

Wilmington Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 26, 2018
Meeting Time: 4:00 P.M.

In attendance: Cheryl LaFlamme, Chair, John Lebron (at 4:40) Meg Staloff, Angela Yakovleff
Craig Ohlson, Zoning Administrator, Gretchen Havreluk, Ann Manwaring, Select Board liaison, Scott Tucker, Town Manager

Open meeting

Cheryl called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

Possible additions to the agenda

Cheryl requested a conversation about a Blight Ordinance.

Gretchen presented information about the possibility of adopting a blight or Property Maintenance Ordinance. An ordinance such as this would address the many vacant buildings in Town. It was decided that the March 12 Planning Commission meeting include this as a primary agenda item.

Approve minutes from 2/12/18

Meg made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 12, 2018 meeting.

Cheryl seconded.

In favor: All

Opposed: None

Public comments

None

Discuss Town plan hearing

The Rural Residential information is only on the Town Plan and map, not in the zoning ordinance. Next steps are to change the language in the Rural Residential section to reflect 3-5 acres in all references, not 5 acres.

Gretchen pointed out that the Demographics are outdated. She is willing to help gather as much up to date information as possible, although realizes the actual numbers will not be available until the next census.

She disagrees with the wording concerning the effect Hurricane Irene had on the Town. She disagrees with the use of "massive business closure" since there were only three businesses affected by the flood. Subsequently businesses re-opened then closed, but she

feels this is largely due to economic downturn. She, as economic developer, is frustrated the fact that she had no input on this section.

John noted that this wording has not been changed since the beginning and there have been opportunities to bring this up in earlier discussions and meetings.

Cheryl said there were two possible decisions to consider tonight:

1. Does the Planning Commission want to keep the document and bring it up to date or
2. Does the Planning Commission want to send the document on to the Select Board with comments and have them move ahead?

Ann asked what we, as a planning commission think the purpose of the Town Plan is?

Consensus was the Proposed Town Plan is a Blueprint or guideline for where the town hopes to go.

Ann would like to have a joint Planning Commission/Select Board round table discussion meeting concerning the Rural Residential District.

The towns surrounding Wilmington have greater than one acre zoning and more conservation land. Much of our affected conservation land is on the West end of Town. We need to have a consensus on where we want to go with this. There is approximately a year before we **must** have a new Town Plan in place.

Craig noted that any changes made to the document tonight can be done without another hearing and the document can then be sent to the Select Board.

Ann said that when this Proposed Town Plan was originally drafted the impact from Hurricane Irene was huge. Now the impact is 1. The impact of recovery from the recession is the United States, and 2. The essential change of technological impact.

Planning Commission meeting suspended at 5:00PM

Cheryl opened the hearing on the Proposed Town Plan at 5:00PM

Community members in attendance: Jake and Monique White, Carolyn Palmer, Meg Streeter, John Bertucci, Nicki Steel, Gretchen Havreluk, Wendy Manners-Seaman, Lynne Matthews, Richard Caplan, Tom Fitzgerald, Sharon Cunningham

Planning Commission has been working on this for multiple years. Some of the demographics are older and can be changed at this meeting and still passed on to Select Board.

Community member asked about the discussion the Planning Commission was having concerning economic development. Do we have to take a vote tonight?

-The Planning Commission has already approved the Proposed Town Plan Document.

Another community member pointed out three minor edits.

-These will be corrected.

Question: What is a certified Local Government?

-Designation/"tag" that allows us to apply for more grants.

-Definition will be added to the back of the document.

Rural Residential and 3-5 acre minimum discussion

Are we then going to go through another assessment if this is accepted?

Is there a plan to get this and common use tract in sync? If the town rather than the State were doing this it would make more sense.

If we were to do this would it affect all of the town or just the large tracts?

Comment: If you want young families to move here, we should lean toward three acre zoning. Five acres encourages continual emphasis on having richer people moving here rather than local or average income people. It removes value if you can't subdivide. (Ex. 30 parcels with 1 acre zoning versus 6 parcels with 5 acre zoning on a 30 acre piece of property.)

If you were in Rural Residential already and have less than five acre parcels, you would have a non-conforming lot. It could possibly restrict land owners in the future should they want to subdivide or if setbacks or other restrictions are changed.

You are putting a penalty on people with large lots of land.

Page 27 Action 1.1.11 makes community member uncomfortable

Page 69 Did we really have 15 farms in town in 2007?

Page 91 Where did the information come from?

Page 122 Some trail upkeep needed. Thank you for putting information in the plan.

What is the proper name of the district...Design Review District or Historic Design Review District?

We can't eliminate municipal parking overnight. We don't have enough parking in town.

Concerns about rivers and flooding and ability of individuals to clean up in the aftermath.

Wilmington has never enacted a set of subdivision regulations. It impacts businesses that want to or intend to divide. It will impact any development. (Presently on PC list of issues to address)

Mention of three lost buildings in Tropical Storm Irene not mentioned. (It is mentioned on page 9.)

Feeling is that the closing of businesses was greatly due to economic downturn.

John made a motion to close the hearing at 5:59. Meg seconded.

In favor: All

Opposed: None

Planning Commission discussion

Do we want to finalize the plan tonight or put it on the Agenda for March 12?

-The consensus was to finalize the plan tonight.

Changes made to Proposed Town Plan document:

Search and find where the plan says 5 acres. Change to 3-5 acres.

Change in the Reporting Form for Proposed Wilmington Town Plan also.

Page 91 a key needs to be added so the map can be understood.

-Craig will check with Windham Regional to try and obtain the information.

Add under definitions: Certified Local Government.

Page 21 Correct font under Town Planning Process and the formatting

Front page take out "Adopted by Select Board."

Craig will contact Windham Regional to find what is available to update and what is not concerning the demographics. It depends on the source.

Close meeting

John made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:23PM.

Meg seconded.

In favor: All

Opposed: None

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Yakovleff, scribe

Next meeting: March 12, 2018 4:00PM