is not all inclusive. DB agreed saying he had some concerns with Chapters 2 and 3 not being user friendly. Brandy said in her experience it is easier to include all available information and remove items not pertinent to the specific city/town because it is not always known what is possible to include.

Brandy continued with the Residential Zoning Analysis and Recommendations discussing the maps and how the current zoning doesn't reflect what exists on the ground. RM asked how she determined the "blocks" and Brandy explained that she used a city inventory that was provided by Tara, multi-housing data from the grand list, 911 and permits. She added that the takeaway is that the SFR district is too large and includes many non-conformities. She proposes 3 residential districts and 1 mixed-use district to accurately reflect what exists and use the proposed dimensional standards to achieve the districts. She added that current zoning is averse to the Fair Housing Law and that Rutland is vulnerable to challenge. She asked the Commissioners to review the proposed zoning map, read the report and prepare questions and comments as homework for the May 26 meeting. She also suggested reading the 2019 Housing Market Study. Brandy concluded saying bringing the zoning districts into line with what exists will provide a small amount of de-densification despite the appearance of the opposite.

Andrew said he would provide the Commissioners with the following documents:

Tonight's Presentation in pdf

2019 Housing Market Study

Tara's list of recurring issues with zoning and permitting

V. NEW BUSINESS – In person meetings.

RM asked whether Commissioners were interested in meeting in person now that people are being vaccinated. SR reminded the Commission that it is illegal to ask if people have been vaccinated and she would not be comfortable at this time meeting in person. Andrew added that there would still need to be a way for the public to participate. RM decided to follow the Board of Aldermen's lead with regard to returning to in-person meetings.

RM asked if the Commission and Zoning Bylaws Advisory Committee (ZBAG) would consider meeting on June 2 to discuss the philosophies and perceptions of the groups about the zoning bylaws draft as a whole. There was no consensus for the June 2 date and it was recommended to do a Doodle poll to find a date that worked for the majority.

VI. ADJOURN – RM moved to adjourn. AF seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 7:39 pm. The next meeting will be held May 26, 2021.

For the Commission: Barbara Spaulding, Recording Secretary