

03-10 Meeting Summary: Zoning Bylaws, Infrastructure, and Community Issues

Zoning Bylaws Infrastructure Development Short-term Rentals

Meeting Information

- Date & Time: 2025-03-10 17:59:22
- Location: [Insert Location]
- Attendees: [Brent Bammarito, PC Vice Chair] [Jen Greenfield, PC Chair] [Pam Spaulding, PC] [Speaker 1] [Speaker 8] [Stephen Twitchell, PC Clerk] [Trevor Powers, PC] [Will Goodwin, Zoning Admin]

Meeting Notes

1. Planning Commission Meeting on Agenda Adjustments and Zoning Bylaws

- **Meeting Agenda Adjustments**
Pam Spaulding proposed changes to the meeting agenda, moving items from old business to new business and tabling the acceptance of minutes.
- **Wyndham Regional Status and Zoning Bylaws**
Discussion on the Wyndham regional status and assistance with new zoning bylaws. Jen Greenfield mentioned a meeting with Wyndham regional representatives and the need for their help.
- **Zoning Bylaws Review**
The group discussed the progress on updating zoning bylaws, including the need to categorize uses and address new uses like primitive camps and short-term rentals.
- **Map Adjustments**
Will Goodwin suggested keeping the old map with some tweaks, particularly around Smith's Mill, to avoid spot zoning.

Conclusion

1. The motion was accepted.
2. Wyndham regional representatives will assist with specific questions but won't approve the bylaws.

3. The group is working on categorizing uses and addressing new uses in the zoning bylaws.
4. The group is considering expanding zoning around Smith's Mill to include residential spots.

2. Zoning and Infrastructure Development

- **Zoning Changes**

Discussion on converting residential areas to commercial zones, specifically around Smith Mill and other properties. Considerations include the impact on residents, property value, and potential for multi-use developments.

- **Village Wastewater System**

Updates on the progress of the village wastewater system, which is 90% complete for the South Village. Discussion on how this might affect zoning and property development.

- **FEMA Map and River Corridor**

Concerns about the upcoming 2028 FEMA map affecting properties in the River Corridor, impacting insurance and mortgage options for homeowners.

3. Zoning and Land Use Regulations

- **Lawrence Hill Bridge and Dam Removal**

Discussion on the potential impact of removing the Lawrence Hill Bridge and dam, which could lower water levels significantly. Concerns about community resistance and involvement of FEMA were mentioned.

- **Zoning and Permits**

The meeting covered various zoning and permit issues, including the classification of home businesses, short-term rentals, and the allowance of certain facilities in different districts. There was a focus on aligning state mandates with local zoning laws.

- **Commercial and Residential Districts**

Discussion on the classification and allowance of different types of businesses and facilities in commercial and residential districts, including healthcare facilities, daycare centers, and retail stores.

- **Firewood Processing as Home Business**

Discussion on whether firewood processing should be classified as a home business, considering the noise and operational aspects. Various perspectives on the impact of such businesses were shared.

- **Tank Farms and Waste Services**

Concerns about the placement of tank farms and waste services in certain areas, with discussions on potential bans and the impact on local communities.

Conclusion

1. No conclusion reached, ongoing discussions with FEMA.

2. No definitive conclusions, ongoing review of zoning laws.
3. No final decisions, further review needed.
4. No conclusion, further clarification needed.
5. No conclusion, further investigation required.

4. Zoning and District Regulations

- **Zoning Regulations**

Discussion on zoning regulations for various districts including government facilities, educational institutions, and farm stands. The need to align commercial districts and the conservation district's boundaries was highlighted.

- **Conservation District**

The conservation district's boundaries and regulations were discussed, including the impact on wildlife and erosion. The possibility of lowering the active 50 requirement from 2,500 feet to 2,000 feet was mentioned.

- **Village Residential and Commercial Districts**

Discussion on the differences between Village Residential and RR1 districts, and whether to make them more or less commercial. The issue of buildable lot sizes was also raised.

- **Document Formatting Issues**

Challenges with document formatting due to software changes were discussed, including issues with section references and formatting consistency.

- **Travel Plans**

Personal travel plans were shared, including trips to Paris and discussions about airline experiences.

5. Minute-taker services and compliance with open meeting laws

- **Minute-taker services**

The committee discussed the need for a minute-taker and the possibility of hiring Sheila for the role. Pam Spaulding mentioned issues with the current minute formatting and compliance with open meeting laws. They considered using AI for draft minutes and discussed the challenges of posting minutes on the town website within the required timeframe.

- **Open meeting law compliance**

The committee addressed an anonymous complaint about not producing draft minutes in a timely manner, acknowledging the violation and discussing remedial steps, including using AI technology for drafts.

- **Short-term rental regulations**

The committee discussed ongoing work on short-term rental regulations, including potential caps on rentals and registration timelines. They also considered aligning the fiscal year with the calendar year for tax purposes.

- **Website and newsletter improvements**

The committee discussed the need for a new website to improve

navigation and ease of posting minutes. They also talked about reviving the town newsletter to keep residents informed.

Conclusion

1. The committee agreed to approve the draft minutes and explore using AI for drafting.
2. The committee acknowledged the violation and agreed to use AI technology to improve compliance.
3. The committee is close to finalizing short-term rental regulations.
4. The committee plans to improve the website and revive the newsletter.

6. Community Management and Infrastructure Challenges

- **Property Management and Short-term Rentals**

The discussion focused on the responsibilities of property owners and agents in managing short-term rentals, especially in emergencies like floods. The need for local agents and house rules was emphasized.

- **Housing Study**

A new housing study covering various counties in Vermont was mentioned. It addresses issues like homelessness and provides detailed insights into different regions.

- **Fire Department Rivalry and Relocation**

The conversation touched on the rivalry between North and South fire departments and the potential relocation of the South Londonderry Fire Department due to flooding risks.

Conclusion

1. Progress is being made on implementing guidelines, but challenges remain due to state distance.

Next Arrangements

[] Will Goodwin will do homework on commercial districts and make suggestions.

[] Will Goodwin will be away for the next meeting but will send materials.

[] Next meeting will cover the beginning of Chapter 2 and a clean draft of the discussed topics.

[] Approve draft minutes as draft two for submission to the town.

[] Explore using AI for drafting minutes to improve compliance with open meeting laws.

[] Finalize short-term rental regulations in upcoming meetings.

[] Contact Alison to clarify the process for posting approved minutes on the website.

AI Suggestion

AI has identified the following issues that were not concluded in the meeting or lack clear action items; please pay attention:

1. Further discussion is needed on the zoning bylaws, particularly regarding the categorization of uses and the inclusion of new uses like primitive camps and short-term rentals. This is crucial to avoid potential delays in finalizing the zoning bylaws and ensure compliance with state guidelines.
2. The committee needs to finalize the decision on hiring Sheila as the minute-taker and clarify the process for posting approved minutes on the website. Additionally, determine the specifics of using AI for drafting minutes, including management and integration into the current workflow, to ensure timely compliance with open meeting laws.
3. Address the potential insurance and mortgage issues arising from the 2028 FEMA map changes affecting properties in the River Corridor. This requires immediate attention to mitigate risks to property owners.
4. Further discussion is needed on the impact and community response to the Lawrence Hill Bridge and dam removal. Zoning classifications for home businesses, short-term rentals, and various facilities require more clarity and alignment with state mandates.
5. The relocation of the South Londonderry Fire Department is at risk due to potential flooding, and a suitable location needs to be identified to mitigate this risk.