

Approved November 20, 2024

## **CORNWALL PLANNING COMMISSION (CPC)**

Regular Meeting

Cornwall Town Hall and via Teleconference

October 16, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Katherine Branch (meeting chair), Mickey Heinecken, Don Burns, Chet Van Dellen, Conor Stinson

**ALSO PRESENT:** Rob Gill, Steve Mahoney, Anna Burns

Recording announced.

**CALL TO ORDER** - The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by the Meeting Chair, Katherine Branch.

**QUORUM** - established

**AGENDA** -Conor S. MOVED / Don B. SECONDED a motion to approve the agenda as presented. ***Motion passed*** - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

### **MINUTES**

**September 18, 2024** - Don B. MOVED / Conor S. SECONDED a motion to approve the minutes as presented. ***Motion passed*** - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS and PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Katherine said that she plans on attending the upcoming Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) Forum, as the focus is on Planning and Zoning.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Updates on Town Plan action items: Report from Anna Burns - *Water and Wastewater Infrastructure to Support Affordable Housing in Cornwall*  
Anna Burns from the Housing Work Group presented and discussed the results of this housing research project with the CPC.

Highlights:

- the project was a collaboration between the Town, the Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) and Addison Housing Works.
- the report is not only useful to Cornwall, but to any rural town that wants more affordable housing but does not have municipal water and wastewater infrastructure.
- the project was not a feasibility study.
- the interns focused their work on the survey and case study.

- the survey response was 12-13% of residents.
- wastewater and water grants are available from the State.
- usually 10-15 sources of funding are needed for affordable housing projects.
- Anna advised that the Town should seek to change the oblong shape of the area in Cornwall that the State has identified as being exempt from Act 250, into a shape that is more consistent with housing patterns in the Town.
- CPC should consider making zoning more friendly for multifamily dwellings as a permitted use.
- CPC should give the Housing Working Group some direction.

The CPC thanked Anna for this useful and detailed report and asked that it be presented to the Select Board during one of their meetings in November (Nov 7 or 19).

## 2. Review of zoning regulations

- a. General feedback/highlights on zoning review and comments thus far.
  - Most members have added their comments to the document in the Google drive.
  - Katherine - the DRB has given us an excellent roadmap to proceed.
  - Don - suggested that having a written document of guiding principals would be most helpful.
  - Chet - sees the regulations update as a refinement, not a re-do.
  - Conor - now that members have gotten comfortable digging into the document, feels that the next logical step is to involve the ADRPC
  - Rob - supports anything to make the language more specific and with less room for interpretation.
- b. Determine process for moving ahead with review of zoning regulations.  
 After discussion of process options, all agreed to move forward by having a small group (Rob, Don, and Katherine) review the whole document, make recommendations for changes and come back to discuss these recommendations with the whole CPC. Conor said that the ACRPC can offer advice around process issues. Katherine will invite the ACRPC to the next meeting. Conor also advised that during the process, the public needs to be notified, early and often.
- c. Discuss whether zoning and subdivisions regulations should remain separate documents or be unified. After discussing the pros and cons, it was agreed by consensus to use the same model as Starksboro, of a single document with two sections, one section for zoning and one for subdivisions.

## 3. CPC membership and leadership

- a. Should CPC members become appointed versus elected? - If there is a vacancy, a member can be appointed until Town Meeting Day. A change from elected to appointed members of the CPC would need to be made by the voters. Chet agreed to circulate a petition for an Article at Town Meeting. 60

signatures of registered voters are required to put an Article on the Town Meeting Warning.

b. Should number of members be reduced? - tabled.

c. Determine interim leadership plan; to begin January 2025. - everyone agreed to continue rotating meeting chairs. Chet is considering the terms under which he could serve in the role of Chair and will bring a proposal to the next meeting.

4. Habitat Connectivity Map - tabled.

**NEW BUSINESS** -Steve Mahoney shared his background and interest in wanting to give back to the community. If appointed to the CPC, his term would be until Town Meeting in March, then he could run for an open seat. Alternately, he could be involved in municipal planning in Cornwall, without being a voting member.

### **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. Remember to add Public Comments to the agenda of all meetings.
4. Add discussion of an additional habitat connectivity map and how to fill the role of Chair on the agenda for the November meeting.
5. Add discussion on housing to the agenda of the November meeting.
6. Katherine will invite ACRPC to the next meeting.
7. Chet considering terms under which he could serve as Chair.
8. Chet will circulate petition for a Town Meeting Article about appointing members to the Planning Commission, rather than electing them.

Remaining 2024 Meeting Chair Rotation

- November - Chet Van Dellen
- December - to be determined

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chet V.D. MOVED / Mickey H. SECONDED a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Motion passed** - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.  
Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Secretary of the CPC

