

TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Minutes for July 6, 2011 Meeting
Approved on August 3, 2011

Commission Members Present: Mark Letorney (Chair), Jeremy Berger, Gordon Gebauer, Daniel Strobridge and Seth Jensen.

Commission Members Absent: n/a

Also Present: Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator).

The meeting began at approximately 7:04 p.m.

Specific Performance Standards For Gas Stations

The Commission agreed gas stations should only be allowed in the Town Common District as a conditional use.

Seth said the Commission should look into creating form based zoning for gas stations and suggested Commissioners find examples of good looking stations.

The Commission discussed the possibility of limiting the number of pumping islands and gas pumps to encourage development of gas stations that are in keeping with character of the village.

The Commission agreed to limit islands to one and pumps to two.

The Commission agreed car washes should not be permitted in the Town Center Area due to water and wastewater restrictions and concerns near the Browns River.

Seth said he felt the lighting standards in the draft performance standards would likely be sufficient to cover gas stations.

The Commission asked Melissa to strengthen the language by inserting “shall” throughout.

Seth suggested the Commission look at Jericho’s gas station definition. He added that gas stations typically look to develop on roads that receive 3000 trips per day so it’s not out of the realm of possibility that a developer would want to place a station on Route 128.

PUD Density Bonuses for Donation of Public Spaces & Allowing For Mixed Use PUD

Seth suggested we grant density bonuses when there is a mechanism to ensure management of an open space.

Mark thought it should be required that all subdivisions have a mechanism to manage open space. If it’s a wood lot the town should require a forest management plan and a agricultural plan if crop land.

Jeremy said developers donating land to the town for public ownership should be granted a density bonus.

Seth mentioned that lands held by the Vermont Land Trust or lands in private ownership are more likely to be used for the purpose of forestry and agriculture. Seth also stated that hunting grounds were an important part of Vermont heritage, but hunters are losing hunting grounds quickly. Seth suggested that areas designated for hunting should be granted a density bonus.

The commission began discussions on transferrable density bonuses.

Mark suggested the Commission correlate the average lot assessment with the monetary worth of the donation when determining the number of transferable density bonuses.

The Commission agreed to allow density bonus transfers for public good projects located in the Town Center Area only.

Seth said individuals should be able to donate engineering, material, labor and/or money to be placed in a Town Center Reserve Fund for public good projects in the area. He added that in-kind work would need to go through the legal contracting process and the individual would need liability insurance.

Seth suggested the Commission call the public good density bonus the Town Center Improvement Bonus as opposed to the Transferable Density Bonus to clarify the intent of the language.

Melissa said she would revise and integrate the draft language.

Commercial Use Standards and Definitions

The Commission agreed catering should be classified as a home business under the new definition for home business and agreed to add Jericho's definitions for restaurant and tavern. The Commission agreed to allow both of those uses in the Town Common and Town Village Districts as conditional uses.

Seth stated his concern that allowing them in the AFR 2 District would likely cause strip development.

Minutes of the June 1, 2011 Meeting

Seth MOVED to approve the minutes.

Jeremy SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 4-0.

Gordon abstained.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:10 p.m.

Submitted by,

Melissa Manka, Planning Coordinator