

TOWN OF CASTLETON
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, March 26, 2019 at 7:00pm
Castleton Town Offices
263 VT – 30
Castleton, VT 05732

PRESENT: Joseph Bruno, Planning Commission Vice Chair; Robert Franzoni, Planning Commission Member; Val Waldron, Planning Commission Member; Jonas Rosenthal, Zoning Administrator; Eliza LeBrun, Recording Secretary/Planning Commission Alternate; Mr. Julius Rumersna(sp)

MISSING: Janet Currie, Planning Commission Chair; John Pintello, Planning Commission Member

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mr. Bruno called the meeting at 7:10pm.

AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

Mr. Franzoni made a motion to approve the Agenda. Ms. Waldron seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

MINUTES APPROVAL

Minutes were tabled until the next meeting of the Planning Commission as there are not enough members present tonight that were present on March 12, 2019, to vote. There was discussion over whether the minutes of March 12, 2019 could be approved as there was not a quorum present and it was not an official Planning Commission meeting due to the lack of a quorum. Although it was noted that Ms. LeBrun was made an alternate member of the Planning Commission last night (March 25, 2019) and she was present at the meeting of March 12, 2019, she had not yet been appointed so could not vote.

DISCUSSION

COMMENCE REVIEW OF ZONING SECTIONS

Mr. Rosenthal pointed out that at a previous meeting it had been decided to discuss exemptions prior to discussing zoning sections.

REVIEW TOPICS FOR VILLAGE DESIGNATIONS PRESENTATION

Mr. Rosenthal shared that the Village designations were approved yesterday, March 25, 2019. The Grange building is being added to the Village designations map which is being worked on by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. The Commission will get a letter of approval for the Village Center Designations. Mr. Rosenthal and Ms. Currie discussed having the Agency of Commerce and Community Development come to Castleton to discuss tax credit eligibility with local businesses owners and owners of multifamily dwellings. Moving forward, any code improvements can get up to 50% tax credit. At a previous meeting it was discussed that having a database of property owners in the Villages would be extremely beneficial.

It was noted that there is a new business going in on 4A that may also be eligible for some tax credits. Mr. Rosenthal was told it was important to caution the business owner to take pictures of the interior and exterior of the building before and after the renovations. Mr. Rosenthal can then send them to Caitlin Corkins at the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. Mr. Rosenthal stated that it would be best if the Agency was invited to the site for a visit as they must approve the eligibility for tax credits.

The work on the former Lake Bomoseen Inn (also formerly known as The Dog) also needs pictures. Mr. Rosenthal stated that they are eligible for tax credits, but he is not sure that the credits will be retro the entire 6 years the building has been under renovations.

DISCUSS FORMING A STEERING COMMITTEE

Mr. Rosenthal informed the Commission that there were ten (10) applications submitted for the Better Connections Grant. Three (3) of those were approved. Two (2) of those were communities that were rejected previously. One of the things recommended was to talk about putting together steering committees and ideas that the community would be interested in addressing. This will be helpful in beginning the process for next year.

The Vermont Council on Rural Development do community visits. The Council holds public meetings to determine what ideas the community would like to work on and assist in focusing those to feasible projects.

Mrs. Waldron believes that there was an Economic Development Study done by Michael Crane in 2016 that listed what types of things would work in Castleton. Mr. Rosenthal confirmed that this report was utilized in writing the Better Connections Grant.

Mr. Rosenthal shared that Town Manager, Mike Jones had called Paul Costello of the Vermont Council on Rural Development to determine if he would be willing to speak to the Select Board and give a presentation to them and other community leaders about holding public meetings to establish steering committees. Mr. Jones reported to Mr. Rosenthal that Select Board Chair, Jim Leamy thought it was a good idea.

Mrs. Waldron believes that it would be a good idea for the Design Review Board and the Planning Commission to attend as well.

Mr. Rosenthal shared that he had asked the Select Board to approve a motion last night to allow him (Mr. Rosenthal) to issue a letter of notification for the Northern Border Grant. The Northern Border Grant is a federal grant program that targets distressed communities in Vermont, Northern New York, Maine and New Hampshire for assistance with any infrastructure projects related to economic development.

Discussion was held on what types of projects this grant could assist with. Several projects within the Town would be ideal and issues with gaps in telecommunications in the Castleton area could also be addressed. Projects have one (1) year to raise matching funds and three (3) years to complete the projects. Mr. Rosenthal noted that these funds do not pay for repairs to current infrastructure, just new infrastructure. The grant has a large list of projects which would be considered eligible. This year there are \$3.5 million dollars available to Vermont.

