



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 November 8, 2023

Present: Rebecca Mattis (RM), *Patrick Griffin (PG), Sarah Roy (SR), Jacob Pluta (JP) and Alvin Figiel (AF).

Also Present: Mayor Doenges, Andrew Strniste Planning & Zoning Administrator, Ed Bove Executive Director RRA, Alderman McCann and John Ruggiero.

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

- I. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS – None.**
- II. PUBLIC COMMENT – None.**
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 25, 2023.**

AF moved to approve the minutes of 10/25/23. RM seconded. Motion was approved once PG arrived 4-0 with 1 abstention - SR.

- IV. NEW BUSINESS - None.**
- V. OLD BUSINESS – Dimensional Standards.**

Andrew started with the discussion of lot coverage and Historical Mixed Use District. The question was are the areas distinguishable or should an overlay district be created. RM said the 80% maximum lot coverage makes sense in the Courthouse area, but not in the North Main Street area. AF thought the ratio also belongs in the South Main St. area (Gouger Hill). AF said these areas also have Architectural Review to control what happens in the historic districts and to leave everything at 80%. Andrew said there could be a reference that says anything north of Woodstock Ave is 60% and anything south of Woodstock Ave is 80%. RM said Architectural Review of the area is a safety net. Andrew reminded the Commission to consider the future in their decision, there will be one-offs that were not considered. SR asked why some of the mixed use properties are included as “historic.” Andrew said unless something looks “alarming” there might not be a lot to talk about. Brandy did an analysis so there is some basis for the district.

AF asked if the R5 District could be raised to 80% for lot coverage. RM said that would make her want to revisit the area south of the hospital district to R7. She said Haywood Avenue has the appearance of R10 and she is worried about the radical change from how some properties look now and how they could look on paper. AF sees R5 as less autocentric and more pedestrian so he would agree that the area should be R7. SR said the southwest area is an R5 next to an R10. RM said the R7 designation would meet the density needs in the area. There is a floodplain in the southwest area that prevents the flow as described by SR.

*Patrick arrived.

JP said he has concern with more storm water runoff and increased heat index with densification. The Commission voted to change the lot coverage in R5 from 70% to 80% and change the zoning designation in the southeast area from R5 to R7 4-0 with 1 abstention - SR.

JP asked why the area of the condos off Campbell Road are R7 in a field of R10. Andrew recommended that the entire area should be R7. There is potential to expand housing in the area. Andrew said in R7, the property in question at 24.03 acres, could have 387 units. In the R10 district it would be 4 and the property would need to be subdivided. JP suggested using a Planned Unit Development. SR agreed it should all be R7. Andrew said it would allow for more development. PG said R7 affords a lot of protections. The Commission voted to change the west and south side of the river, minus the college, to R7, 5-0.

Andrew asked if there were any other maximum lot coverage tweaks. Alderman McCann asked if variances are available to anyone who may want to exceed the maximum lot coverage. Andrew said it could be a waiver request to the DRB. He needs to review the dimensional waivers.

Andrew discussed how minimum lot size is calculated with the current zoning. He also demonstrated how minimum lot size is calculated under the proposed zoning in R5 with 3-4 units permitted so for additional units the 1800 sq. ft. is used. Should the number be reduced to be more consistent and not such a big jump. In the R7 it's a 6500 jump. RM said she is more concerned with the density than the jump. Andrew provided some examples using the Home Act which permits 4 dwelling units. SR asked if we want to change the minimum lot size. Andrew said we don't want to restrict dwelling units with maximum lot coverages and encouraging more development is good. SR said there needs to be balance between where we are and the extreme potential. AF asked for clarification between lot size and unit size. SR said it should say lot area per dwelling unit. AF tried to relate the chart to an actual location. Andrew used 120 Maple Street as an example in the R5 District.

John Ruggiero said the lots in the R5 District are between 4-7,000 sq. ft. and not reflective of the proposed chart #1. He does not think 9 units are feasible due to costs associated with development. He suggested looking at 114 Strongs Avenue as a potential 5-units; the property is under 4,000 sq. ft. total. Another property John suggested looking at is 41 Baxter St. for development to six units. Andrew said that property is 7,187 sq. ft. and is reflective of his example in chart #2. AF said there are a variety of units that could fit with or without difficulty on these properties. Andrew said to achieve the goal of maximizing the number of dwelling units there is an impact to other parts of the City, so there needs to be a balance or do we want to be more aggressive. RM suggested trying to decide on that number at the next meeting. AF asked for Brandy's input. Andrew suggested, for the next meeting, that the Commission look at the dimensional chart for red flags and the definitions, Chapter 5. RM suggested, as homework, the Commission apply the 1800, 1200 and 1100 numbers to their own lots.

- VI. CORRESPONDENCE** – SR moved to receive and file the correspondence listed below. AF seconded. Motion was approved.

Oct. 20, 2023 - Jurisdictional Opinion JO1-452 re: Paramount Theater, 30 Center St. Rutland; and Act 250 Application 1R0206-3 Hospital Heights: Confirmation of No Operational General Permit Requirement.

- VII. ADJOURN** – SR moved to adjourn. RM seconded. Motion was approved. The meeting ended at 7:07 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting is November 29 in the Hub CoWorks.

For the Commission: Barbara Spaulding, Recording Secretary