

Approved March 19, 2025

**CORNWALL PLANNING COMMISSION
(CPC)**

Regular Meeting
Cornwall Town Hall and via
Teleconference
February 19, 2025

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

ALSO PRESENT: Rob Gill, Steve Mahoney, Anna Burns, John Roberts

OPENING BUSINESS

- a. Recording started, meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by the Chair, Chet Van Dellen
- b. **Quorum** established
- c. **Agenda**—Mickey MOVED/ Don SECONDED a motion to approve the agenda as presented. ***Motion passed—4 in favor, 0 opposed.***
- d. **Minutes** of January 15—Don MOVED/ Mickey SECONDED a motion to approve the minutes of January 15 as amended, striking Lauren as being present as she was not there.. ***Motion passed—4 in favor, 0 opposed.***
- e. **Announcements**
 - i. Correspondence - Chet reported that one reply from the e-blast was received. Chet added that the general CPC google email account is not viable because of the way it was set up. A new solution is needed.
- f. **Public Comments**—none

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Zoning and Regulation Updates**
 - i. **Work Group Process and Progress**
 - Don welcomed John Roberts, who is the Select Board liaison in the zoning update process.. John said he is here to listen and learn and will be attending meetings and keeping up with the proposed changes the CPC makes to the document. John wants to bring himself up to speed as soon as possible and looks forward to participating.
 - Considerable time was spent discussing the update process, what is working well and what might be improved. It was agreed that the working group continue to work through the entire document. This is considered the first pass. The working group will have the next set of changes ready for the full CPC 9-10 days before the next meeting.

CPC members are asked to send their comments on these changes to the working group by the Friday before the meeting. That way the working group can discuss the comments and will be prepared to respond to those comments and it will be more efficient than trying to hash things out during regular meetings.

ii. Review Proposed Revisions

- Katherine outlined the proposed changes made in Article III (Administration and Enforcement) and Article IV (Required Regulations) in the last month by the working group, many of which were editorial and technical changes. All the proposed changes are tracked in the document. There is an additional spreadsheet that lists the rationale for all the changes.
- During review of changes in Section 404: Accessory Dwelling Unit, the group discussed the language defining an ADU, as well as minimum square footage set by the State. Apparently there is no maximum set by the State, other than it not more than 30% of the habitable floor space of the dominant home. The requirement for sufficient wastewater capacity is also a limiting factor in ADU construction. Concerns were expressed by the Housing Group about 900 square feet not being a family dwelling and about ADUs just being built to become short term rentals. Research into regulations of nearby towns (Orwell, New Haven, Lincoln and Shoreham) show a wide range of caps on square footage of ADUs, from 900 square feet up to 2,200 square feet. Chet said that future discussions about changes to this section make clear how a cap is calculated, if there is one
- During discussion of changes in Section 411: Special Public Use Exceptions, Katherine said that changes in the Statute added emergency shelters and hotels and motels converted to permanently affordable housing developments to the list of uses that can only be regulated in limited ways as defined by Statute.

iii. Next Steps

- Review Section 530 and maybe all of Article 5 before the next meeting.
- For the April meeting, Articles 6,7 and 8, which are short
- For the May meeting, Articles 9 and 10
- April 1 Quarterly update to the Select Board - Steve will present
- July 1 Quarterly update to the Select Board - Katherine will present
- October 7 Quarterly update to the Select Board - Rob will present
- January 6 Quarterly update to the Select Board - Presenter to be announced

b. Town Meeting Day

i. Commissioner Appointment Initiative - Article 9, asking the voters to approve a change from elected Planning Commissioners to appointed Commissioners, is on the Town Meeting Warning. If approved, it will take effect March of 2026.

ii Other CPC Obligations / Considerations- Chet will introduce himself and provide basic information about the Zoning Regulations update process currently underway.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. **Housing Working Group Update** - the Housing Working Group is meeting every other month, is looking at the current regulations on housing and will be recommending some clear language with the goal of increasing accessibility of ADUs, in other words, making building one as easy as possible.
- b. **Action Items from Last 2 Meetings Update**
 - 1. Clarify language in 240A - Chet will do
 - 2. Village Center Designation for West Cornwall Village - in process
 - 3. Anna will go to Evernorth
 - 4. Chet will look into the email situation
- c. **Town Plan Action Items Update** - none tonight
- d. **Parking Lot Items** - none tonight
- e. **Other** - Anna reminded everyone of the information session at Addison County Regional Planning Commission on February 20 at 6 pm - Act 181 Land Use Standards. This is part of the roll out of Act 181 from the State to the regional planning commissions to the municipalities.

ADJOURNMENT

Mickey MOVED / Katherine SECONDED a motion to adjourn. ***Motion passed - 4 in favor, 0 opposed.***

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Secretary