

TOWN OF LYNDON
PLANNING COMMISSION
August 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes
Approved 9/12/18

Planning Commissioners: Mike Schlesinger, Sean McFeeley, Evan Carlson (6:33 p.m.), Sylvia Dodge, Susan Hanus, Tammy Martel

Public Official(s): Annie McLean

Press: None

Public: Bob Howland, Matt Reeve

Mike Schlesinger chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Sean McFeeley made a **motion to approve the minutes of August 8, 2018 as amended**. Mike Schlesinger **seconded the motion**. The Commission voted **6-0**.

Mike Schlesinger opened the **PUBLIC HEARING** on the miscellaneous proposed amendments to the Town Zoning Bylaws. Annie McLean read the notice of public hearing and provided a brief overview of each proposed change and the intent behind the change. Bob Howland asked for clarification on proposed amendment #4 Removal of zoning permit extensions [section 13.8] and proposed amendment #7 Addition of definition of “Grading” to Flood Hazard Regulations [section 11.11]. Hearing no further testimony from the public, Mike Schlesinger made a **motion to close the public hearing**. Tammy Martel **seconded the motion**. The Commission voted 6-0. Sean McFeeley made a **motion to approve the written bylaw amendment report [without changes or additions] and forward it to the Town Selectboard**. Sylvia Dodge **seconded the motion**. The Commission voted 6-0.

Evan Carlson introduced Matt Reeve, former chair of the Town of Kirby Planning Commission. Mr. Reeve provided the Commission some background on the development of Kirby’s Highlands Zoning District, which encompasses all land over 1,800 feet in elevation. Mr. Reeve noted that the district already existed when he joined the Planning Commission [Kirby], however more restrictive regulatory language was added to the existing district. Mr. Reeve explained that the Commission [Kirby] restricted the number of allowed uses in the Highland District in addition to increasing the minimum lot size for homes and camps to 25 acres in order to protect the higher elevation areas of their town from over development. Sylvia Dodge noted that the elevation based model was clean and simple. Commissioners discussed how this model potentially could be applied in Lyndon and what that might look like. Sean McFeeley and Mr. Carlson requested that Annie McLean provide maps of areas over 1,100, 1,000, 900, etc. feet in elevation for the Commission to review. Mr. Reeve suggested the development of a historic overlay district would be a tool for controlling larger scale development, noting that strict but clear regulations are necessary to preserve the aspects of the area that people move here to enjoy. Susan Hanus suggested a recreational use overlay might be another approach to consider. Sean McFeeley stated that “we like our town the way it is but we have no rules to keep it the way it is”.

Commissioners continued their discussion on the Zoning for Scenic Protection presentation given by Darling Hill Residents Kathleen Walsh and Barbara Irwin at the previous meeting. Sylvia Dodge encouraged the Commission to make a decision as to if and how they wanted pursue this type of regulatory tool. It was generally agreed that scenic viewshed map would be an asset to the Municipal Plan. Commissioners asked Annie McLean to look into possible funding for a scenic viewshed mapping initiative in 2019. Commissioners were less enthusiastic about the immediate development of regulatory language that was tied to scenic views. Evan Carlson noted that the currently proposed 10-acre minimum lot size and lot width/depth ratio in the Rural Residential District in addition to the Commission’s

ongoing work to develop regulations more in line with the goals of the Municipal Plan would indirectly address some of Ms. Walsh and Ms. Irwin's concerns in all of Lyndon's rural areas without the need for the selection of properties based on what could be viewed as subjective criteria. Commissioners again thanked Ms. Walsh and Ms. Irwin for their thorough research.

Sylvia Dodge reminded the Commission that they had considered including a 2-year allowance in the proposed Rural Residential District zoning changes for landowners with 10 acre lots to subdivide once. Commissioners discussed potential problems with this approach. Annie McLean noted that as Lyndon does not currently value undeveloped subdivided land as house sites there would be no financial disincentive for anyone to subdivide under a limited time provision, which might have the opposite of the intended effect of keeping open land open. Ms. McLean suggested adding water and wastewater requirements to the subdivision regulations.

Evan Carlson mentioned Stone Environmental Vermont Municipality ArcGIS Hub Competition to Drive Community Engagement. Stone Environmental is looking to collaborate with a Vermont municipality interested in developing a community web application to utilize the power of local information and stories to drive civic engagement and support local initiatives. As part of this project, their team of GIS specialists will be available to develop an "ArcGIS Hub" site for one Vermont municipality to share information and engage its citizens around a particular community interest or cause on an online platform. Commissioners were generally supportive of the Town's participation in the completion. Mr. Carlson noted that he was waiting to hear back from NVDA on next steps. Commissioners discussed how this type of site might interface with the existing GIS and limited property card data currently maintained by CAI in addition to whether or not this might be an appropriate time to approach the Selectboard again to advocate for making the existing GIS and limited property card data available online via the Town's website.

The next Planning Commission meeting is September 12, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. This meeting will include a public hearing on the following proposed bylaw amendments:

- 1) Addition of a minimum lot width/depth ratio of 20% for the Rural Residential District; and,
- 2) Increasing the required minimum lot size in the Rural Residential District to 10 acres.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.