

Approved _____, 2024

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CORNWALL PLANNING COMMISSION (CPC)

Regular Meeting

Cornwall Town Hall and via Teleconference

July 17, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mickey Heinecken (meeting Chair), Don Burns, Katherine Branch, Lauren Ringey, Caroline Mellish

ALSO PRESENT: Rob Gill

Recording announced.

CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by the meeting Chair, Mickey Heinecken.

QUORUM - established

AGENDA - Lauren R. MOVED / Don B. SECONDED a motion to approve the agenda as presented. ***Motion passed*** - 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

MINUTES

June 19, 2024 - Don B. MOVED / Lauren R. SECONDED a motion to approve the minutes as amended, with typos corrected, and name spellings corrected.

Motion passed - 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS - after arriving at the meeting via Zoom, Katherine said she had difficulty logging on because the passcode on the agenda was incorrect. She was able to get in with the standard passcode from a previous agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - none

OLD BUSINESS

- **Katherine report on funding support and other town experience with zoning/subdivision regulations.** Katherine B. reached out to several neighboring towns, including Salisbury and Shoreham, who have recently updated their by-laws. All these towns received by-laws modernization grants from the State.

Take-aways from calls with Shoreham and Salisbury:

1. Updating by-laws takes a lot of time - 2-2.5 years.

2. It is important to get organized and be clear on the scope of work, before applying for a grant. Both towns recommend applying for a grant.
3. If a consultant is used, use them to pull writing together, review for compliance, and make sure nothing is missing.
4. Critical to have strong liaison with the Select Board.
5. Neither town felt like ACRPC nor VCLT was helpful, either because their input was confusing or because they could not help due to other priorities, such as flooding emergencies.
6. Allow sufficient time for legal review.

Katherine informed the CPC that the State no longer provides a separate grant to modernize by-laws, but rather is in the process of rolling a grant for by-laws update into the Municipal Planning Grant, and the guidelines have not yet been released.

- **ACRPC guidance on zoning/subdivision regulations** - Connor S. did reach out to ACRPC to ask if someone would be able to come to CPC meetings. No response yet.
- **Individual board members made the following recommendations on how to proceed**

Mickey:

- Focus first on adjusting existing Zoning regulations and then address Subdivision regulations.
- While the CPC is working on Zoning ask the DRB to do a review of the sub-division By Laws and point out areas of concern they want the CPC to address.
- Recommended process--Each board member will be responsible for reviewing 4 pages. You may trade if interest and expertise make it more logical. Pages are assigned to board members alphabetically. Some pages are will require more work, but over the long haul should allow for a reasonable distribution of workload. (Hopefully a copy of the Regulations can be downloaded so suggested changes can be made for the review of the entire board). All suggested changes made in red. This will become more complicated if the editable down-load is not possible, but surely some of the younger folks will know how to do this.
- Future board meetings will build in time to discuss and finalize suggested changes. Schedule a minimum of 5 members (covering a total of 20 pages),to make recommendations in each future meeting and the board

will discuss and finalize any changes. A total of 3 additional meeting will be required to finalize the plan.

- Continue with this format until the zoning is completed and then follow the same process with the Sub-Division By-Laws which have be previously edited by the DRB.
- I assume once completed by the CPC, an opportunity for public input will be arranged.

- **Katherine:** Suggested:

1. Form bylaws review guidance team of 3 people. Team would be responsible for at least these actions:
 - a. Identify areas within the bylaws that need to be reviewed and revised.
 - b. Set up a timetable for completing the review, month by month.
 - c. Apply for grant(s) if CPC determines this is advisable. Prior to grant application, clearly identify what the grant would be used for.
 - d. Determine a method for participation by each CPC member (ideas might be assigning a set number of pages to each member; or round-robin input; or assigning certain areas to certain people for reporting back; or some other method).
 - e. Set up process(es) for input from Cornwall citizens.
 - f. Establish a strong liaison process for Select Board and DRB.
 - g. Report back to CPC and lead CPC agenda items regarding bylaws.
2. Request a list of problem areas in the current bylaws from the DRB.
3. For the time period of bylaws review, set aside 30 minutes per CPC meeting for discussion of bylaws review and revision.

