

**Wilmington Selectboard
Wilmington Planning Commission
Wilmington Development Review Board
Special Worksession Meeting**

March 25, 2015 at 6:00pm

Town Hall Meeting Room

Minutes

PRESENT: Selectboard Members: John Gannon, Jake White, Tom Fitzgerald, Diane Chapman & Susie Haughwout
Planning Commission (PC) Members: Wendy Manners & Carolyn Palmer
DRB Members: Fred Houston, Meg Streeter, Peter Wallace & Wendy Manners
Zoning Administrator Craig Ohlson & Town Manager Scott Murphy
Quorums were present for the Selectboard and DRB, though not for the PC.

VISITORS: Nicki Steel, Shelley Park, Cliff Duncan, Chris Mays – Brattleboro Reformer

CALL TO ORDER: 6:06pm

AGENDA: Discuss philosophical directions regarding zoning, planning and other similar issues.

Topics discussed included, but not limited to: Height restrictions with regard to fire safety and esthetics & who is responsible to regulate for fire safety; Builders are responsible to build to national building codes; Town did away with building inspector position years ago in part due to liability issue; Where in town would height regulations make sense; Members of the PC & the ZA have been working on identifying which buildings have historic significance and whether they appear on state or national lists; Possibility of expanding design control district further than the current HRD (Historic Review District), possibility to include former high school; Town's historical background includes agriculture and more, such as industrial and tourism back to 1800's; Are we accomplishing being "business friendly" with our regulations; Possibly poll recent permit applicants about the local process; State regulations to open a new business are onerous, would it help if on balance the local process were easier; It's appropriate to have a geographically defined design control district like HRD with stricter standards, but not apply those stricter standards to entire town.

No official action was taken by any board.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Topics of comment including but not limited to: Fire & Police officials for example can testify as expert witness at a DRB hearing; the Village is very different than the rest of the town and thus a different set of standards is appropriate; Support for a post permit survey; Landscape regulations may not be necessary; DRB decisions may not reflect all standards listed in the zoning documents; Can't write regulations that cover everything, impossible to achieve that level of precision, grey areas go to DRB, DRB makes decisions based on the regulation and uses common sense; Presence/footprint of a property is important to the success of the business contained therein; [in HRD] it's important to be good stewards of a property's intrinsic character; One constant we all have to deal with is change; The challenge for individual property owners to fight the state system is difficult – the deck is stacked; Helpful if local authorities can stand with and support individual property owners.

Adjourned 7:25pm

Respectfully submitted,



Susie Haughwout, Selectboard Secretary