

Town of Starksboro
Planning Commission
Minutes (APPROVED)
September 18, 2025

Present: Dennis Casey, David Schmidt, Luke McCarthy, Dan Kuzio

Unable to Attend: Dan Nugent

Others Present: Steve Rooney (Zoning Administrator)

Visitors: Tom Perry, Herb Olson (Zoom)

Meeting called to order by Chair Dennis Casey at 6:32pm

Visitors Business: H. Olson expressed concern about the proposed land use maps provided by ACRPC. While they made most of the changes we had asked for there were still a few properties listed as “Rural Conservation” (potentially Tier 3) that we asked to be listed as “Rural Agriculture and Forestry” (potentially Tier 2.) Conversation ensued about how best to express to ACRPC the changes we would like made. D. Schmidt emailed the ACRPC map maker during the meeting to ask for changes.

PC Current Business:

1. ZA Updates:

- a. S. Rooney asked about Short Term Rentals and how (or if) the Town regulates them. They don’t really fit under the definition of rental camps and cottages, and even if they did it would be a Conditional Use, but what would the DRB be reviewing? PC to consider language to include in future bylaw edits to specifically address STR’s.
- b. State of VT does not require certified mail for notification of abutters; the only requirement is regular mail with a certificate of service. This process would be much faster than the certified mail process, as well as significantly cheaper. Section 401.(A) of the bylaws states that the ZA *may* require the warnings be sent by certified mail. Language may need to be clarified but it appears current bylaws allow the ZA to determine level of service.
- c. Phasing of Development – Section 426.H states that only three building permits can be issued for new developments in any calendar year. S. Rooney questioned why this bylaw existed and whether or not it should still be there.
- d. S. Rooney asked why the “minor modifications” section was removed from the proposed bylaws. PC explained that a previous ZA had asked for it to be removed. S. Rooney requested it be put back.

2. Discussion of Draft Bylaws:

- a. There was no response from ACRPC regarding the PC’s specific questions on the ROD.
- b. While the density charts only discuss number of dwelling units per acre, the bylaws do define a “multi-family dwelling” (triplex or more) and “two-family home” (duplex) as buildings with multiple individual dwelling units. Since under the HOME Act, the state allows duplexes in any district zoned for single-family homes, wording in the density chart may be irrelevant.
- c. Need to get a copy of the river corridor boundaries to include in the bylaws. D. Kuzio to ask ACRPC for this information.
- d. Discussion was had about who will be making all the formatting changes to the document. It is incredibly difficult to work in the document on the web-based version of word, which is all the PC members have access to. It is understood that the office staff is incredibly busy, but Steve Rooney or Amanda Vincent would be the best people in the office to make changes. Unless one of the PC members can be given a license or a computer with a license.

MOTION: D. Kuzio moves to send bylaw revisions to the Selectboard. D. Schmidt seconds.

DISCUSSION: Confirmed the correct use tables

VOTE: All in favor

3. Approve any outstanding minutes:

- a. Minutes from the 9/4 meeting were reviewed

MOTION: D. Schmidt moves to approve the 9/4 minutes. D. Kuzio seconds

VOTE: All in favor

- b. Minutes from the 8/7 meeting were reviewed

MOTION: L. McCarthy moves to approve the 8/7 minutes. D. Schmidt seconds

VOTE: All in favor

4. PC Roundtable

- a. D. Casey asked about the status of the Jerusalem Community Center Project. Construction to begin on or around March 1 since there is no viable storage location for the fire truck in the winter. The construction crew was at the site for a few hours last week poking around. Estimates are in the works, and the management team is in conversations with the ZA to secure a permit.
- b. Brief discussion of the land going up for auction on Route 116 and how it could potentially fit in with the Community Land Trust model.
- c. D. Schmidt said the Selectboard asked him to talk about the Zoning Fee Schedule with the PC. There is no mention of how to assess fees on town projects. Historically the town has never charged itself for permit fees but there is nothing in the bylaws saying that. Discussion ensued. Section 400.A states the Selectboard may establish "reasonable fees." The PC feels a reasonable fee for a Town project is \$0.
- d. Discussion of agenda for 10/2. The consultant for the Municipal Planning Grant will be in town on 10/2 touring the area and would like to meet the Planning Commission. Discussion of Act 181, Selectboard response, ZA updates as needed.
- e. Tom Perry asked to speak. He is concerned that the town is not engaged with the process of the bylaw edits. He is going to put something in Front Porch Forum regarding the changes being proposed.

Motion: L. McCarthy moves to adjourn. D. Schmidt seconds.

Vote: All in favor

Meeting adjourned at 9:00

Minutes submitted by L. McCarthy