PLANNING COMMISSION
DRAFT MINUTES

TUESDAY, MAY 25, 2021 @ 11:30 AM

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

ATTENDANCE

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:
Alvin Figiel (AF)
Rebecca Mattis (RM), Chair
David O'Brien (DO)
Sarah Roy (SR).

OTHERS PRESENT:
Andrew Strniste (AS), PZA
Brennan Duffy (BD)
David Cooper (DC)

RM called the meeting to order at 11:32 AM.

I. AGENDA ITEM: ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

[11:32] No additions or deletions were submitted by any parties.

II. AGENDA ITEM: PUBLIC COMMENT

[11:32] No general public comment was provided.

III. AGENDA ITEM: NEW BUSINESS

[11:32] No discussion items were scheduled or presented under New Business.

IV. AGENDA ITEM: OLD BUSINESS – GENERAL DISCUSSION

[11:32] RM informed those in attendance that she envisioned that the purpose of the meeting was to obtain specific requests for the consultant, Brandy Saxton, as well as clarify the Commission's goals as they relate to the Zoning Bylaw rewrite. RM shared an email sent by DC outlining potential goals. DO advised that he interpretated DC's comments from the previous meeting as being in the context of a user, and then opined that Rutland would not be fixed overnight since the community got to where it is today due to a century's-worth of development. RM echoed the sentiment of having a document that is clear, consistent and user-friendly. AF provided similar input, stating that vague and simple can lead to confusion, and given the size of Rutland, the desire to have simple may not be user-friendly.

[11:45] AS provided feedback based on his experience from Underhill, VT and advised that formatting & organization, depictions within the regulations themselves, as well as providing brochures/FAQs, were all potential strategies to make the zoning regulations user-friendly. DC provided an overview of his concerns, opining that the worst-case

scenario would be to have regulations that were ambiguous and the second worst case scenario being regulations that are an obstacle. He then provided an example of where potential confusion would emerge in the regulations, specifically using references to waivers in multiple locations as an example. AS opined that terminology is important and could help resolve those types of issues. Those who have been associated with the rewrite from the initial stages opined that they did not have a sense of the totality of the project, and to date, the process and project has felt fragmented.

[12:02] AF suggested that RM talk to Brandy regarding the aforementioned concern. RM echoed the desire to have an understanding of the totality of the process and project, but also suggested moving forward with the May 26 Planning Commission meeting. RM will reach out to Brandy. AS obtained acquiescence to talk to Brandy about terminology.

[12:08] DC asked if the Commission could have a discussion on general philosophy – what everyone's position was regarding the type of bylaw to propose (with the two sides being described as laissez-faire on one side and micromanaging on the other). DC informed the Commission that his position was for less regulation with the approach of getting people to come to the City and then see incremental change over time. AF opined that the City would benefit from more tourists and people visiting or moving to the city, and that presentation along the major roads is important; since the 1970s, there are fewer interesting thins in the City. DO opined that there were a lot of inconsistencies within the City that occurred over a long period of time with no standards. BD echoed DC's perspective of less regulation, but also having regulations that the Zoning Administrator can enforce in a logical way. DO appreciated the position and inquired if the objectives were opposing to one another. AF opined that standards may not necessarily scare away developers. SR opined, based on her experience, that more details provide less confusion, and that the regulations do not have to be thick and arduous. She understands both perspectives and commented about the complexity of the City being bisected by two major roads. SR also opined that the city needs people as well as businesses. DO commented that the City has also been at a disadvantage due to the tax burden. RM provided her position, appreciating AF's comments, that beautification is something the City could focus on in the short term. DC thanked the Commission for their feedback and opined that the conversation was helpful, and recognized that everyone wants the City to be better. He then suggested that the City could lean into its industrial characteristics, encourage beautification, as well as use words like "should" and "may" in the regulations.

[12:28] DO suggested looking at other communities that have suffered from strip development. AF clarified his position, stating that he does not want the City to be like Woodstock or Manchester, but also does not want it to look like Anywhere, USA. RM informed the Commission that she felt like the goals of the meeting were achieved, and then advised that the three requests from Brandy going forward are: 1) obtaining a Table of Contents of the proposed zoning bylaws, 2) providing updated section and page numbers within the Table of Contents, which should assist in understanding the totality of the project, and 3) how the document will be structured. DO inquired about the user's experience and suggested the development of a process/flow chart. SR informed the Commission that she has training in visio-mapping

V. AGENDA ITEM: OLD BUSINESS – DISCUSSION RE: RESUMING IN-PERSON MEETINGS

[12:43] A discussion ensued about in-person meetings. RM advised that a hybrid function will be necessary. She proposed June 9 as the day to resume in-person meetings. BD inquired as to what impact that in-person meetings may have with Brandy Saxton. The Commission discussed potential options of conducting a hybrid meeting. RM opined that the Commission may be more apt to move to in-person meetings since they were a small group and not a lot of public attends. She then inquired if the Commission would be open to her leading the initiative to figuring out how to proceed with hybrid meetings. AS provided traditional teleconferencing as an alternative should the visual component of the hybrid meeting fail.

VI. ADJOURN

[12:53] DO moved to adjourn. The Commission unanimously passed the motion. The next meeting will be held on May 26, 2021 @ 5:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Andrew Strniste, Planning & Zoning Administrator