

Town of Barre

Planning Commission

March 20, 2024

The Town of Barre Planning Commission held a meeting on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building at 149 Websterville Road, Websterville, VT.

MEMBERS

In person: Cedric Sanborn, George Clain, and Byron Atwood

Remote: Alice Farrell, and Rodney Morin

Absent: Terry Reil and Craig Chase

STAFF:

In person: Brandon Garbacik

Remote: Cindy Spaulding

PUBLIC ATTENDEES:

No public attendees

A. CALL TO ORDER –

Mr. Sanborn called the meeting to order at 7:00 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. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1) February 21, 2024

On a motion by Mr. Clain, seconded by Ms. Farrell, the Planning Commission approved the minutes of February 21, 2024 meeting as written. Vote 4-0-1. (Atwood abstained)

D. NON-AGENDA ITEMS (PUBLIC COMMENT):

There were no non-agenda items.

E. WARNED PUBLIC HEARING(S):

There were no public hearing scheduled.

F. NEW BUSINESS:

- 1) Discussion on whether Barre Town should look into applying for Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) designations through ACCD.

Mr. Garbacik provided an overview regarding applying for Neighborhood Development Area designation through ACCD would not be feasible as there currently aren't any locations that would be eligible for designation as some of the criteria the town could not meet.

Below are the criteria for each category for NDA highlighted in his staff report::

The town would be required to meet at least 8 of the following 10 Complete Streets criteria featured on the NDA application:

1. Require that provisions be made for the extension of the street and pedestrian network into existing streets and adjacent, undeveloped land.

2. Existing or planned pedestrian facilities (such as sidewalks/paths) service the proposed NDA. Planned facilities are identified in the municipal plan, official map, other planning documents, or the capital budget and program.
3. Require sidewalks or pedestrian facilities for new development, both connecting to buildings on-site and to off-site pedestrian facilities.
4. Have plans or regulations in place that address the need for bike facilities (such as bike paths and lanes or multi-use paths) where appropriate.
5. Require street trees, lighting, and green strips along streets for new developments.
6. Require new streets to be as narrow as possible (such as having specifications for travel lanes that are 11 feet wide or narrower).
7. Regulate and minimize (1,000 feet or less) the length of cul-de-sacs or blocks.
8. Require utilities to be placed underground in new developments.
9. Minimize the required off-street parking spaces. (Requiring two or more off street parking spaces per residential unit is excessive.)
10. Allow for on-street parking.

Furthermore, the town would also have to meet at least 8 of the following 10 Building and Lot Patterns criteria:

1. Allow for a mix of housing opportunities (multi-family, duplex, and single-family, etc.) throughout the NDA.
2. Allow for small minimum lot sizes, requiring no more than ¼ acre per lot, or sizes similar to the existing small lot sizes in the area if less than ¼ acre.
3. Allow for the adaptive re-use of single-family residential buildings to multi-family units.
4. Allow for infill development by minimizing dimensional requirements (whether traditional: lot size, frontage, lot coverage, etc. or form-based: building form standards, frontage type standards, etc.).
5. Allow for building heights that enable diverse housing options (at least 3 functional floors).
6. Require traditional neighborhood design by minimizing building setbacks (conforming to existing building lines if appropriate) or establishing maximum setbacks to prevent new development from being disconnected from the street.
7. Include provisions that ensure vehicles are not the dominant element facing a street, such as garages that are set back from the front wall of houses, multi-car parking or structured parking entrances that are setback or to the side or rear of buildings.
8. Building design and landscaping requirements for building and landscape design that create spaces for pedestrians, such as buildings and trees lining a sidewalk or a green surrounded by buildings.
9. Include provisions that encourage primary building facades to be oriented to the street (such as requiring primary entrances face the street).
10. Have provisions that minimize curb cuts and reduce their frequency, or other access management provisions that favor pedestrians.

