



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

Meeting Minutes June 14, 2023

Present: Rebecca Mattis (RM), Patrick Griffin (PG) and Alvin Figiel (AF).

Also Present: Andrew Strniste Planning & Zoning Administrator, Alderman McCann, Jacob Pluta and John Ruggiero.

Absent: Sarah Roy.

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

- I. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS** – PG reminded the Commission that he would like to add discussion of the Kentucky Fried Chicken free standing sign to a future agenda. He would like Andrew to bring the sign application that was submitted to the Commission.

Andrew asked to add an update from Brandy and Rod regarding the proposed walking tour. RM moved to add the discussion at the beginning of Old Business. PG seconded. Motion was approved.

- II. PUBLIC COMMENT** – Alderman McCann said the issue of the green strip parking was sent to Charter & Ordinance Committee and he will let the Commission know when that meeting is scheduled.

Jacob Pluta, 59 Elm St. – Mr. Pluta said he was present to find out how the Home Act, S100 Bill, would be reflected in the proposed zoning. Andrew said the Act dictates wherever municipal infrastructure is extended, 4-5 unit dwellings must be allowed. This covers the entire city; therefore 4-5 unit dwellings are allowed throughout the City. Andrew would not recommend passing zoning bylaws that contradict State statute. According to Brandy 4-5 unit dwellings cannot be restricted, but it doesn't have to be outright permitted. Andrew said the bylaws can have site plan review for 3, 4 and 5 unit dwellings. He said this law affects wherever residential uses are allowed.

- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 24, 2023.**

RM moved to approve the minutes of May 24, 2023. AF seconded. AF mentioned a typo on page one regarding his initials being AF and not AFA. Motion was approved.

- IV. NEW BUSINESS** - None.

- V. OLD BUSINESS – Discussion of Proposed Zoning Regulations.**

Andrew updated the Commission on his conversation with Brandy and Rod regarding the walking tours. He said there was a question regarding whether there was a connection between Mahoney Avenue and Allen Street. Google Earth did depict a pathway between the two streets. The second question was whether the tour should go all the way to Geno

Avenue. Andrew said Geno was selected because of the athletic facility there being a good starting point. PG said he thought a better neighborhood would include the Middle School, because of changing Grove Street to the Mixed-Use zoning district. Andrew suggested starting at Calvary Church which would include the anomaly of Barleyfield. RM said it makes sense to move the starting point to Calvary. Andrew will reach out to Brandy to change the starting point to Calvary and also to use the community space at the church. Andrew said the next step is to schedule the tours which includes communicating with Calvary, Rutland Free Library, Northeast Elementary School, Dana Center, Allen Street Campus and the VT Achievement Center. PG wants to make sure the tours are the right length. Andrew said they are about a mile. RM asked about the allotted time for each tour. Andrew said an hour and a half to 2 hours. Andrew said 2 to 3 tours a week could potentially be planned with the possibility for two on a Saturday during late-August to early-September. Andrew asked if six tours are necessary. PG asked how the tours were determined. Andrew said the tours are based on different and distinct development patterns within the various areas. His next steps will be to change the start of the northwest tour to Calvary (rather than Geno Ave.), collect the contact information for the various sites, and PlaceSense will do outreach and create the timeline.

AF asked how the Commission will respond to the community's ire regarding the State's mandatory allowance for 4-5 unit dwellings in all residential districts. Andrew said the rebuttal will be that the change is State mandated and the City does not have a choice. PG said the Commission prepared for the change while working on the zoning rewrite. Alderman McCann said the law will not create an overnight change to the character of the neighborhoods. PG said the maximum lot coverages will help preserve the character of the neighborhoods even if more units are added.

AF asked if the Downtown tour will be productive. Andrew said in light of the new State law, there might not be much value. RM suggested nixing that tour to bring the total down to five.

RM said the next agenda item is the Design Review Districts and regulations. Andrew discussed the Downtown Designation District map and a couple minor changes to the Downtown Business zoning district to reflect and correspond with the State-approved Downtown Designation. AF asked if administrative review would be sufficient in the outlying Gateway Districts. Andrew said he would make that change. He noted that the Historic Design Review District would extend to Strongs. Andrew said the lots that include the carwash, O'Reilly auto part store and the Party Store were not included in the design control district on Strongs Avenue.

Andrew provided three maps, one reflecting AF's proposal, another reflecting Brandy's proposal for the design control districts, and what the Planning Commission tentatively agreed to over the last few meetings. AF said he feels the Commission understands better now what is most important.

