

CORNWALL PLANNING COMMISSION (CPC)

Regular Meeting

Cornwall Town Hall and via Teleconference

January 15, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chet Van Dellen, Don Burns, Mickey Heinecken, Katherine Branch

ALSO PRESENT: Rob Gill, Steve Mahoney, Anna Burns, Jim Ross, Mary Dodge

OPENING BUSINESS

- a. *Meeting called to order* at 7:24 pm by the Chair, Chet Van Dellen
- b. *Recording* begun at 7:27
- c. **Quorum** established
- d. **Agenda**—Mickey MOVED, Don SECONDED, that the agenda be approved as presented. **Motion passed**—4 in favor, 0 opposed.
- e. **Minutes** of December 2024—Don MOVED, Mickey SECONDED, that the minutes of December 18 be approved as presented. **Motion passed**—4 in favor, 0 opposed.
- f. **Announcements**
 - i. *Anna*—Addison County Regional Planning Commission’s (ACRPC), informational session on the new land use mapping standards and methodology as issued under Act 181, the Act 250 reform bill, has been scheduled for February 20 at the ACRPC office in Middlebury, The meeting will be at 6:00pm, in person at the ACRPC offices, 14 Seminary Street, with a ZOOM option.
- g. **Public Comments**—None

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Zoning and Regulation Updates**
 - i. *Work Group Process and Progress*—the work group met twice since the December meeting, reviewing the MDR, LDR, and Conservation Districts (§§.250–270) The group presented their recommendations for changes in the 3 districts with discussions following.
 - ii. *Proposed Revisions*—a number of terms were replaced, including “allowed uses” rather than “by-right uses,” and “DRB” rather than “ZBA.” Discussion on whether or not to mention workforce housing under affordable housing as was done in the Village areas.
 - (1) MDR, LDR, Conservation Districts—Clarified several terms including multi-family units and child care; proposed a number of conditional uses (some from the LUDR, others new), including senior living facilities and workforce/affordable housing, Rural Enterprise, Mobile Vendor; proposed several dimensional changes (front setback decreases, maximum coverage percentages, minimum lot sizes).
 - (2) Conservation District—Several minor changes proposed (e.g.: “wind” to “renewable” under energy), no dimensional changes.

(3) Discussions ensued:

- (a) Generally: the requirements for specific architectural styles (noted styles are not enforced and are very subjective, they are currently “encouraged “not mandated); addition of sustainability issues in building construction (better to leave in other places like the *Town Plan*); change “accessory apartments/ dwellings” to Accessory Dwelling Units“ (ADUs);
- (b) Uses: adding EV chargers under renewable energy; discussions regarding kennels, limiting number of beds/units in residential care/senior living facilities; how to designate uses and categories, expansion of categories; limit on certain uses depending on location; some uses have been added to the proposed uses that currently exist, but are not listed in current regulations.
- (c) Provisions: the need for consistency in allowing uses in the districts; mechanism(s) for review of uses not listed (e.g. uses that are not listed in Village areas might be considered in areas where appropriately sized land is available); lot sizes should align with any state or federal programs that might be pursued by owners (e.g. Current Use; such programs should have links); “Blanket Clauses”, “Uses Not Allowed” should be left out, few other towns use them, DRB and ACRPC not in favor of having; Links rather than explanations favored for Statute citations.

iii. Next Steps—

- (1) EverNorth: Anna had contacted them about cluster housing, was told septic issue not necessarily the binding issue regarding density. Anna will re-contact EverNorth for further information.
- (2) Move on to Article III.
- (3) It was noted that any suggestions for changes should be accompanied by justification for the change, not solely the change wanted.

- b. **Municipal Plan Grant**—competition this year expected to be stiff; not certain they need a grant, ACRPC can supply resources and information. PC determined they are not planning to pursue.
- c. **A future topic for discussion** may be the hiring of someone to handle public comments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. **Housing Group Updates**

- i.* The group feels a well-structured plan that supports affordable housing is most important; they will pursue and submit to the Working Group.
- ii.* Steve offered to join the Housing Group
- iii.* Overlay Districts—Mary explained the purpose and structure of Overlay Districts as being created to allow certain uses that would not ordinarily be allowed in a district.

b. **Action Items from Last Meeting**—Updates

Chet noted that all the December Action Items have been dealt with, including fixing of links to the last two PC meetings on the website and Select Board granted read-only access to Google Docs.

c. **Town Plan Action Items Update**—none tonight

d. **Parking Lot Items**—none tonight.

ADJOURNMENT

Mickey MOVED, Don SECONDED, that the meeting be adjourned. ***Motion passed***—4 in favor, 0 opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Submitted by Robin Conway, Substitute Minute-Taker