

Planning Board Minutes

Date: March 22, 2017

Time: 7:30

Present:

X	J. Hargraves	X	A. Pease
X	J. Lindquist	X	W. Stacy
X	A. Leonard		

Also attending: Mark Archambault, Land Use Agent, and lots and lots of residents. Meeting held in Selectmen's Office and televised...

Documents:

Attendance sheets for two hearings

March 8 draft of the Village Center Compact Development Zoning Bylaw.

Minutes:

AP moved to approve the minutes of March 8, 2017. AL 2nd. Unanimously approved.

7:45 Opened the Hearing on the marijuana bylaw. Alan explained the content of sections 6.1.2 and 7.2.12. Questions from the attendees included worry about commercial operation and what commercial production would involve; concerns about violating federal laws prohibiting marijuana; concerns about what the Commonwealth has yet to decide about regulations. The sense of the room was generally very negative, although there were a few, maybe two?, positive comments about taxes and it's similarity to other agricultural products.

The strong sense of the attendees was that commercial production of marijuana is not an agricultural use but a commercial use; they didn't like it situated in the Residential/Agricultural zone; and no one seemed to be interested in a big building abutting their land.

8:15 Opened the Hearing on the Compact Development Bylaw

This was a very hot hearing which ranged from antagonistic to confused and which may have calmed down some by the end, but possibly only because it was nearly 10 and everyone was tired. The Executive Secretary has done her best to record the flow of the meeting...

Initial questions centered on what does this mean; why place the zone in the Village Center; how many lots are affected by the zoning and how many potential developments could be added; and why is the PB just randomly coming up with zoning that we know nothing about and only want to accommodate a single developer who will get rich at our expense and who's plan we can't see or talk about?

Alan's responses were unperturbed and clear. He gave a little lesson on how the PB approaches zoning changes, saying that they are often driven by an individual person's desire to do something that is prohibited in the zone (ex: Butch Shepherd, Jodi Tumber, Rene Rainville). The Board researches zoning changes and brings proposals to Town Meeting to vote on. Other members of the Board made clear that the PB has many years of experience, skill, and training which we bring to the work, while avoiding returning the insults that were hurled at us.

Questions continued in a moderately less combative tone centering around confusion about condominiums/ownership/taxation; who's in charge of what – landowner role, Town role, Board role; setbacks and what they mean; what is the definition of a dwelling, what is a home; what will houses look like – are they attached or separate; what about roads/driveways; what about wetlands; how do you determine how many houses can go on a parcel; what about AirBnB; what about accessory apartments; how many units could there actually be and are they really and truly single family homes; what about the affordable bonus and will this open the door to the unwashed hordes;

Other concerns included fire load; septic; wells and water; and unintended consequences to something.

There were several developers present and they seemed to have an understanding of what we were trying to do. Otherwise the people were pretty confused.

Two substantive requests were 1) that we address the question of parcels that cover 2 districts. Our current method of determining the acceptable density of parcels based on which district the frontage is located, may leave us open to abuse by an unscrupulous developer who buys parcels reaching into the R/A district with frontage in the Residential district, thereby squeezing in many more houses. 2) That we provide some samples of developments using similar zoning as we are proposing.

Adjourn: 9:50

Submitted by Jeanie Lindquist, Executive Secretary