

Town of Barre
Planning Commission
June 19, 2024

The Town of Barre Planning Commission held a meeting on Wednesday, June 19, 2024, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building at 149 Websterville Road, Websterville, VT.

MEMBERS

In person: Cedric Sanborn, George Clain, Alice Farrell, Rodney Morin, Terry Reil and Craig Chase
Absent: Byron Atwood

STAFF:

In person: Brandon Garbacik

PUBLIC ATTENDEES:

In person: Carolyn Appleton, John Appleton and Tom Mancini

A. CALL TO ORDER –

Mr. Sanborn called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

B. CHANGES TO THE PUBLISHED AGENDA

Mr. Sanborn asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were no changes to the agenda.

C. REORGANIZATION (ANNUAL)

CHAIR:

Mr. Reil nominated Cedric Sanborn as Chair. Mr. Chase seconded the nomination. Vote 6-0-0.

VICE CHAIR

Mr. Clain nominated Alice Farrell as Vice Chair. Mr. Chase seconded the nomination. Vote 6-0-0

CLERK

Mr. Reil nominated Cindy Spaulding as Clerk of the Commission. Mr. Chase seconded the motion. Vote 6-0-0.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1) May 15, 2024

On a motion by Mr. Reil, seconded by Mr. Morin, the Planning Commission approved the minutes of May 15, 2024 meeting as written. Vote 5-0-1 (Clain abstained)

E. NON-AGENDA ITEMS (PUBLIC COMMENT): NONE

F. WARNED PUBLIC HEARING(S):

- 1) Proposed zoning bylaw amendment:** This proposed bylaw amendment changes the zone of property located at 6 Tanglewood Dr in Barre Town (Parcel ID: 006/095.01). The parcel is currently zoned Low Density Residential. The proposed bylaw amendment would change the zone of this parcel to High Density Residential.

Staff Report

This is a warned public hearing in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 4441 and Section 1.5 of the Barre Town Zoning Bylaw, whereas the Barre Town Planning Commission heard a proposed request from a member of the public to amend the Barre Town Zoning Bylaw, voted to adopt the proposed request, prepared and approved a written report on the proposed request, and duly warned a public hearing on the proposed request. A copy of the proposed zoning bylaw amendment and the written report was delivered electronically (with proof of receipt) to DHCD, CVRPC, and the chairs of the planning commissions of each municipality that abuts Barre Town. The purpose of this public hearing is for the Barre Town Planning Commission to hear public comments on the proposed zoning bylaw amendment, make any necessary revisions to the bylaw amendment or the associated written report, and subsequently submit the proposed request to the Barre Town Selectboard (and simultaneously file these documents with the Barre Town Clerk's Office for public review).

Summary

Mr. Sanborn opened the public hearing at 7:04 p.m. regarding proposed by law amendment changes zone of property located at 6 Tanglewood Dr in Barre Town. Mr. Garbacik provided an overview of his staff report as stated above.

Public Comments

Mrs. Appleton stated she opposes the zoning change from low-density to high-density residential. The proposed development of the property would increase vehicular traffic on the roadways surrounding the neighborhoods of Tanglewood, Tamarack Lane and W Cobble Hill Road— as well as surface water run off drainage impacting abutting properties and contributing to the continuous ground erosion in the area.

Mr. Appleton asked what the potential population increase would be from low-density residential vs high density residential.

Mr. Mancini stated that anyone had a chance to buy the property when it was for sale, if the property is developed, it would be like other developments in the area.

Mr. Sanborn and Mr. Chase explained:

- Criteria for low-density residential and high-density residential zoning
- State Statute/Act 47 regarding accommodating properties that could be developed if it has municipal water and sewer
- Process for an application brought before the Development Review Board
- The State will review wetlands, stormwater discharge and groundwater issues

Mrs. Farrell, as a resident of the area, expressed her concerns with a development could cause an increase in vehicle traffic. She further stated that there is a lot of recent vehicle traffic, especially heavy truck traffic to and from 6 Tanglewood Drive's driveway. She is concerned that it would impact on the roads and drainage in the area of Tanglewood Drive and Tamarack Lane (which was later echoed by Mr. Morin). The area is a habitat for wildlife.

Mr. Clain asked for an explanation of Act 47 regarding the 40% more units of affordable housing. Mr. Garbacik explained affordable housing development is defined in Act 47. He also explained what constitutes a single-family dwelling with an accessory dwelling unit.

Mr. Sanborn reiterated that the Planning Commission intends to change the zone of this parcel from low density residential to high density residential, stating that the State would likely force the change to occur regardless. Mr. Clain stated that though the State makes the rules, he's waiting for them to tell him that this change *must* occur.

On a motion by Mr. Chase, seconded by Mr. Reil, the Planning Commission moved to close the public hearing. Vote 6-0-0.

Prior to a vote on moving the request to the Barre Town Selectboard, Mr. Clain asked about the possibility of amending the proposed request to exclude the subject property's Class II wetlands area from the zoning change. Mr. Sanborn and Mr. Morin argued that wetlands are in the purview of the State, particularly the Department of Environmental Conservation. Mr. Chase added that it is likely that if the development at Tamarack Ln and Tanglewood Dr hadn't existed, and if someone were to propose to build that today, it would likely be difficult (if not impossible) to satisfy the state's current wetlands regulations.

On a motion by Mr. Chase, seconded by Mr. Sanborn, the Planning Commission submitted the request to amend the zoning bylaw (to change the zone of 6 Tanglewood Dr) to the Barre Town Selectboard for their consideration, as well as to the Barre Town Clerk's Office for public review. Vote 4-2-0 (Clain & Farrell dissent)

G. ZONING BYLAW UPDATE:

- 1) Review topics to consider amending in the Barre Town Zoning Bylaw.

