

Town of Starksboro
Planning Commission
Minutes (APPROVED)
September 4, 2025

Present: Dennis Casey, David Schmidt, Luke McCarthy, Dan Nugent
Unable to Attend: Dan Kuzio
Others Present: Steve Rooney (Zoning Administrator) Robert Turner
Visitors: Tom Perry

Meeting called to order by Chair Dennis Casey at 6:31pm

Visitors Business: R. Turner commented on the results of the Public Hearing and renewed his concerns about the Recreational Overlay District. Primarily, the concern is the process the PC took to create this area and whether or not it is truly an overlay district, or a new land use district. If it's technically a new land use district, did the PC comply with the process outlined in 24 VSA 117? It also does not meet the traditional definition of an overlay district. Although the ACRPC has reviewed the proposed bylaws as a whole, R. Turner strongly recommends asking pointed questions specifically about the ROD again. There is also a general question about the new 800 foot road rule and its applicability and compatibility with the proposed ROD.

PC Current Business:

1. Municipal Planning Grant Update:
 - a. R. Turner gave the PC an update about the implementation of the planning grant. They had their first meeting to discuss the process, expectations, and concerns. Process involving community housing trusts and their potential implementation will involve research, public meetings, etc.
2. ZA Updates:
 - a. S. Rooney discussed several changes to the bylaws that should be made in a future update.
 - b. For present updates, suggestions were made for language changes in the ROD section including better defining certain uses. A general comment was made to better define what a "dwelling" is and what an "accessory dwelling unit" is since it is used frequently in the bylaws.
 - c. S. Rooney questioned some of the designations in the use tables and their applicability in certain districts.
3. Discussion of Public Meeting:
 - a. Continuing on the topic of the use tables, the PC realized that some of the designations in the ROD and FC districts listed in the current use table are different than those in the first set of by-law edits which are different than the most recent edits. At some point along the way they got mixed up.
 - b. The use tables were discussed line by line to rectify any errors. Multiple potential uses (healthcare, daycare, etc.) were removed from the ROD/FC districts.
 - c. The density tables were also briefly reviewed and it was noted that even though the state allows for duplexes in all zoning districts now, our density tables do not reflect this fact. Densities are currently determined by number of dwelling units per acre.
 - d. One intended change to the bylaws that was announced at the Public Meeting was changing the use tables to read that uses not listed would be automatic conditional use permits, as opposed to "not permitted" which is the current language. That change was never made to the warned and published bylaw edits, so it is unlikely to change.
 - e. Vote to accept all changes to take place at subsequent meetings.

4. Potential vote to refer draft bylaws to the Selectboard.
 - a. No vote
5. Approve any outstanding minutes:
 - a. Tabled for next meeting
6. PC Roundtable
 - a. PC members had nothing to discuss
 - b. T. Perry asked if he could comment. All agreed. Asked about private landing areas in the bylaws and voiced concern about whether or not the town could regulate them given the language in the bylaws. Discussion ensued about how the DRB can place conditions on anything they want as long those conditions are consistent. The language in the bylaws is a broad outline of what the DRB should consider when applying for a private landing area, but the DRB can place conditions on the site based on the information received.

Motion: D. Nugent moves to adjourn. D. Schmidt seconds.

Vote: All in favor

Meeting adjourned at 9:00

Minutes submitted by L. McCarthy