



**TOWN OF STOWE
PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2022**

The Town of Stowe Planning Commission held a meeting on **Monday September 19, 2022**, starting at 5:30 p.m. with remote participation available via Zoom. There was no public meeting space. The meeting began at 5:30 pm.

Members present included Hope Sullivan, Robert Davison, Neil Percy, Chuck Ebel, and Brian Hamor. Staff Sarah McShane was present. Others present included David Pound.

Acting Chair Hamor called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Review Prior Meeting Minutes [08/15/2022]

On a motion by C.Ebel, seconded by B.Davison, the meeting minutes from the prior meeting were approved as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments & Updates

Adjustments to the agenda- none. There were no public comments.

Cannabis Establishments – Continued Discussion

Staff updated the Commission on the current status of the interim bylaws pertaining to cannabis establishments. She reported that members of the Commission had met with the Selectboard during their September 6th meeting to discuss the proposed bylaws. The Selectboard had several questions and tabled the discussion to a later date to allow staff and the Commission to further discuss and research. She explained the focus of tonight's conversation is for the Commission to discuss and answer the following questions:

- 1) Should retail cannabis establishments be allowed in the LVC and village zoning districts?
- 2) Where should larger tier (4-6) indoor cannabis cultivators be located?
- 3) Where should larger tier (4-6) outdoor cannabis cultivators be located?

She provided a brief presentation showing the 500-foot buffer from schools, churches, etc. and how it would impact the MRV and village districts. B.Davison reported that he would rather not see a proliferation of retail cannabis shops in the southern gateway (LVC) as visitors enter town. B.Hamor asked whether places like the Baggy Knees Shopping Center might be appropriate. Members agreed that the village zoning districts were not an appropriate location.

Members discussed the buffer requirement and reviewed how the existing buffer requirement would impact the MRV district. Members inquired whether a buffer should be required from churches/synagogues/houses of worship. Some members felt it was appropriate, while other members felt it should not be required. H.Sullivan noted that there is a bar next door to a church in the village and that might possibly be more impactful.

Members discussed whether the Stowe Rec Path should be considered a recreational facility for the purposes of the interim zoning bylaws. Majority of members agreed but asked whether staff

could prepare a map to visualize how applying a buffer from the Rec Path would impact the MRC village. Staff agreed to prepare for discussion during the following meeting.

Members discussed where larger tiered indoor and outdoor cannabis establishments might best be located. Members reviewed the zoning map and discussed possible districts and locations. Although outdoor cultivators may be viewed similarly to an agricultural use, larger operations could have secondary odor impacts that are not as common as other agricultural operations. Larger tiered indoor operations will require larger commercial warehouse buildings. Members generally agreed that the larger operations, both indoor and outdoor, were not appropriate in most locations. Staff noted that outdoor operations will involve an isolated portion of the year, while indoor grow operations may have continuous growing cycles. Members viewed staff's presentation and the zoning map. Although larger rural lots may have more physical area to mitigate any potential secondary impacts; members agreed the RR5 and other RR districts are primarily residential districts and not appropriate for commercial sized operations/uses. Members agreed smaller operations could be suitably located in some RR districts but not the larger upper tiered operations. Members agreed the only zoning district that would be appropriate for such sized indoor and outdoor operations is the WBCSD.

Following discussion, members agreed to recommend the following:

- Retail cannabis establishment should only be allowed in the MRV district.
- Reduce the overall buffer area to 250 ft and remove churches/synagogues/houses of worship from the protected land uses.
- Allow larger tiered indoor and outdoor operations in the WBCSD only.
- Consider the Stowe Rec Path a recreational facility for the purposes on the interim bylaws.

Staff will prepare a map for discussion at the next meeting which illustrates the 250-foot buffer and will update the draft regulations to incorporate agreed upon recommendations. Community member David Pound provided comments on the odor impacts from the hemp growing operation on Weeks Hill Road. He reported that the odor significantly impacted the enjoyment of his property. Members inquired about the overall sized of the hemp growing operation and thought it might have been larger than what will be allowed for cannabis. Further discussion with the Selectboard is planned for October 11th.

Correspondence

Staff passed along recent correspondence from the Town of Morristown and Town of Bolton Planning Commissions regarding zoning amendment public hearings.

Staff briefly reviewed a letter from LCPC regarding regionally significant ridgelines. She explained the map provided with the letter did not appear to show Shuetteville Hill Wildlife Corridor; she suggested for the Commission to respond requesting LCPC consider the Shuetteville Hill area. Members agreed. Staff will follow-up with LCPC.

The next PC meeting is October 3rd. The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McShane, Planning & Zoning Director