Staff Report

On the morning following the March meeting, I sent you all a four-page document via email (also included in this month's packet) listing off items in the Barre Town Zoning Bylaw to consider amending. If there's enough time following this month's public hearing, I'd like to review/discuss these topics. I'll likely create a PowerPoint presentation ahead of the meeting. At a minimum, it'd be nice to review each topic and determine if any changes/edits are necessary. I can highlight the items on the list in which the PC determines that changes/edits are necessary. Then, at a future meeting, we can figure out how to amend those items. For the topics that the PC determines are fine as they are, I'll cross them off the list and we can forget about them. Since there are a lot of topics on this list as it is, this might be something that will need to be reviewed over the course of a few meetings.

Discussion

Mr. Sanborn commented that he found most of the suggested changes favorable. However, he noted that he disagreed with the request made by the Town Assessor to require permits for generators kept on the property.

Mrs. Farrell asked if accessory dwelling units could be used for short-term rentals rather than long-term rentals. Mr. Garbacik replied that Barre Town does not have regulations on short-term rentals, therefore accessory dwelling units can be used for short-term rentals (such as AirBnB).

Mr. Clain asked what the Planning Commission's thoughts were on the provision in Section 4.4 of the Zoning Bylaw that requires the DRB to add a condition to a conditional use permit (for someone requesting to live in a camper/RV for longer than 14 days) that states their wastewater must be disposed of at least once a week. Mr. Chase replied that if someone is living in a camper/RV for any amount of time, they should be required to get a wastewater disposal permit from the State. Mr. Clain expressed concern that it may not be possible to adequately enforce such a condition, and therefore questioned the inclusion of that provision in the zoning bylaw.

Mr. Garbacik shared a PowerPoint presentation on different topics to consider amending in the Zoning Bylaw. Subjects discussed include:

- Switching from separate zoning and subdivision bylaws to a single unified development bylaw
- Adding a zoning district for the village centers and for civic uses, and amending other existing zoning districts
- Lot density requirements in areas served by municipal water/sewer (per Act 47)
- Amending the town's zoning bylaw
- Allowed use determination permits
- Potentially inviting the DRB to a joint PC/DRB meeting
- Allowed vs Conditional vs Prohibited uses
- Shared driveways, shared curb-cuts, and private roads

H. NEW BUSINESS: None

I. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND BILL REVIEW: None

J. OLD BUSINESS: None

K. FOLLOW-UP

- 1) Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission monthly report

Report

Mrs. Farrell shared that CVRPC held their annual meeting with each of its members. They discussed the goals for the upcoming year. Many of the goals involved seeking improvements in Barre City, particularly to address the flooding event that occurred last July. CVRPC shared a map showing locations that included both private and public properties in Barre City that could potentially be suitable for infill development in order to provide an adequate supply of housing units.

- 2) Energy Committee monthly report

Staff Report

Amy Gamble, a member of the Montpelier Energy Advisory Committee and the coordinator of the local Montpelier/Barre WindowDressers chapter, was invited to speak to the committee about participating in WindowDressers this fall. After some discussions, the Energy Committee determined that they'd like to participate this fall by piggybacking off of the Montpelier/Barre WindowDressers planned Community Build this fall.

They rescheduled their July meeting, cancelling the regular meeting on July 3rd with plans to schedule a special meeting on July 1st.

One of the committee members attended VECAN's Spring Summit and reported on his experience. As a reminder, VECAN is the network of local energy committees across Vermont (affiliated with VNRC).

Finally, the committee discussed participating as a vendor at the 1st Annual Barre Town Summer Festival on July 20th. The committee plans to provide resources (we have brochures from Efficiency Vermont, Capstone, and hopefully WindowDressers), host a brief survey/questionnaire on the community's thoughts on energy efficiency, solicit volunteers for WindowDressers this fall, and discuss the benefits of weatherization with the help of beach balls. The size of the beach balls is supposed to represent the cumulative area of holes, cracks, and leaks in the average home where warm air can escape.

- 3) Update on June 27th public forum to explain the benefits of Village Center designations to affected property owners.

Staff Report

Last month, the PC chose **June 27th at 6:00pm** for a time to schedule the forum to explain the benefits of Village Center designations to the affected property owners. Since then, I have confirmed the time/date with both Caitlin Corkins (who specializes in the village centers’ tax credits/grants program through ACCD) and Brian & Will from CVRPC. Everything appears set to go. I’m expecting to hear back from them with what they plan to present prior to Wednesday night's meeting. If needed, this item can get moved higher up on the agenda so that this segment is properly addressed.

My thoughts are that I can start the meeting and introduce the panel (including you all) to the crowd. Then, I can pull up maps of the four village centers, share them on the screen, and discuss which properties are/aren’t included. If there is anything else we notice that was not addressed by CVRPC or ACCD, then we can also try to fill in those gaps. After the brief introduction, we can pass the floor to whoever is next. After CVRPC and ACCD give their presentations, then there can be a Q/A session for those in the crowd with questions. I’m estimating that the event will last around an hour long, maybe a little longer.

If anyone has any ideas, feel free to share.

Discussion

The members of the Planning Commission were agreeable to Mr. Garbacik’s suggestions on how to organize the forum, and they are looking forward to participating on June 27th at 6:00pm.

L. ROUND TABLE

M. ADJOURN

*On motion by Mr. Clain, seconded by Mr. Chase, the Planning Commission adjourned at 8:59 p.m.
Vote 6-0-0.*

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Spaulding, Clerk
Brandon Garbacik, Planning Officer

Cedric Sanborn, Chair

Alice Farrell

George Clain

Byron Atwood

Terry Reil

Craig Chase

Rodney Morin