

Approved December 18, 2024

**CORNWALL PLANNING COMMISSION (CPC)**

Regular Meeting  
Cornwall Town Hall and via Teleconference  
November 20, 2024

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

**ALSO PRESENT:** Rob Gill, Steve Mahoney, Anna Burns, Katie Reycroft-Meyer, Jim Ross

Recording announced.

**CALL TO ORDER** - The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by the Meeting Chair, Chet Van Dellen.

**QUORUM** - established

**AGENDA** -Mickey H. MOVED / Conor S. SECONDED a motion to approve the agenda as presented. ***Motion passed*** - 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

**MINUTES**

**October 16, 2024** - Conor S. MOVED / Don B. SECONDED a motion to approve the minutes as amended, with the addition of an action item - Chet to circulate a petition for an Article about appointing CPC members (rather than electing them), to be considered at Town Meeting. ***Motion passed*** - 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS and PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Chet welcomed Jim Ross, Steve Mahoney, and Anna Burns. All have expressed interest in municipal planning in Cornwall.
- Jim Ross introduced himself, and shared information about his background and interest in the work of the Planning Commission,
- Katherine said she was in touch with the League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) to ask if someone who was not a resident of Cornwall could be appointed to the Planning Commission. She was told that it is the Select Board that would need to ask this question of the VLCT.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Zoning and Regulation Updates**

- **Workgroup Draft Guidelines and Action Plan** - Katherine provided a summary of the process to update Town regulations thus far, beginning in the spring of 2024. The process is expected to be completed in about two years from now.
  - A draft document describing the scope of work, that includes guiding principals, will be discussed at the December meeting. Each member has read and discussed the current regulations (zoning and subdivision), and was assigned a section to comment on in Google Docs.
  - Recently updated regulations in other towns were viewed. The CPC agreed on a plan to make one document, with two sections, one section for zoning and one for subdivisions.
  - The DRB has been consulted and has provided a written document with their suggestions. Don Burns is the liaison to the Select Board and Katherine is the liaison to the DRB.
  - A working group was formed in October consisting of Don Burns, Katherine Branch and Rob Gill. This group is using a working document with recommendations for the update, and will meet again before the December meeting.
  - The plan to engage the public is to begin with proposing changes to Article 1, and send out a town-wide email to solicit suggestions and inform the public about the update process in general- the scope, guiding principals, and timeline.
- Meeting with Addison County Regional Planning Commission Planner, Katie Reycroft-Meyer
  - Katie advised that every town is different in terms of regulations, and some towns have no zoning at all, which can lead to unexpected negative outcomes for the community.
  - She said that clarity is important in updating zoning regs and a simple approach is best. Clear definitions are essential.
  - The by-laws modernization grant is designed to create more opportunities for housing and to streamline the process with the DRB. Materials for this grant are expected to be available in January.
  - She provided a copy of the Lincoln By-laws Modernization Grant Report, for the CPC to review.
  - Examples of ways to create more housing incrementally include reducing setbacks, changing parking requirements, allowing duplexes and multi-

family housing with 3-5 units as a permitted use with a site plan review, and offering a density bonus for senior housing.

- In terms of the State Statutes governing town regulations, a Town can make town rules more strict than a Statute mandates, but not less strict.
  - To encourage community input, Katie advised not having too many public meetings, but rather do short surveys about big changes such as changes to uses, setbacks and lot sizes.
  - She agreed that references to the Statutes can be links, for those using the electronic format, but in it is important to cite the specific Statutes in all formats. People need information about the basis of the rules that govern development in their town. Katherine will follow up with the DRB about this issue.
  - Katie agreed with the CPC members that tools are needed to help planning commissioners understand the legislative changes (Act 47 and Act 181) in the last two sessions that affect zoning. Anna Burns, who is one of Cornwall's representatives to ACRPC, asked Don to have Adam Lougee, Director of ACRPC, put together a list of these relevant changes.
  - Katie said she is available to further assist the Town with the zoning update, by answering specific questions that come up in the process.
- **Housing Workgroup Discussion** - Mickey reported that the group has not met since the last CPC meeting, but has had some good back and forth discussions via email. The workgroup plans to meet before the next CPC meeting in December, when they will provide their final report. Don B. added that at the next meeting, he would like to talk about the regulations update working group requesting tasks from the housing workgroup. Don also mentioned that Anna Burns and Jean Eisberg gave a clear, concise, and well received presentation on the housing study to the Select Board.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- Cornwall Habitat Connectivity Map Discussion - after discussion, all agreed that this item be continued to be tabled. It involves a process that the CPC does not have the capacity to work on at this time.
- Planning Commission Membership - Chet said that currently there is one open seat on the commission, and two more upcoming vacancies. He suggested that that appointments not be made for such a short time period, but rather that interested persons put their names on the ballot for election at Town Meeting in March. Meanwhile, attend the monthly meetings to continue to learn about the issues and tasks. Terms of membership on the Planning Commission are 3 years.

- Chairperson - Chet has stepped up in the role of Chair of the Planning Commission. As such, he will also chair the meetings. The other members encouraged him to reach out to them whenever he needs help. Chet has the full support of the Board, and their deep appreciation.
- Appointment petition - Chet will gather the needed 60 signatures of registered voters, in support of an Article in the Town Meeting Warning, to have commission members appointed rather than elected.
- Town Plan Action Items Update - none today
- Parking Lot Items - none today

## **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Add report from the housing workgroup to the agenda of the December meeting.
2. .Chet will gather at least 60 petition signatures in January and February.
3. Housing workgroup will meet before the next CPC meeting.
4. Regulations update workgroup will meet before the next CPC meeting.
5. Katherine will contact DRB about citing Statutes in the regulations document.
6. Chet will include Anna, Steve and Jim in distribution of materials.
7. Sharon will include Anna, Steve and Jim in distribution of meeting minutes.
8. Don will contact Adam Lougee about the need for tools to understand recent legislative changes.

Remaining 2024 Meeting Chair  
- December - Chet Van Dellen

## **MEETING CHAIR NOTES :**

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.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Lauren R. MOVED / Mickey H. SECONDED a motion to adjourn the meeting. ***Motion passed*** - 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.  
Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Secretary of the CPC