

Town of Bristol
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
HYBRID Public Meeting
Tuesday, January 16, 2024
Meeting Minutes

DRAFT

Planning Commission Members Present: Fred Baser, Kevin Hanson, Melissa Hernandez, Slim Pickens, Chanin Hill, Rob Rooker, Bill Sayre

Others Present: Kris Perlee, Zoning Administrator; Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Ian Albinson (Selectboard), Chris Dearborn, Jim Quaglino, Tom Wells

Call to Order: PC Chair Kevin Hanson called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

I. Review agenda for additions, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 V.S.A. 18 §312(d)(3)(A) and implicit approval

No adjustments were made to the agenda.

II. Public Comment

Nobody offered comments at this time.

III. Continuing Business

None.

IV. New Business

Discussion: Review modified memo to Selectboard of Zoning Changes

Kevin summarized that the Selectboard had held two public hearings regarding the draft UDRs, and had made some changes to the draft based upon feedback received. He explained that procedurally, there now needs to be a memo generated describing those changes and how they relate to the Town Plan. Kevin had composed a draft of that memo for review by the PC, in preparation for another Selectboard hearing scheduled for January 22. The major items to be addressed are a change to the order of procedures to be followed when the State and the DRB are reviewing development in the flood plain, dimensional standards added to the Village Mixed Use District, dimensional changes to ADU building height and footprint, and edits to the Business Yard definition.

Both Kris and PC members indicated an interest in discussing these topics, but there were no comments offered regarding the contents of the memo per se.

Discussion: Review of Selectboard Changes to the proposed Unified Development Regs (UDR)

Addition of structural footprint dimension for the Village Mixed Use (VMU) District –

It was discussed that this district allows for commercial as well as residential uses, and that the omission of building footprint dimension was therefore intentional. The limitation included by the Selectboard also impedes development of multi-family housing structures. The 2016 version of the UDRs was looked at, and also did not have footprint dimensions included. Ian confirmed that the Selectboard had added this simply because it appeared to be missing. It was suggested that there might be different footprints outlined for residential vs commercial structures, but it was agreed that it would be difficult to craft language that provides an appropriate balance between all potential development in the district. It was agreed to recommend that the UDRs remain silent on footprint dimensions in the VMU District.

MOTION: *Fred made a motion to recommend that the Selectboard approve returning to the language currently in effect for footprint dimensional standards in the VMU District, which is silent. The motion was seconded by Rob. Kris noted that the lot coverage at 40% for commercial and 50% for residential will not change; he also confirmed that there has been no specification of footprint in the UDRs going back to 2006. All voted in favor of the motion.*

Reduction of Accessory Structure footprint to 900 square feet in the High Density Residential (HDR) District –

Kris outlined the difference between an Accessory Structure (building) and Accessory Dwelling (use). Ian explained that this change was proposed by the Selectboard in order to provide compatibility between the allowed footprint for an Accessory Structure and that for an Accessory Dwelling. PC members were in support of this change.

Accessory Dwelling Unit definition, specifically the portion that outlines what is meant by ‘clearly subordinate’, and the height dimensional standard –

Ian explained that the Selectboard changed the height allowance to be either 25’ or 80% of the primary dwelling, to allow for a suitable building height in relation to one-story primary residences. Discussion of this matter included the following points:

- There are different ways to create an ADU, language this specific is detrimental (ADU above a garage/workshop, for example)
- This parameter applies to new construction only
- The HDR dimensional standards already serve to limit the height of Accessory Structures to 28 feet
- The definition is relevant to all districts, and in less dense areas there is not the same concern for building heights
- The comments raised during public hearing are related to ADUs associated with one-story single-family residences
- ‘Up to 80%’ is better language than ‘at least 20% less than’
- Specifying a 25’ height in the definition is in conflict with accessory structures in many districts
- An exception for ADUs associated with single-story primary residences can create confusion and be difficult to enforce
- Dimensional front line setback standards in the HDR District appear to be an adequate solution to the issue of preventing imposing accessory structures; these might be suitable for the entire ‘village planning area’
- Setback distances for accessory structures are not of the same concern in the districts allowing for less dense development

Taking this all into consideration, it was decided that the height restriction in the outline of ‘clearly subordinate’ should be removed, and that the front-yard setback restrictions are suitable for the village area in general.

MOTION: *Kevin made a motion to delete item ‘d’ in the definition of ‘clearly subordinate.’ The motion was seconded by Fred. All voted in favor.*

MOTION: *Chanin made a motion to adjust the language of item 'c' in the definition of 'clearly subordinate to read 'New construction, in the Village Planning Area, shall be set back from the front property line at least 20 feet greater than the main single family dwelling.' The motion was seconded by Fred. All voted in favor.*

Adjustments to the definition of Business Yard –

Kevin explained that the Selectboard removed the mention of trash and recycling services from the definition of Business Yard, as these uses are not specifically allowed in any District. They also removed the requirement that access to a paved road is necessary for the use of larger, heavier vehicles, as it was agreed this was too restrictive. Ian confirmed these changes and the reasoning behind them. There was no further discussion by the PC.

Kevin summarized the changes agreed upon, and indicated that he would compose a related letter to the Selectboard, which he will send out to PC members for review before submitting it to the Board.

Action: Provide feedback to the Selectboard on their proposed changes to the UDR

It was agreed to authorize Kevin as Chair to draft a letter to the Selectboard outlining the feedback from the PC regarding the proposed changes to the UDR.

Action: Appoint rep to serve on Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Steering Committee

Chanin volunteered to serve on the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Steering Committee.

V. Administrative Matters

Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes of November 7, 2023 were amended and then accepted.

The minutes of November 21, 2023 were accepted.

Rob requested that the link to the UDRs on one page of the Town website be changed, as it pointed to the older version of the UDRs. Ian made that change during the meeting.

Discussion: Zoning Administrator Report

Kris reported on recent subdivision applications, noting that one has been approved for four lots on North 116 and a final hearing is coming up for a seven-lot subdivision on Plank Road.

Discussion: Miscellaneous Correspondence

Recent correspondence had all been forwarded via email to PC members.

VI. Public Comment

Nobody offered public comment at this time.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary