

Town of Bristol  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
HYBRID Public Meeting  
Tuesday, November 15, 2022  
Meeting Minutes

**Planning Commission Members Present** *[in person and by remote]*: Kevin Hanson, Jeff Lunstead, Robert Rooker, John Moyers, Melissa Hernandez, Chanin Hill

**Absent:** Bill Sayre, Fred Baser

**Visitors:** Jim Quaglino; Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) Executive Director Adam Lougee

**Others Present:** Zoning Administrator Kris Perlee; Peggy Connor, recording secretary

**Call to Order:** Kevin Hanson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**I. Review Agenda for Additions, Removal, or Adjustment of any Items per 1 V.S.A. §312(d)(3)(A) and implicit approval**

- Move Item II. Continuing Business to top of the agenda

**III. Continuing Business**

**a) By-Law Modernization Grant work with ACRPC (Adam Lougee)**

- i. Overview – Evaluate Bristol Zoning and specifically, four zoning districts within the Bristol Village Planning Area, for potential changes that would improve the opportunity to build new housing**

ACRPC Executive Director Adam Lougee noted that at the previous two Planning Commission meetings, topics included defining the role of the Planning Commission, and defining a roadmap for amending current zoning regulations. The focus now will be to evaluate Bristol’s zoning regulations, specifically four zoning districts within the Village Planning Area, with an eye toward potential changes that would improve the opportunity to build new housing. The districts include High Density Residential, Village Residential, Village Mixed, and Residential Office Commercial. Considerations for each district will be: 1) Does the Purpose Statement of each district still accurately reflect Bristol’s needs? 2) Is the density of the units appropriate for the district? 3) Are the housing uses allowed appropriate for the area? and 4) Are the setbacks and other zoning dimensional standards appropriate to the area?

- ii. Definitions and regulations:  
Multi-family housing**

Bristol’s Unified Development Regulations (page 102) define “Multi-family Dwelling” as: “A building, or portion thereof, designed exclusively for occupancy by three or more families or households living independently of each other in individual dwelling units; or a portion of mixed-use building designed for use as one or more rental dwellings.”

Adam noted that the Table of Uses (pp. 15-16) indicate that the review process for a proposed multi-family dwelling that lies within the Village Planning Area requires a site plan and conditional use review by the Development Review Board (DRB), but the same two-step process is not required in other zoning districts. He noted that a site plan review is a lower standard whereby the DRB considers lighting, parking, etc.; while a conditional use hearing begins with the question, “Is this proposal appropriate for this district?” Adam asked PC members to consider either 1) amending the definition of multi-family dwelling unit; or 2) amending the zoning regulations to allow multi-family dwellings as a permitted use within certain zoning districts within the Village Planning Area, which may be appropriate in some zoning districts but not for others.

Kris Perlee pointed to the impact of additional multi-unit dwellings on the existing municipal waste

57 water system in the village area as well as available on-street parking as particular obstacles to  
58 expanding multi-family housing.

59  
60 Melissa Hernandez suggested the decision to change the requirement for a proposed multi-family  
61 dwelling from conditional use review to solely a site review would be easier if the number of families is  
62 defined beforehand. Melissa supported changing the definition to read “3- or 4-family multi-dwelling  
63 units require a site plan review, while 4 or more also require a conditional use review.”  
64

65 Kris Perlee noted that the issue of density plays a significant role, and suggested adjusting density  
66 requirements for multi-family units. Kris added that the long-term must be taken into consideration,  
67 noting the potential for a currently owner-occupied multi-family unit being sold as an investment rental  
68 property in the future. From a zoning perspective, Kris advised that he regularly receives requests  
69 from homeowners in the village requesting to add an addition to rent. He suggested the Planning  
70 Commission also consider fewer restrictions regarding apartments.  
71

