

Town of Starksboro  
Planning Commission meeting  
November 1, 2018  
Unapproved

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

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The meeting was called to order at 7:09 pm

Corrections/changes to agenda: none

Minutes of 10/4/18

Motion: Denny Barnard made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/4/18 as corrected. Jeff Keeney 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
Motion carried.

### Bylaw revisions discussion continued

Rebecca distributed two documents from the recent VLCT Planning and Zoning forum: one on Act 143 and agricultural businesses and the other on various zoning issues related to signs.

The board reviewed the language from Act 143 and discussed the current practices and recommendations from the VT Agency of Agriculture. The group discussed ag business models in other towns in Vermont like Allenholm Farm in South Hero. There the orchard is main business but they have developed various related ag attractions to support the business throughout the year.

There are a variety of new ag enterprises and crops that are being cultivated in Vermont. Starksboro zoning should be flexible and forward-thinking regarding crops and related activities such as hops and grapes/vineyards with tasting rooms/sampling events; hemp farms; and other ag crops. For agricultural business, Act 143 defines the scope of what is an acceptable agricultural business. Local zoning can regulate through site plan review, defining restrictions and conditions but allowing ag businesses to operate within the local zoning and planning context.

- The board noted that the Norris' had something like this a few years ago and the PC considered what zoning language was needed to support the activity. **Add this to the use table.**
- page 3-30, Section 342B, items 2 and 3 – change 25% to 50%;  
75% local and 25% from the land owned/rented

On-farm businesses:

- Need definition of “local products” – does this mean just made in Vermont? Do products need to be produced within a certain radius (i.e. 100 miles from Starksboro)? The board discussed the idea of a poll on FB, FPF, and in the Gazette – “What does **local** mean to you?”
- Perhaps a poll question each month could help get people engaged in thinking about planning issues in Starksboro.

The board had more discussion of silviculture, what the definition is, and how it differs from other agricultural practices.

Jeff still believes that 20 ft is too much for the side setbacks. Denny said the waiver process addresses this and allows for the landowner to request a reduction. Jeff pointed to 423.E (4) – appellant shall prove that the land development cannot be reasonably constructed in conformance. Norm says there needs to be at least 10 ft for maintenance so one doesn't infringe onto neighbor's property. Dan noted that waiver process gives the neighbor the opportunity to give input and/or express concerns during the hearing and to be properly warned.

**Motion:** Jeff Keeney made a motion to reduce the set-backs in all districts to 5 feet for accessory structures of 100 SF or less. Dan Nugent 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Discussion:** The building could be 4 ft wide and 25 ft long (i.e. woodshed). Norm said this is a safety issue; he prefers a 10 ft. set back minimum.

**Vote:** 1 in favor, 3 opposed. Motion declined.

#### EV station issues:

- Placement
- Human behavior issues
- Is a parking ordinance needed? (to enforce a tow policy if time limits aren't observed)
- How do we manage if someone parks there all day?
- Perhaps placement should be up by Post Office?
- Are there liability issues?
- Could it be placed near the fire station?
- Could it be placed at Cota field?
- Group is less inclined to have it placed near the Town office

#### Town Plan Regional Approval process

Rebecca spoke with Claire Tebbs from AC Regional Planning Commission regarding the next steps of receiving RPC approval of Starksboro's Town Plan. The board asked about the process if ACRPC has suggested changes to the plan already approved by the PC and the Selectboard. Rebecca will clarify and update the board before the next meeting. Tentative plan is to schedule the ACRPC review hearing at the regularly scheduled PC meeting the first week of December.

#### PC vacancy:

Hugh Johnson resigned his seat at the last meeting. The board discussed whether to recommend leaving the seat open until Town Meeting and the election in March 2019 or whether to recommend a nominee to the Selectboard. Norm Cota and Dan Nugent said the seat should remain vacant given that the election is only a few months away and the board has already completed the Town Plan. The short time period remaining would make it difficult for a new member to become acquainted with the board's current work. The PC recommends leaving the seat vacant and putting advance announcements in the Gazette and on other town communications about the seats up for election in March.

**Motion to adjourn:** Norm Cota made a motion to adjourn. Dan Nugent 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Motion carries. Adjourned at 9:25 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder  
Zoning Administrator