

WATERBURY PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
Approved Minutes
Monday, January 11, 2016

Planning Commission: Rebecca Washburn, Chair; Ken Belliveau, Sarah McShane; Mary Koen (by phone)

Staff: Steve Lotspeich, Community Planner; Patti Spence, Secretary

DISCUSSION ON DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE FLOOD HAZARD AREA REGULATIONS

The Planning Commission attended the first portion of the Select Board meeting to discuss considering scheduling a public hearing on the draft of the amendments to the Flood Hazard Area Regulations that the Planning Commission has transmitted to the Select Board and Trustees. The Select Board requested the following action prior to them considering scheduling a public hearing on the draft regulations:

1. Chris Nordle would like a letter from a 2nd attorney that addresses the options in State statute for the variance review criteria and whether the proposed amendments comply.
2. An explanation stated in the Introduction and Report for the draft amendments regarding why the PC is proposing that new construction be built 3' above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE – 100-yr. flood elevation) rather than the minimum of 2' in the State floodplain rules and procedures.

The PC meeting was continued at the Steele Block conference room:

The following points were raised to provide to the Selectboard to answer #2 above:

1. Waterbury is a unique community. Waterbury is at greater risk of flooding than many communities in the State.
2. The scientific information on weather patterns says there are going to be more major storms and increased levels of flooding.
3. The PC answered the community's input by distinguishing between new development and existing structures.
4. The combination of where Waterbury is located and the research that was done by the consultant firm, Milone & MacBroom concludes that in order to balance the needs of the community and take in to account many safety concerns, the PC's recommendation is the 3' above the BFE for new buildings.
5. Some other communities in Vermont are prohibiting any new building within their 100-yr. floodplain areas.
6. The PC was sensitive to the needs of the owners of existing buildings and the hardships they would face if more stringent constraints were put on their properties.
7. The PC did consider an even more stringent building standard of one foot above the 500'

floodplain. The recommendation they agreed to in the current draft is a compromise with the best interest for the safety of the entire community in mind.

The PC scheduled a special meeting on Monday, 1/18/16 at 6pm at the Steele Block, 2nd floor conference room to finalize the changes to the Introduction and Report for the proposed amendments.

2016 PLANNING COMMISSION WORK PLAN

Options/Opportunities:

1. A study to identify non-floodplain areas for future higher density residential and commercial development was not funded with a Municipal Planning Grant (MPG), see project description 09-30-15. Consider items 1, 2 and 5 from that grant proposal as the highest priorities.

#1. Examine opportunities for infill development within downtown Waterbury and consider the possibility of extending the Designated Downtown in the Village of Waterbury to include additional mixed use areas.

#2. Map and analyze the opportunities and constraints for land development to guide where future higher density development can and should go in the areas within and adjacent to the developed high density areas of the Village of Waterbury and Waterbury Center village.

(This project would provide background and a basis for the re-write of the zoning regulations)

#5. Identify areas of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations that will need to be amended in order to implement the recommendations of this study and assure that compact village development will be surrounded by a low density rural residential/agricultural/forest development pattern.

(apply for a MPG grant in Fall 2016 to fund this project)

2. A comprehensive re-write of the Zoning Regulations would be a possible follow up project.

Discussion regarding doing some of this work in conjunction with Revitalizing Waterbury arose. With Revitalizing Waterbury's focus on economic development there may be conflicts to work out in the context of a teaming with them on a project. Steve will follow up and get a copy of the agreement between the Town of Waterbury and RW and the Economic Development Director and/or have Bill Shepeluk come to a PC meeting to discuss this topic.

Moving forward:

1. define timeline
2. define task list
3. define and get committed partners
4. draft an overall strategy
5. review with the Town of Bolton how they engaged public participation

OTHER BUSINESS

In light of the search for a new Zoning Administrator, the PC would like to have more input in the

process. Moving forward consideration should be given to job retention, hours worked, and other planning work that could be done within this position.

What would be the process to make changes to this position? Any increase in hours and additional benefits has budget implications that would have to be worked out with the Municipal Manager and the Select Board. Steve will forward the job description to PC members.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 09:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Patti Spence
Secretary