

**TOWN OF STAMFORD**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**August 1, 2022**  
**(UNAPPROVED)**

Planning Commission: Debra Burchard, Chair, Carolyn Brooks, Kurt Gamari, Aaron Malachuk, and Sheila Lawrence.

Daniel Potvin, David Saldo, Maura Hawkins, and Jenifer Hughs were not present.

Visitors: Michael Denault, Marta Miller, Beth Phelps, Debra Righi, James Righi, and Pamela Tworig. Ryan Rush-Booth, Zoning Administrator.

Jim Sullivan, Bennington County Regional Commission.

Lori Shepard, Secretary.

Deb Burchard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. She apologized for the cancelled meeting last month and suggested some procedures for a courteous meeting and proper decorum.

#### DISCUSSION OF THE ZONING BY-LAWS AND BUSINESS IN TOWN

Mike Denault asked what rules the town has for starting a business, who enforces permits, and if businesses are taxed in town. The town clerk and Jim Sullivan provided an overview of the process. Within each district there are uses that are allowed directly by the Zoning Administrator with a permit. Certain home occupations conducted inside the home or a garage that do not change the character of the home, with limited traffic, etc. can be approved by the Zoning Administrator. Some uses, such as those that will have a non-residential impact, require a site plan review by the Planning Commission. Once the Planning Commission approves the site plan, they direct the Zoning Administrator to approve the permit. The only time the Zoning Administrator denies an application is when the project does not meet the standards of the By-laws. Then the property owner can appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a variance. In many instances, it should not be a rejection by the Zoning Administrator, but a referral to the Zoning Board.

The board discussed how new people who move to town learn about the Zoning By-laws and how to make people more aware. Some towns have a sign at their entrance saying Zoning By-Laws in Effect. The Zoning Administrator does not follow up after every permit to be sure that the structure is built as stated on the permit application.

Pam Tworig has received several complaints about certain properties and structures in town. Kurt Gamari felt the town is setting a precedent by allowing a camp in a residential area. Jim Sullivan advised that the Selectboard should not be receiving complaints. All questions, concerns and complaints should be directed to the Zoning Administrator. He determines whether there is a violation or not. If someone feels his decision is wrong, they can appeal his decision to the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Jim Sullivan stated that the Bennington County Regional Commission and the Planning Commission are great resources for the Zoning Administrator if he has questions on how to enforce the By-laws.

The board reviewed the permit application fee and discussed the fee structures in other towns. It was noted that when fees were discussed previously, many felt if the permit fee was too high that more people would build without a permit.

## MINUTES

The board deferred accepting the minutes until the next meeting since not everyone in attendance was at the last meeting.

## BYLAW MODERNIZATION GRANT

Deb Burchard and Jim Sullivan attended the state hearing remotely. The state approved the village center designation, but reduced the size the Planning Commission had hoped for. The designation goes from Bilmont's Country Store to the old Masonic Temple property. Jim Sullivan provided a copy of a map with the approved boundaries for the Planning Commission's review.

Jim Sullivan provided information on various grants that will be available. Some grants have more requirements than others. The next step will be to look at creating a separate village zoning district designed to encourage more mixed-use development. Sheila Lawrence was concerned that people within this new district might be taxed or assessed differently than other zones.

## OLD BUSINESS

Kurt Gamari said he had concerns with section 7.2 of the Zoning By-laws. The Zoning Administrator approves rights-of-way for access to one or two lots. In previous By-laws, the responsibility of approving rights-of-way was shared among a board. Ryan Rush-Booth agreed that it should be a decision for more than one person. Kurt Gamari noted that the width of the right-of-way in this section is different than in other sections. He feels this is an important area and the board should get the language right.

The next Planning Commission meeting will be Monday, August 29, 2022 at 6 p.m.

MOTION by Aaron Malachuk to adjourn. SECONDED by Deb Burchard. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Debra Burchard  
Planning Commission Chair

DB/las