

Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes of 6/20/19
Unapproved

Board members: Dennis Casey, Denny Barnard, Jeff Keeney, Brad Boss, Rodney Orvis
Unable to attend: Dan Harris, Dan Nugent
Others present: Rebecca Elder, ZA

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Dennis Casey.

Minutes of June 6, 2019

Motion: Jeff Keeney made a motion to approve the minutes of 6/6/19 as corrected. Rodney Orvis 2nd.

Motion carried.

ZA Rebecca Elder gave an update on the VLCT Planning & Zoning training she attended. The board received information about the process for seeking Village Center designation from the State of Vermont. By doing so, the town would be eligible for additional funding sources for various projects related to historic preservation, community engagement, and other municipal funding grants.

- Village center designation – The board discussed how these designations can be a difficult discussion. The town can end up spending a lot of money restoring buildings but without engagement and planning with the community, the resources expended might not meet the needs of the town. Is the effort justified?
- Could we get a grant for a feasibility study? It would be helpful to have a professional assessment of what kinds of businesses would be feasible to be in Starksboro. Often a town will have an “anchor business” – what that might be in our town?
- The anchor could be an ag based business—it can be anything that gets people to stop here. It would be best to have a business that doesn't depend on state \$ to continue.
- Are there properties that the Town may want to purchase or invest in when they become available? Feasibility study may help identify such properties.
- How can the piece of usable land behind the municipal offices be best utilized? What would the town like to see there? Community center? Residential space for elder housing?
- Cota Field is a underutilized resources in town. There could be a farmer's market there like other local towns (Hinesburg, Richmond, etc)
- How can we get the word out?

The Town of Starksboro was awarded a grant from the Vermont Agency of Commerce to install an electric vehicle (EV) charging station behind the municipal offices. The grant award covers 90% of the costs associated with the installation and equipment. The Energy committee was able to secure additional funding from VTrans for the remaining 10% of the costs. Jeff Dunham will coordinate with the ZA, PC, and the Road Foreman regarding final placement and signage needed.

Community survey idea: The board discussed creating a community survey to help inform some of the ideas and topics above. Some ideas for the survey to get community input:

1. EV charging stations
2. Wood processing operations

3. Junkyards – should Starksboro adopt the State regs (4 or more, etc.) and should it be enforced by the town?
4. Cannabis (marijuana) retail market: Should Starksboro allow retail business related to the legalized cannabis in Vermont? What's your opinion of cannabis in terms of growing, marketing...what should we encourage vs. not encourage? This topic is one that VLCT advised towns to be thinking about. The State is still determining what the marketplace will look like in our State but implementation will occur on the local level. How do residents feel about it? Ask people to share their opinions in the survey.
5. Village Center designation – Would you support the town seeking this designation? If not, why?

Bylaw review discussion continued

Revoking a conditional use permit – bylaws don't speak specifically to the authority to revoke a permit issued by the DRB. The bylaws outline the steps for enforcement by the ZA. The board discussed how the DRB can write in the decision and address the compliance requirements. If a condition of the permit is not abided by, then the applicant is in violation.

Motion: Denny Barnard made a motion to adjourn at 9:15 p.m. Rodney Orvis 2nd

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder, ZA