

MINUTES
FAYSTON PLANNING COMMISSION
AUGUST 3, 2015

Members Present: Polly McMurtry, Carol Chamberlin, Jim Halavonich, Fred Gilbert; ZA: John Weir;

Polly called the meeting to order at 5:05p.m.

Members first discussed the Minutes of July 13, 2015. Jim moved to accept and Carol seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Members then discussed the issue of driveways. Specifically, the issue concerns the construction of a driveway without further development (i.e. without concurrent plans to build a dwelling). As the process now stands, a landowner applies to the Select Board for a curb cut. The road foreman will then visit the site after the proposed cut is staked out and ensure the access meets town and state standards. If it does, the curb cut will then be approved. Thereafter, the landowner is free to construct a driveway without permitting from the zoning administrator. This is the case despite the fact that construction of a driveway constitutes “development” under the Fayston Zoning Regulations. Consequently, a landowner with an approved curb cut access can develop a driveway without restriction as to length, slope or the like.

Carol has discussed the issue with Susan Senning (Waitsfield Zoning Administrator) for any feedback she might have. Susan provided some language from either Waitsfield’s zoning regulations or its curb cut application/policy. John will follow up to find out more and where that language came from.

Currently, Section 3.1 (A) includes that “Access permits must be obtained prior to the issuance of a zoning permit.” Polly wondered whether this should be the inverse, instead reading that “Zoning permits must be obtained prior to the issuance of an access permit.” In other words, the zoning administrator could condition a zoning permit on curb cut approval. Board members decided to have a conversation with the Selectboard about the driveway permitting process. Specifically, the town needs to address changing the language of Section 3.1 (A) and/or the process concerning curb cuts.

Members also discussed how to address the length of driveways. Members agreed that there should be a maximum allowable length of a driveway, perhaps 500 feet. In this situation, any driveway that proposes to be longer than 500 feet would trigger conditional use review by the Development Review Board. Polly will call the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to see what information they might have pertaining to restrictions on the length of

driveways. Carol also noted that the town of Enosburg has conservation restrictions for driveway development.

Members then moved on to discuss the mapping of certain areas in the town where resources need the most protection. Ideally, members could generate a map (with the help of members of Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources) that combines either the Tiered Ecological Priorities map (Map 13 of the Ecological Mapping and Build-out Analyses in the Mad River Valley) or the Ecological Conservation Focus Areas Map (Map 1 of the same), with parcel overlays. The goal is create an overlay district on either the Tiered Ecological Priorities map or the Ecological Conservation Areas Focus map in order to map certain areas where resources need the most protection from development. The overlay district could include primary conservation areas, secondary conservation areas, the Forest district, and the Soil and Water Conservation district. Members will continue to work on this, as well as discuss the options with the Selectboard. In addition, members will create language restricting the length of driveways to 500 feet while allowing for longer driveways only under conditional use review by the Development Review Board.

Members then briefly discussed the alternative energy facility siting standards. Additional standards need to be added to the recent Town Plan, which can only be done via an amendment to the 2014 Town Plan. Members will review those standards included the Waitsfield Town Plan and discuss at the next meeting.

The next meetings of the Fayston Planning Commission will be August 17 and August 31, 2015.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:30.