The Commission started with Section A - Building Orientation relating to parking behind or to the side of the building. RM said she is concerned that with narrow lots there may be a challenge. The Commission agreed to parking in the rear or to the side in all three

districts with an exception for physical limitations of the lot. Andrew suggested a qualifier for new construction or development on non-conforming properties. The Commission discussed several sites that might have difficulty with this parking lot requirement. PG proposed using lot size to create an exemption for a pre-existing non-conforming lot. The Commission agreed that parking areas shall be located behind or to the side of buildings, but this rule does not apply to pre-existing non-conforming lots that are under 75% of the minimum lot size. There will be no exemption for Downtown.

The Commission made the following recommendations to Design Control regulations:

- Buildings must be oriented to the street [keep for Downtown, Historic & Gateway-admin]
- Buildings must establish a street wall along the front property line [keep for Downtown]
- Retail and other active, pedestrian-oriented activities must be located at the street level [keep for Downtown]
- Buildings must be designed with at least 60% of the street-facing ground floor elevation...[keep for Downtown]
- Parking areas are prohibited between the building and the street. [keep for Downtown, Historic & Gateway-admin]
- Parking areas shall be located behind the buildings or to the side of the building [remove, and insert standard discussed above, with the exemption for pre-existing non-conforming lots under 75% in both Historic & Gateway-admin]
- Buildings must have one or more entrances along the street accessible from the public sidewalk [remove "along the street" for Downtown, Historic & Gateway-admin only]
- Buildings must be designed to offer entryways protected from the elements...[remove]
- Mixed-use buildings must provide separation between public (non-residential) space and private (residential) space...[remove]
- Buildings must incorporate outdoor usable open space such as porches, arcades, courtyards, etc. along the street [remove]
- Buildings that are more than 2 stories tall must incorporate a base, middle and cap. The base must include an entryway with transparent windows. The middle must include windows and/or doors with balconies. The cap must include a cornice or roof overhang [remove and/or doors with balconies for the Downtown]

- Street-facing building elevations must incorporate changes in plane and architectural features...[remove]
- Changes in roof pitch and adjacent heights must be accompanied by plane offsets [remove]
- Building entrances must be highlighted through use of porches, awnings, recesses or other architectural features [keep for Downtown, Historic & Gateway-admin]
- Buildings must be designed so that horizontal elements (window lines, belt courses, molding, cornices, etc.) are aligned with equivalent elements on neighboring buildings...[keep for Downtown only]
- Buildings must provide shade and shadow [remove]
- Buildings must be equivalent to the height of adjacent structures...[remove]
- Street-facing elevations must be equivalent to the scale, height and width of surrounding buildings...[Downtown only]
- Franchise architecture is prohibited [keep for Downtown, Historic & Gateway-admin]
- Rear or side public entry to a building must have equivalent architectural treatment to the front elevation [keep for Downtown, Historic & Gateway-admin]
- Changes in building materials must intersect with an architectural element...[remove]
- Windows and doors must be recessed to create shadow lines [Downtown only]
- Windows must be located and configured to offer privacy for any residential units in the building...[remove]
- Canopies, awnings and similar appurtenances constructed over windows or entryways may extend into required setbacks [keep for Downtown, Historic & Gateway-admin]
- Shutters, if used, must be designed and sized to cover half the window...[remove]
- Drive-up or drive-through windows must be located to the side or rear of the building [keep for Downtown, Historic & Gateway-admin with issues relating to landscaping being addressed by the Commission in the future]
- Service areas, delivery entrances, loading docks and refuse facilities must be located to the rear of the building and screened...[remove "located to the rear of

the building;" add "Drive-thru" to the standard; add a reference to the landscaping requirements; and keep for Downtown, Historic and Gateway-admin]

- Service areas must be separated from main circulation and parking areas [only for Gateway-admin]
- Accessory structures must be sited and designed to minimize their visibility from the street and to be compatible with the architectural character...[keep for Downtown, Historic & Gateway-admin]
- Accessory structures must be located to the side or rear of the principal building [keep for Downtown, Historic & Gateway-admin]
- Fueling station canopies and similar appurtenant structures must not use internally illuminated architectural elements...[remove requirement to be compatible with architectural character etc., keep in Downtown, Historic and Gateway-admin]

VI. CORRESPONDENCE – None.

VII. ADJOURN – RM moved to adjourn. AF seconded. Motion was approved. The meeting ended at 7 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting is June 28 in the Hub CoWorks.

For the Commission: Barbara Spaulding, Recording Secretary