

SWANTON PLANNING COMMISSION
DRAFT MINUTES
Wednesday, July 30, 2024
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT
5:00 p.m.

Present: Ross Lavoie-Chair, Oliver Manning, Heather Buczkowski-Members, Amy Giroux-Zoning Administrator, Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant, Corey Parent, Jim Pratt, Lucie Hill

Members Absent: Andy LaRocque, Ed Daniel

Zoom: No Attendance

1. Call to Order

Mr. Lavoie called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

2. Agenda Review

Mr. Lavoie reviewed the agenda, asked Ms. Giroux if she had received his email from Alburgh Vermont about zoning. Ms. Giroux said she reviewed the email and he had received it because he is the chair of the Planning Commission.

3. Review minutes of June 12, 2024

Ms. Buczkowski made a motion to approve June 12, 2024, draft minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Manning. Motion carried.

4. Public Comment

Mr. Pratt came before the board as a member of the Development Review Board to discuss changes he thinks could be helpful to the Development Review Board.

Mr. Pratt said Maquam Shore road has many narrow lots making it difficult for people to build anything without going to the DRB. Mr. Pratt said this area should have the have different setbacks. Ms. Buczkowski said this comes up regularly and the setbacks will be looked at. The State still must approve shoreline permits.

Mr. Pratt asked about building envelopes being removed from subdivisions. Mr. Parent said Swanton is one of the only Towns with this most Towns allow a percentage of lot coverage/impervious surface. This would be the best practice to be in line with the region and the state. Mr. Pratt showed the board an example of a development that had a building envelope to build in that he did not agree with. These subdivisions also have lots owning to the center of the road. Mr. Pratt said he would like to see this change; this can cause issues with access and

maintenance. The road should be owned by the HOA, this will also allow the Town to take over roads in the future. The developers are using the road right-of-way to get the road depth and frontage to create more lots. This is not good practice. Mr. Lavoie clarified excluding rights-of-way and roadways to be used in lot dimensions.

Mr. Pratt also discussed homes being converted from seasonal to year-round homes on small lots on Maquam Shore road. These property owners need to come before the board due to the lot size. Mr. Parent said the State law is changing this requirement, if they can get approved septic, it should not be an issue.

Mr. Pratt discussed setbacks in Swanton Village on corner lots. Mr. Pratt thought a good plan would be to bring homes in a straighter line. Mr. Parent said other communities make you use the average setbacks of the neighbors and use that.

Mr. Pratt discussed that he believes the Planning Commission should review and approve mylars and subdivisions according to the district plans. This is how it used to be done with the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Mr. Lavoie suggested any development of more than 3 lots should come to the Planning Commission before going to the DRB. They then could give their suggestions. Mr. Manning asked if the DRB gets the packet before the meetings would it be option to send them to the Planning Commission as well to review and send Ms. Giroux ideas/comments. Mr. Parent will research other communities.

Ms. Hill came before the board, she lives on Maquam Shore road, to discuss what is allowed in that district. Ms. Hill said her lot is non-conforming and would like them to include options to use her lot. Ms. Hill currently can't subdivide due to not having enough depth. Ms. Hill is looking for smaller lot requirements or the option to lot line adjustment. Taking a non-conforming lot to make usable.

5. Land use & Development Regulations Review

Mr. Parent reviewed Land use and Development regulations. They discussed the need for site plans with the new State regulations. They discussed the difference that requires someone to go to the DRB for a variance vs. conditional use less 30% and should this be changed.

Ms. Giroux discussed the need to add professional and personal service in all districts.

They discussed setback requirements in shoreland districts where the State requires shoreland permits anyway. They discussed lowering road setbacks in the shoreland district to allow buildings as far back as possible from the water to prevent flooding.

Mr. Lavoie suggested advertising in the newspaper the changes to Land use & Development Regulations.

6. Set the next Planning Commission Meeting date.
August 7, 2024 @6:30 pm & August 14, 2024 @6:30 pm
7. Any Other Necessary Business
None
8. Adjournment
Mr. Manning made a motion to adjourn at 7:58 pm, seconded by Ms. Buczkowski. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant