

**CORNWALL PLANNING COMMISSION (CPC)**  
Regular Meeting  
Cornwall Town Hall and via Teleconference  
April 17, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Don Burns, Mickey Heinecken, Katherine Branch, Lauren Ringe, Caroline Mellish, Chet Van Dellen (meeting Chair)

**ALSO PRESENT:**

*Recording announced.*

**CALL TO ORDER**—The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Don Burns, turned over to Chet at 7:06.

**QUORUM**—established

**AGENDA**—Mickey H. MOVED / Katherine B. SECONDED to approve the agenda as distributed. **Motion passed**—5 in favor, 0 opposed (Chet not yet arrived).

**MINUTES**

**March 20, 2024**—Lauren R. MOVED / Katherine B. SECONDED to approve the Minutes as distributed. **Motion passed**—5 in favor, 0 opposed (Chet abstained, was not at meeting).

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**—none

**CORRESPONDENCE REVIEW**

- Email from Middlebury College announcing a Land Planning Initiative at the Kirk Alumni Center on April 24 from 6:30 to 8:30pm.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**—none

**OLD BUSINESS**

- **May Meeting**—Lauren confirmed she will chair the meeting.
- **Previous Action Items**—Updates will be under “New Business.”
- **Town Plan Action Items**
  - **Affordable Housing**—The next housing work group meeting will be in May, with a report to the PC at the May meeting.
  - **Child Care**—Lauren R.’s information regarding prior childcare work was moved to the May meeting.
- **Housing Grant**—The RPC had a planning grant opportunity that both CORA and the PC’s Housing sub-committee planned to apply for. The grant had a \$10,00 limit, with one grant per town. The approval of the Select Board was needed. The Board recommended that the Housing Committee apply for the RPC grant. The RPC money will allow the Housing Committee, working with the Addison County Housing Works, to do an infrastructure study with a focus on sewer and water specifically. Jean Eiseberg, a certified planner and consultant who lives in Middlebury but will be moving to Cornwall, was hired to help with this. The study will focus on Cornwall, but will serve as a model for other small towns, and represents one reason why the RPC was interested in the project.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Discussion of current Zoning Regulations, pages 26–65**—A general overview
  - A number of things were found to be confusing and/or lacking clarity such as “Existing Small Lots,” “Environmental Court,” Home-based Businesses (DRB noted need for more clarity on this).

- **Board references** need to be changed from “Board of Adjustment” to “Development Review Board,” and responsibilities clarified between the DRB and the PC as the DRB has responsibility now for a number of things that formerly fell under the PC.
- **Legislative changes since 2008** need to be identified, incorporated, and adjusted where possible to fit the needs of the town; the DRB may have suggestions as to what does/does not work and what might be improved upon.
- **Format**—If an online version could be made, the many references that go back and forth from one section to another could be done with links to alleviate endless paging back and forth, making the document easier to navigate. Interior links can also be made in PDFs.
- Possibly a scope of work for the project could be developed in June.
- **The 2019 draft** regulations contain valuable information that should be carefully looked at and definitions that can be added to this new update. Perhaps a smaller 1 or 2 person sub-group could take a closer look at the 2019 version and see what can be used. There were a number of issues that came to her mind as Katherine reviewed the Land Use and Development Regulations proposed in 2019: is there value in combining zoning and subdivisions into one document; are the current district standards useful and worth retaining; the overlays suggested should be carefully considered in light of the adverse reaction to them that occurred; similarly, the General Requirements (Article 3) need careful review; Article 6, Administration and Enforcement, contains clear and very specific information on the duties and powers of the PC, the DRB, and the ZA; the definitions section is much expanded from the current 2008 version and while some definitions may be relevant only to the 2019 draft, there are also many that should be considered for inclusion in this new update.
- **Questions** to be examined further:
  - What is the extent of updating vs re-writing, where is the line?
  - How autonomous is the PC? The group agreed that it would be wise to work with the Select Board, DRB, and ZA rather than work in isolation.
  - Was “technology” discussed at a previous meeting? This needs clarification (ie does ‘written’ include ‘email’? What format(s) should the new document take?).
  - What can be done about regulations that are too difficult to comply with or too difficult to enforce?
  - The regulations need to be considered in terms of meeting Town Plan goals. They must be certain to support affordable housing, but they touch on a variety of other equally important issues as well such as conservation, recreation, flooding.
  - What about forms? Are they available, do they explain what the applicant needs to do, who makes the forms? Is this also something the PC should be including in their updating?
- **Traffic update**—Mickey H. discussed his visit to the Select Board meeting and what information he had garnered from that discussion. Mainly that the State sets speed limits according to an average of the speeds of vehicles using the section of road. In general, towns do not have authority to set speed limits on State highways. Nonetheless a number of municipalities do set speed limits on sections of highways running through their towns. Mickey left it to the Select Board to consider appealing to VTRANS for speed reductions, and possibly moving the town’s speed monitors to the State roads and seeing what reaction the State has.
- **Recreation Committee trail development update**—Tabled for May

## OTHER BUSINESS

- Mickey H. attended a development meeting in Barre and was put in touch with two wastewater consultants. Chet will follow up.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Lauren Ringey was confirmed as Meeting Chair for May.
2. All CPC members read the Subdivision Regulations for discussion at the May meeting. Check the glossary if there is a word or phrase that is unfamiliar, note if it is not there.
3. Add "*Prior work on childcare issues*" to the May meeting agenda.
4. Add "*Discuss Subdivision Regulations*" to the May meeting agenda.
5. Add "*Recreation Committee ideas around trail development*" to the May meeting agenda.
6. Add "*Discuss updated Vermont Conservation Design*" to the May meeting agenda.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Don B. MOVED / Katherine B. SECONDED to adjourn the meeting. ***Motion passed—6 in favor, 0 opposed.***

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Submitted by Robin Conway, Substitute Minute-Taker