72 John Moyers supported the current definition for multi-family dwellings, and pointed out that it is  
73 appropriate there be more scrutiny for a proposed multi-unit dwelling in the village given the close  
74 proximity to neighbors. John added that he was not aware of anyone advocating for a change to the  
75 current definition. Chanin Hill, Slim Pickens, and Rob Rooker agreed there should be a higher  
76 standard for the Village Planning Area.  
77

78 Jeff Lunstead suggested that the decision to require a site plan or conditional use review depending  
79 on the number of families in a multi-family unit be made after a study is complete.  
80

81 Further discussion regarding Multi-family Housing **tabled**.

82  
83 **iii. Neighborhood Development Area**

84 Adam explained eligibility requirements for the Neighborhood Development Area Designation  
85 Program sponsored by the State Agency of Commerce and Community Development that include:  
86

- 87 ➤ Ensure that all investments contribute to a built environment that enhances the existing  
88 neighborhood character and supports pedestrian use.
- 89 ➤ Ensure sufficient residential density and building heights.
- 90 ➤ Minimize the required lot sizes, setbacks, and parking and street widths.
- 91 ➤ Require conformance with “complete streets” principles as described under 19 V.S.A. §309d,  
92 street and pedestrian connectivity and street trees.

93  
94 Benefits include:

- 95 ➤ Qualified “mixed income” projects are exempt from Act 250 regulations.
- 96 ➤ Act 250 projects not qualifying for the exemption receive a 50% discount on application fees.
- 97 ➤ Agency of Natural Resources fees for wastewater review are capped at \$50 for projects that  
98 have received sewer allocation from an approved municipal system.
- 99 ➤ Exemption from the land gains tax.
- 100 ➤ Limitation on appeals of conditional use permits for residential development.
- 101 ➤ Municipalities receive priority consideration for state grants.

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103 **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU’s)**

104 Referring to Section 404 of the Unified Development Regulations (p. 41), Adam noted that the Town’s  
105 zoning regulations are already somewhat more permissive than what State statute requires (i.e.,  
106 owner is allowed to occupy either the primary or accessory dwelling, and greater floor area is allowed  
107 in an ADU).  
108

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109 The By-Law Modernization Grant work with Adam Lougee will continue at the Planning Commission's  
110 next meeting in December; specifically, further review of multi-family definitions and how used in area  
111 towns, and to review ADU's versus duplex housing.

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113 **II. Administrative Matters**

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115 **a. Approval of Minutes: 10/18/2022**

116 No noted changes to the meeting minutes for October 18, 2022.

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118 **b. Discussion: Zoning Administrator Report**

119 No report.

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121 **c. Discussion: ARPA Funding Advisory Committee Update**

122 Rob Rooker reported that the committee is continuing the process of sorting data to present a  
123 comprehensive package for a public hearing and then to the Selectboard.

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125 **d. Discussion: Misc. correspondence**

126 Kevin received the following correspondence:

- 127 ➤ Offer from AARP for free publications – "The Livable Library Housing Collection"
- 128 ➤ Inquiry re: how revised By-Laws might help an individual seeking to construct an ADU
- 129 ➤ Participated in interview with Marin Howell of the *Addison Independent* regarding the
- 130 commission's By-Law Modernization work.
- 131 ➤ The Town received a grant for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), which Valerie and Porter
- 132 Knight are working on. The goal is to actively foster a culture of inclusivity by creating learning
- 133 and discussion opportunities for staff interested in improving their cultural competency and
- 134 creating a more welcoming, diverse work environment.
- 135 ➤ Inquiry re: role of Planning Commission in connection with Act 250 regarding a minor permit

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137 **III. New Business**

138 None.

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140 **IV. Public Comment**

141 None.

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143 **VII. Adjournment**

144 Rob Rooker moved to adjourn; Melissa Hernandez seconded. **SO VOTED (6-0). MOTION PASSED**  
145 **UNANIMOUSLY.** Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

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147  
148 Respectfully submitted,  
149 Peggy Connor, Recording Secretary