

Planning Commission

October 20, 2022

Unapproved

Board members present: Dennis Casey, Dan Nugent, Denny Barnard, Lexy Thompson, David Schmidt

Unable to attend: Jeff Keeney, Brad Boss

Others present: Rebecca Elder, Susan Thompson, Katie Antos-Ketcham, Carin McCarthy

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dennis Casey at 6:35 p.m. in person and on Zoom.

No changes to the agenda.

No visitors present (other than on agenda).

New Planning Commissioner

Welcome was expressed to Alexsys “Lexy” Thompson as a new planning commission board member. The Selectboard appointed Lexy to fill the vacancy created by Dan Harris’ resignation. She will fill the seat until the elections in March 2023.

Library and Town Hall planning goals

Katie Antos-Ketcham and Susan Thompson, Starksboro Library Trustees, attended to talk with the PC about the current work at the library and goals for the future. They gave a brief history of the library board and described the turn-over with the retirement of several long-serving trustees who were foundational for the establishment of the library. During the last few years, the library board revised their vision statement and created a mission statement to help guide their work.

They described the changing role of libraries in communities. The library is a place for “connection” not just a collection of books. The library serves as a community living room of sorts. Though it is only open 3 days a week for now, they hope to expand offerings and hours in the future.

The board is looking at the building, which is an asset and resource for the whole town. They have submitted an ARPA funding proposal to help address ventilation and heating issues that would improve the air quality, help with bad circulation, and allow the library to have both heating and cooling, which would allow the building to serve as a cooling center in the heat of the summer.

The library trustees are also looking at accessibility issues: the second floor is not usable for public events because it is not accessible. However, even the first floor has challenges because there is no signed and accessible parking by the entrance. The front doors are a bit crowded to go through for walkers and wheelchairs. Dennis Casey suggested he connect them with a colleague in Lincoln who is retired from labor and industry, but may be able to offer suggestions that would be cost-effective. There is also no compliance for the back emergency exit.

Ove the last couple years, the library held some “community conversations” to gather input from community members and stakeholders. They will share the results of those conversations with the PC. They also have a report from PTV associated architect who gave an initial proposal to consider. An exterior stairwell would be required. The library is housed in an historic building and one that is of

interest to preserve in the village. The local legislators have expressed interest in the project. The trustees are mapping out funding sources and opportunities.

Bylaws Discussion

Denny opened the discussion about bylaw revisions. Rebecca provided the group with the list of priorities along with language from the current bylaws to begin editing.

Carin McCarthy attended and spoke about the B&B business that she and her husband, Luke, own on Russell Young Road in S. Starksboro. The business was approved under a previous set of bylaws with conditions set accordingly. They are limited to 3 bedrooms and are not permitted to service food to any guests who are not staying on site. This limits their ability to host small events or day guests (they would like to offer things like book groups, celebrations, and possibly use of their recently remodeled kitchen). They hope to open up possibilities though the opportunity to grow is limited. In addition they are located on a Class 3 Rd so they cannot expand to an Inn of larger size.

The board engaged in a lengthy discussion about ways that businesses such as this can thrive given the current zoning restrictions. Where can the bylaws allow for expanded uses within reason on Class 3 roads? What are the areas for concern (seasonal road conditions, effects on neighbors, lack of parking space, etc.) Denny asked Carin to follow up with any specific ideas or requests for the PC to consider as they delve further into the by revisions.

Sec. 321 Noise

What has been learned through site plan hearings? The current specifications in the bylaws are referring to OSHA standards. These are not the best measurement for noises in residential settings and for uses being considered in zoning decisions.

The group reviewed language used by the Town of Williston regarding noise. All agreed much of the language was appropriate for Starksboro. A few items were eliminated. Revised draft language for the noise section will be circulated for review at a future meeting.

Next meeting: continue revisions with Sec. 322 and 322

Planning Commission Roundtable

Reminder of the MAUSD merger vote on Nov. 8

Next meeting is 11/3/22. Guests Elise Shanbacker and Peter Schneider will join with the Energy Committee to talk about energy efficient solutions for the mobile home park home replacements.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder