

# Starksboro Unified Zoning Bylaw Amendment Report

Prepared for draft Unified Zoning Bylaw dated September 16, 2019

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The Starksboro Planning Commission has proposed a list of minor revisions to Starksboro's existing Land Use and Development Regulations (Zoning Bylaws). Residents are hereby notified that these draft Bylaws will be discussed at a public hearing hosted by the Planning Commission. The hearing will be held on **Thursday, October 17, 2019 at 7:00 PM at Robinson Elementary School, Starksboro, Vermont**. Property owners and residents of Starksboro may find a copy of the proposed Bylaws on the Town website [starksborovt.org/bylaws](http://starksborovt.org/bylaws) or by stopping by the Town office during regular business hours.

In accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4441(c) the Starksboro Planning Commission presents this report on the amendments proposed to the Starksboro Zoning Bylaws. Starksboro first adopted zoning regulations in 1993, then made minor amendments to them in 1998 and 2006. Starksboro adopted a comprehensive Town Plan in 2011 that outlined many proposed amendments to the Town's Zoning Bylaws. The Town Plan was revised again in 2018 and was approved by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission.

Bylaws impact all property rights in one way or another. The Planning Commission recommends that all Starksboro residents review this document and the proposed revisions. The Planning Commission works diligently to balance individual property rights with the needs of residents and the whole community. That balance can be difficult to strike and therefore the board engages in an ongoing review of the Bylaws and these amendments reflect the outcome of discussions over the past two years. The foundation for the board's work on continual improvements to the Bylaws is rooted in the Town Plan, which is the guiding document and vision. The proposed amendments reflect language in support of energy goals and incentives to support affordable or elderly housing in perpetuity among other changes.

Starksboro's 2018 Town Plan includes a comprehensive "Enhanced Energy Plan" to help guide the town in our collective responsibility to help reduce and conserve the energy we all use. The town's goals from the Town Plan are:

- Maintain the land base needed to support environmentally sustainable and economically viable farming and forestry in town, thus preserving our rural way of life.
- Preserve the interrelated values of community, neighborliness, independence and privacy essential to Starksboro's small town character.
- Guide the land use and development of the town to protect the health of the natural environment and the scenic landscape around us.
- Guide the land use and development of the town to help protect the long-term interests of the community, while minimizing infringements on individual rights.
- Restrain rapid, large-scale or otherwise inappropriate growth that would negatively affect Starksboro's fiscal condition, environmental quality, and/or rural character.
- Protect and enhance the natural resources of the town for the health, safety, and enjoyment of all residents, current and future.

- Protect the health of residents through the maintenance of a clean environment, and safe and adequate water supply.
- Mitigate, the impacts of development on clean water, clean air, soils, forests and wildlife to the extent possible.
- Support our working landscapes – farms, forests and sugar bushes – and the livelihoods of residents who make their living off the land.
- Support the stewardship of natural resources in ways that do not degrade the resource.

The unified land use and development regulations are the town’s implementation tool for the goals, policies, and objectives laid out in the Town Plan. All land development applications that cannot be handled administratively by the Zoning Administrator are referred to the Development Review Board (DRB). The DRB is an independently appointed board of residents that reviews applications in a quasi-judicial capacity based on the criteria outlined in the Bylaws.

The draft amendments to these Bylaws strengthen standards required for land development and the impacts to natural resources features of the area. The Bylaw standards aim to guide the DRB in the development review process by providing clear direction as to the type of appropriate development Starksboro desires.

**The changes proposed to the Unified Bylaws include:**

1. Incorporation of all items adopted by the Selectboard on October 11, 2016 as “Interim Zoning Amendments”. Changes were made to Sections 113.A, 211-figure 4, 251.A, 251.B, 325.B, 358.E, 510.C, 510.H, 510.L, 510.N, and 510.S.
2. Clarifying edits to Sections 113.A, 122.D, and 124.C.
3. Chapter 210
  - a. Figure 3 - Insertion of Electric Vehicle charging stations, both residential and commercial uses
  - b. Figure 4 – Clarifying edit to residential density line
4. Section 311.B – new language regarding driveways; renumber section
5. Section 313.G – New language regarding Electric Vehicle Parking
6. Section 317.G – New language regarding Electric Vehicle Charging Station Identification Signs
7. Section 342.A – Clarifying edit to wording for home-based businesses.
8. Section 342.B – Change of percentages in Value-Added Processing and Manufacturing.
9. Section 345.A – Addition of language regarding size of replacement structures in Mobile Home Parks.
10. Section. 414.E – Correction of statutory reference.
11. Section 426.I – Insert statutory reference.
12. Section 510 – Definitions – Insertion of new definitions
  - a. 510.C – Contractor Yard
  - b. 510.C – Delete cottage industry
  - c. 510.E – Insert Electric Vehicle Charging Station
  - d. 510.F – Insert Forest Products Processing and Forestry; addition to Fueling Station
  - e. 510.H – Insert Home Industry
  - f. 510.S – Correction to Significant Ecological Resources and Significant Natural Areas.

The Planning Commission has drafted this summary report to help residents review the proposed amendments easily. Please note that the public hearing has been scheduled so the Planning Commission can receive public comments on the proposed changes to Bylaws. Copies of the proposed Bylaws are available at the Town Office or on the Town website. Additionally, questions and/or comments can be directed in person or submitted in writing to any Planning Commission member or Rebecca Elder, ZA.

Respectfully,

Starksboro Planning Commission,  
Dennis Casey, Chair  
Jeff Keeney, Vice Chair  
Denny Barnard  
Brad Boss  
Dan Harris  
Dan Nugent  
Rodney Orvis