Mr. Bruno asked how to start or go about forming a steering committee.

Mr. Rosenthal stated that the Town Manager will work with the Select Board to begin. The Planning Commission could suggest individuals for the steering committees. The Select Board would need to invite the Vermont Council on Rural Development down for a public meeting. The Public Meeting would not be a Select Board meeting but would need the Town Moderator to attend. Discussion continued on the different projects that the Town of Castleton may have that would be eligible.

Mrs. Waldron commented that this is a step in the right direction.

EXEMPTIONS IN ZONING

Mr. Rosenthal passed out Leicester Unified Development Regulations and the Town of Castleton's exemptions from zoning (Section 1021). The Commission compared the two (2) lists side by side. It was noted that Leicester's regulations were drafted by an attorney.

Mr. Rosenthal noted that items #1, #2 and #3 under the Leicester regulations cite statutes so would recommend including them. The Commission agreed.

The Commission discussed item #4 under the Leicester regulations regarding farm structures. Again, there was a statute cited for the definition of a farm. The Commission discussed whether there were conflicts with the Castleton exemptions for sheds and setbacks. None were determined.

The Commission discussed item #5 under the Leicester regulations regarding not restricting hunting, fishing and trapping. It was noted the Town of Castleton did not have a regulation like this.

Mr. Bruno would like to have some kind of restriction on the areas that guns can be fired in Town. Mr. Rosenthal and Mr. Bruno agree that this is more of a topic for the Select Board to address with an ordinance.

The Commission discussed item #6 under the Leicester regulations regarding fences and stone walls no more than three (3) feet in height in the Lakeshore Districts. The Commission would like to change this to be no more than six (6) feet in height in the Lakeshore Districts.

The Commission discussed item #7 under the Leicester regulations regarding deck or unroofed porch differences. The Commission determined that there is no difference between a deck and an uncovered porch. Mrs. Waldron suggested eliminating covered or uncovered and clarifying the difference between a deck and a porch in definitions. Mr. Bruno believed that by leaving the language as it is, it is clear whether it is a covered or uncovered deck.

The Commission discussed item #8 under the Leicester regulations regarding uncovered lake shore decks. It was noted that the exemptions of Leicester included the updated Act 250 regulations.

The Commission liked items #9, #10, and #11 under the Leicester regulations.

The Commission discussed item #12 under the Leicester regulations regarding posting signs under six (6) square feet. Mrs. Waldron would like to see businesses take their signs with them or down when they close or move.

The Commission had no issue with item #13 under the Leicester regulations.

The Commission discussed item #14 under the Leicester regulations regarding temporary roadside farm stands. The Commission agreed to remove subsection e.

The Commission discussed item #15 under the Leicester regulations regarding renovations to the interior or exterior that do not alter or change its use or size. Discussion was had as to whether or not changing the exterior of a building would increase its value.

The Commission discussed item #16 under the Leicester regulations regarding tag, yard, lawn or garage sales. The question was raised on enforcement for this regulation. The Commission liked the regulation.

The Commission had no issue with item #17 under the Leicester regulations.

The Commission discussed item #18 under the Leicester regulations regarding certain government and community facilities. Mrs. Waldron asked to add a definition of what is considered a community facility.

The Commission had no issue with item #19 under the Leicester regulations.

The Commission had no issue with item #20 under the Leicester regulations.

The Commission discussed item #21 under the Leicester regulations regarding home occupations that do not alter the buildings or grounds. The Commission decided that they would rather use the Town of Castleton's exemption regulation for home occupations.

REVIEW OTHER TOWNS "TABLE OF CONTENTS"

The Commission agreed to table the review of other Town Table of Contents.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Rosenthal had a question on a zoning permit application on Neshobe Canal Drive. The permit is being requested for a garage with a forty (40) foot center setback to the edge of the property. There is a fifteen (15) foot right of way that goes thru the property as well.

Mr. Bruno noted that his understanding was that if the applicant owns the property, they can use the right of way as part of the setback.

The zoning requires fifty (50) foot setbacks for that location. The applicant will need to go to the DRB for a variance. Mr. Rosenthal will contact the applicant as the design does not appear to meet the setback requirements.

There was discussion regarding a deck on a non-conforming property. There are several pieces of information needed to confirm exemptions. Mr. Rosenthal will double check the application.

EXECUTIVE SESSION None need.

ADJOURN

Mr. Franzoni made a motion to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 8:47p.m. Mrs. Waldron seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted; Eliza LeBrun, Recording Secretary