

Town of Starksboro
Planning Commission meeting
November 15, 2018
Unapproved

Board members present: Dennis Casey, Jeff Keeney, Denny Barnard, Dan Harris, Norm Cota
Unable to attend: Dan Nugent
Others present: Rebecca Elder (ZA)

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chair Dennis Casey.

The Board discussed the pending application for a grant to support the installation of an electric vehicle charging station in the commuter parking lot behind the Town Clerk's office. The group had several questions and sent a summary statement to the Selectboard.

Minutes of 11/1/18

Motion: Norm Cota made a motion to approve the minutes of 11/1/18 as presented. Jeff Keeney second.
Motion carried.

Bylaws discussion continued

The group returned to the ongoing discussion about improvements and recommendations for revisions to the Bylaws.

- Solar panels as structure? Racks are just support.
- Home occupations – We need a better definition. Is a tangible product a qualifier? Services vs. products. What about services that involve no traffic or visitors to a location? Examples: heat pump installers; web designers; accounting services, etc.
 - What is the purpose of the zoning permit for home occupations?
 - 1) assessing impacts (expanded home use; additional infrastructure)
 - 2) assessing effects on people outside your property (visitors, deliveries)
 - If it doesn't impact the house/residence, is a permit required? Dan H. pointed to the current language on home occupations > 342.A a,b,c –
 - Jeff said the board could make home occupations exempt if no impact was determined.
 - Dan said an accessory building to support the home occupation should be a trigger for requiring a permit. If you are making changes to your residence just for the business (i.e. change footprint, separate out a portion of your house for business use), then a permit is required.
 - Jeff also noted there are two different scenarios: a person working from home (for another entity or business) vs. a person having a home occupation – Each could have the same impact.
 - Dan asked why a permit is required for one and not the other. If there is no impact on anyone around you, why require a permit?
 - Does it matter if you are making a profit? Should a nonprofit be regarded differently? No, the impact is the same.
 - Jeff recommended leaving the language as is.
- Septic issues: the zoning goal is to bring into compliance. How can the town address compliance issues for the current mobile home parks?
 - Lazy Brook – gravel system, swamp on both sides; 50-60 homes; per septic standards, the park would need 350SF x 60 equaling roughly ½ acre for a proper leach field. This is likely impossible because the water table doesn't even go down 2 ft.

- Hillside – Now has a community system; many failures in the past. Otter Creek Engineering did the septic plan.
 - Double wide mobile homes in these parks are additionally problematic. Systems weren't built for the additional capacity.
 - There is no way to have separate septic systems for each lot.
 - Zoning permits for new trailers going into the parks: the new owner, when applying for the permit, needs to show where the property line is; needs to include a sketch, show boundaries, show placement of replacement structure.
 - We need to know what is in the parks currently. Need a current map, dimensions on the lots. The parks were established in the 1960s, pre-zoning.
 - These parks are not transitional housing anymore. Originally designed as transitional but over time has become more long-term/permanent housing. The infrastructure wasn't designed properly for that type of use. To make it safe and compliant, ACCT should remove some lots and combine very small lots to allow for proper setbacks, safer travel for emergency vehicles, more personal privacy/yard space.
 - Vermod – These structures have a foundation. How do we regulate? What is the difference between a Vermod and a modular house? Nothing: neither has wheels or chassis. Zoning regulations are the same.
- Rebecca will invite Beth Jackman and the facilities manager from ACCT to a meeting in January to discuss the mobile home parks.

Motion to adjourn: Norm Cota made a motion to adjourn at 9:34 p.m. Denny Barnard second.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
Zoning Administrator

NEXT MEETING: December 6, 2018

Addison County Regional Planning hearing – Regional approval of Town Plan

7pm – Town Clerk's office