

~~Draft (corrected)~~ Approved (with correction)
West Rutland Planning Commission (PC) Meeting Minutes
January 5, 2022 6:30pm Town Offices, 35 Marble St.

Call to Order:

Members Present: D. Lincoln (Chair), Michael Brzoza (Vice-Chair), Sean Barrows, Leona Minard

Also Present: Jeffrey Biasuzzi (as Alternate & Recorder), Mary Cohen (Exec. Director. Housing Trust of Rutland Co.)
Attending remotely (Zoom): Ed Bove (Director, Rutland Regional Planning Commission)

Chair D. Lincoln called the Meeting to Order at 6:38 pm, and led the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.
The Meeting was not electronically recorded.

Agenda:

M. Brzoza made a Motion to accept the draft agenda. S. Barrows seconded, all approved, and Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes:

L. Minard made a Motion to approve the December 1, 2021 minutes. M. Brzoza seconded, all approved and Motion passed.

Open Meeting-Public Input: There was no Public input.

Review of proposed amendments to Zoning Regulations:

Mary Cohen introduced details of a multi-family housing project sponsored by the Housing Trust and development/investment firm Evernorth. At this time, an initial agreement is in place to purchase two adjacent parcels (#26-0010398 & 00103326) from Chris Brown (aka Bluebird Capitol) on the north side of Main Street, totaling 0.58 acres in area. The Sponsors have hired Enman & Kesselring Consulting Engineers, and M. Cohen provided preliminary building schematics and a Site Plan prepared by Patrick Griffin (P.E.). This described proposed construction of one three -story structure, having a total of 25 Dwelling Units (DU); 20 being 1-bedroom, and 5 being 2-bedroom design. The structure would cover 50% of the Lot area and the total impervious surface coverage (including 19 on-site parking spaces) is estimated at 80%.

D. Lincoln asked about off-site parking options to make up the shortfall of spaces required by current zoning (9), or by having at least one space per DU (6). M. Cohen cited experience with existing projects, which often resulted in many mandated spaces going unused. Currents residents today may not own a vehicle, and rely on public transportation.

M. Brzoza asked how spaces would be assigned. M. Cohen stated certain DUs would be assigned a specific space and some DUs would not include on-site parking.

S. Barrows mentioned the possibility of developing nearby off-site parking at the Riggs property (E. Bove noted that site has a “clean” environmental site review), nearby commercial business lots, or the Marble St. lot across from Town Office.

L. Minard asked about possibly elevating the building to allow for at (or below) grade parking.

D. Lincoln noted the eight foot street setback proposed. E. Bove discussed how having the building closer to the sidewalk improved pedestrian’s sense of security, and had a “calming” effect on traffic. S. Barrows and M. Brzoza stated their support for the building’s location close to the Street line.

Lot Coverage was reviewed. E. Bove noted that many Town zoning rules still reflect a 50+/- year old “suburban” approach to land use, requiring larger parcels and maintaining considerable open space. This no longer works when attempting to maximize housing space in existing urban areas.

J. Biasuzzi asked if Flood Hazard issues on the property have been addressed. The engineer reports the proposed building would be eight inches above B.F.E. There may be some issues with the existing ground drainage system to address.

Discussion then focused on amendments to current zoning needed to address greater utilization of the Town’s open parcels. Changes to rules that allowed variances would not address the ability to adapt to a specific project. Setback Waivers (not currently mentioned in the Zoning rules) could authorize the Development Review Board to consider a

specific project's "fit" on a property. Reviewing other Town's zoning that included Setback Waivers (example: Brandon & Sunderland) was to be initiated by the ZA before the February PC meeting. L. Minard noted that applying changes to prescribed rules need to be administered on some uniform basis or standards. The ZA, with the assistance of PC Members available, will organize an effort to draft proposed amendment language for Multi-Family and PUD rules before the next meeting.

J. Biasuzzi discussed the draft amendment proposed for the Zoning map, which would include Mary's Diner, the former Cash Market, and the C. Brown properties in the proposed Village Zoning District, and possible eligibility for Designated Village District tax incentives in the future.

The PC thanked Mary & Ed for their input, who then left the meeting. The Members continued review of the Site Plan presented and commented on:

1. The parking lot did not appear to address seasonal snow piling or storage, without a reduction of parking spaces. Plowing the Access Driveway appeared to provide little snow bank clearance from the fence along the eastern property line, or the side walk along the west side of the Access Drive. One suggestion was to relocate the Dumpster location, and angle the sidewalk to be closer to the main building (see attached schematic)
2. Several Members agreed that the design for the southern elevation of the proposed building lacked visual appeal. While understanding that this design is still very preliminary, majority opinion was to better mimic existing architecture in the Village (example: Kazon Building) by including window symmetry along the entire wall, soffit and corner detail, etc.

Zoning Administrator & RRPC Representative reports: There was no reports presented or discussion held.

Meeting Schedule:

The next scheduled P.C. meeting is for **Wednesday February 2, 2022, at regular time of 6:30 pm** at Town Office.

Adjournment:

L. Minard Moved to conclude the Meeting; S. Barrows seconded, All approved and the Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted by J. Biasuzzi

Approved w/ Correction 2/2/2022

Following Attachments are in Zoning files

- a. Site Plan; depicting some snow removal design.
- b. Examples of existing Village architecture