

TOWN OF STAMFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
August 26, 2019
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Planning Commission: Aaron Malachuk, Chair, Stephen Bechtel, Steven Denault, Kurt Gamari, Daniel J. Potvin, and Jenifer Hughs.
Helen Fields, Sheila Lawrence, and David Saldo were not present.
Visitors: James Stimpson and Pat Sullivan.
Lori Shepard, Secretary.

Aaron Malachuk called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and opened with the pledge of allegiance.

HEARING OF VISITORS:

HIGH SPEED INTERNET

Jim Stimpson told the board about the high speed internet presentation at the last Selectboard meeting. Chris Lynch from Matrix Design Group is working with Readsboro and other southern Vermont towns. Stamford would have to pay the fee for the right to attach to each telephone pole. Mr. Lynch suggested there are grants available to help defray these costs. Jim Stimpson felt the Planning Commission should be part of this. Aaron Malachuk will invite him to an upcoming meeting.

BUILDING COMMUNITY GROUP/MUNICIPAL PLANNING GRANT

Pat Sullivan explained that two years ago a group of volunteers with a vision to build a community building at the school began working together. She has searched for many funding sources and grants and discovered the municipal planning grant. She feels if the town applied for the municipal planning grant, it could open many doors for other grants which could fund the community building. She believes designating a village center would allow the Building Community Group to apply for other funds. The grant is through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. If the Planning Commission applied for funding and prioritized a list of top goals for the town, their project would be in a much better position for funding. The grant would pay for expenses to conduct research, send out surveys or hire consultants to collect information. The Planning Commission suggested possible goals such as energy independence and the likelihood of implementing weatherization techniques, the needs of the Seed Savers Group and the Building Community Group, and the high speed internet project. Aaron Malachuk asked board members to consider volunteering to lead this project and will discuss it further at their next meeting.

MINUTES

MOTION by Aaron Malachuk to accept the regular meeting minutes of July 15, 2019 as written.
SECONDED by Jenifer Hughs. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

CLUSTER-BUILDING

The state promotes clustered town centers and less growth in the outskirts. Aaron Malachuk does not think encouraging growth in the center of town would benefit Stamford. Kurt Gamari understood cluster-building as houses that are built tightly together in town centers to preserve the surrounding land. Dan Potvin and Jim Stimpson would like to be able to cluster-build on their own properties and would like to change the Zoning By-laws to allow this. Their intention is to allow their own children to grow up and build their own houses on their parent's land without the need to subdivide. Some of the

other board members felt that would cause problems for the town down the road. Jim Stimpson and Dan Potvin maintained that the state approves all septic and water permits, and as long as the property was approved for each septic and water installation, that multiple houses on one parcel should be ok. The property as a whole would need to meet the two acre per house requirement and if parcels were sold in the future, a driveway/private way would have to be created that could meet the town's road frontage requirements. Kurt Gamari felt this would create future right-of-way problems for the town and said he thinks Stamford would benefit from an increase of businesses in town.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS COMMITTEE

Pat Sullivan provided the board with an update on the newly formed committee. The Community Projects Committee has met twice and wants to help residents by providing them with resources and guidelines for projects or events they are planning.

DISCUSSION OF ZONING BY-LAWS

1. Jim Sullivan reviewed the draft of the Zoning By-laws and provided four pages of suggestions for the Planning Commission's review. His first suggestion was to provide a definition of camp, which term is used in our current By-laws but not defined. After much discussion, Steve Bechtel noted that Section 1.19.1 has an acceptable definition for seasonal and vacation structures and the term camp will be added.
2. Jim Sullivan provided the new language in Vermont statute for Section 2 – Limitations.
3. The board discussed at length what structures should require a permit and how tents should be viewed. They debated above ground pools, in ground pools and blow up pools as well as temporary tents vs. tent structures with a foundation or base.
4. The Planning Commission discussed reducing the permit application fees.

OLD BUSINESS

A letter was sent to David Saldo concerning his lack of attendance at the past several meetings and asked if he intended to stay on the board. He responded to Aaron Malachuk advising that he has had serious health issues and will begin attending meetings as soon as he is able. If the board has difficulty making a quorum, he is available by phone to meet a quorum.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

MOTION by Aaron Malachuk to adjourn. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, September 23, 2019 at 7 p.m.

Aaron Malachuk
Planning Commission Chair

AM/las