- **Caroline:** said she wants meeting agendas to specify what will be covered during each meeting. Thinks that both documents need to be reorganized, whether or not they are combined into one document.

- **Chet:** appreciate both Mickey and Katherine's approaches and think there are great ideas in both. Given the complexity and length of the Zoning Regs, I think it does make sense to arbitrarily split the document and assign pages to each CPC member. The amount of work to even identify what needs changing and trying to balance where our various interests/expertise lies would be a monumental task in and of itself.

However, I think this project is bigger than the review and editing of the pages themselves, as Katherine pointed out. There are tasks to make sure public input is handled, the DRB is engaged, find and apply for grants (if necessary), and find and hire a contractor (if necessary). Should

these tasks be assigned to one or more people while the rest handle the actual page reviews? Or are we getting a bit ahead of ourselves and need to evaluate the need for and opportunity to engage professional help to tackle this project?

While I think proposing and reviewing various approaches should definitely be a goal of this week's meeting, I think our number one task right now is to determine if we need to engage consulting services, then assign a task force to find and do so, with the goal of presenting that solution at the August meeting.

Don:

Referred to the scope of work document, as a good guide.

Break up into teams of two people, who set their own goals. Each team reviews the entire document.

Team 1 focuses on the Town Plan and references in the Plan to zoning changes.

Team 2 focuses on State regulations and what has changed since 2008.

Team 3 looks at the 2019 update that was not approved by the Select Board and which nevertheless may contain much useful content. Don is concerned about dividing the review up by pages, for the lack of consistency and lack of holistic view.

Lauren R.: wants to keep it simple, agrees that dividing by pages is the best way to get started.

Rob G.:

After being asked by Don if he would be interested in working on the by-laws update project, Rob replied that yes, he is very interested in helping in any way. Rob is not a member of the Planning Commission and would not be able to vote, but otherwise could participate in any other way. Rob agreed to take a general pass on pages 5-28.

• **Develop a plan on how to proceed**

After hearing from everyone and further discussion, it was agreed that for the next meeting each member will review the following pages:

5-8 - Katherine B.

9-12 Don B.

13-16 Mickey H.

17-20 Caroline M.

21-24 Lauren R.

25-28 Conor S.

29-32 Chet V.D.

• **Town Plan action items**

- Child care - Lauren R. said that she did write a blurb for the most recent newsletter. She has not received any responses to date. It was agreed that the best way to understand the need for childcare in Cornwall would be a survey. It was suggested she be in touch with Chet V.D. about how to generate a survey
- Status on CORA meeting:trail concept - Conor S. - tabled.
- Housing update - Chet, Mickey
Mickey said that there will be a full housing group meeting before the next CPC meeting and that Chet and Mickey will give a housing update at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Scheduling of joint meeting with DRB by-law input - tabled.

ACTION ITEMS

1. The meeting Chair should add “review of Town Plan action items” to the meeting agenda.
2. Send the agenda out 7 days before each meeting.
3. Lauren R. will contact Chet V.D. about how to generate a survey.
4. Mickey will ask Conor to add the 2008 Zoning By-laws document to Google docs in Word so that members can add comments as they review. Everyone should look at the 28 pages before the next meeting, to see all the comments.
5. Members will review the following pages before the next meeting:
 - 5-8 - Katherine B.
 - 9-12 Don B.
 - 13-16 Mickey H.
 - 17-20 Caroline M.
 - 21-24 Lauren R.
 - 25-28 Conor S.
 - 29-32 Chet V.D.
6. Rob G. will do a general review of pages 5-28.

Remaining 2024 Meeting Chair Rotation

- August - Caroline Mellish
- September - Lauren Ringey
- October - Conor Stinson

- November - Chet Van Dellen
- December - Katherine Branch

ADJOURNMENT

Lauren R. MOVED / Don B. SECONDED a motion to adjourn the meeting. ***Motion passed*** - 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Secretary of the CPC