Along with the Complete Streets and Building & Lot Patterns criteria, the application for NDA designation also requires the following:

- Confirmed planning process (similar to Village Center designation)
- Preapplication meeting (also similar to Village Center designation)
- Proposed NDA location meets eligibility requirements (within ¼ mile of Village Center, may be extended beyond ¼ mile if it meets 4 other specified criteria)
- The associated Village Center is within a 10-minute walk from all locations within the proposed NDA.

- Excludes flood hazard areas unless those areas include preexisting development in areas suitable for infill development as defined in the Vermont Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor Rule.
- Avoids or minimizes (to the extent feasible) the inclusion of “important natural resources” as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2791(14).
- NDA location reinforces the character of adjacent historic resources, including National Register Historic Districts, national or State register historic sites, and other significant cultural and natural resources identified by local or State government.
- Base zoning densities (excludes density bonuses, PUD density calculations, or accessory dwelling units) within the proposed NDA must be greater than or equal to four dwelling units per acre for all identified residential uses or residential building types, or not fewer than the average existing density of the surrounding neighborhood (whichever is greater).
- Municipal regulations do not prohibit energy saving devices (such as clotheslines).
- Maps showing the following within a proposed NDA:
 - “Important natural resources” as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2791(14)
 - Existing slopes of 25% or steeper
 - Public facilities, including public buildings, public spaces, and public infrastructure
 - Planned public facilities, roads, or private development that is permitted but not yet built
 - National Register Historic Districts, national or State register historic sites, and other significant cultural and natural resources identified by local or State government
 - Designated village center and associated neighborhood planning area (¼ mile buffer area)
 - Delineated areas of land appropriate for residential development/redevelopment

G. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND BILL REVIEW:

1) Update on housing/Act 250 reform legislation.

Mr. Garbacik provided an overview of the housing/Act 250 reform in legislation with highlights on H.687 and S.311.

H.687 emphasis is on establishing a three-tier system for Act 250 review, as well as identifying new potential automatic jurisdictional triggers for Act 250. S.311 focuses more on identifying areas to promote specific exemptions for Act 250 review, as well as implementing more changes to municipal zoning (parking, multi-unit dwellings, lot coverage, quasi-judicial proceedings, etc.).

Mrs. Farrell also mentioned that H.626 is an act related to animal welfare and regulate shelters and dog rescues who bring dogs into Vermont from other states and countries.

H. ZONING BYLAW UPDATE:

1) Preliminary discussion on updating the Barre Town Zoning Bylaw in compliance with Act 47 of 2023 and new potential legislation.

Mr. Garbacik suggested the first thing to do to update the zoning by law was to review current zoning districts and establish new ones where water and sewer connection is available in accordance with Act 47. Discussion ensued on areas where water and sewer connections (municipal services) are available. It was questioned if the Graniteville Fire District is actually a municipal service.

I. OLD BUSINESS: None

J. FOLLOW-UP

- 1) Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission monthly report

Mrs. Farrell announced that there would be a seminar hosted by CVRPC regarding Act 250 policy.

- 2) Energy Committee monthly report

Mr. Garbacik reported that the Energy Committee met and two presentation:

- a. Amanda Carlson, manager of Community Rides Vermont (part of Capstone) referring to a new ride share program called Gopher serving all of Washington County plus the towns of Williamstown, Orange and Washington.
- b. Kyle McDonald, Energy Coach Coordinator for Capstone’s Weatherization Team regarding the No-Cost Weatherization program offered through Capstone for income-eligible households.

- 3) Update on Village Center designations

Mr. Garbacik reported the Downtown Development Board approved all four of the Village Center destination were approved and the Board commended the PC for their work to designated village centers. The next step is to invite the affected property owners to inform them of the incentives/benefits of the program.

K. ROUND TABLE

No round table discussion.

L. ADJOURN

On motion by Mr. Atwood, seconded by Mrs. Farrell, the Planning Commission adjourned at 8:26 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Spaulding, Clerk

Cedric Sanborn, Chair

Alice Farrell

George Clain

Byron Atwood

Terry Reil

Craig Chase

Rodney Morin