



**TOWN OF STOWE
PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
August 7, 2023**

The Town of Stowe Planning Commission held a meeting on **Monday August 7, 2023**, starting at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Stowe Town Office with remote participation available via Zoom. The meeting began at 5:30 pm.

Members present included Mila Lonetto, Bob Davison, Chuck Ebel, Jill Anne, Heather Snyder, Brian Hamor, and John Muldoon. Also present was Sarah McShane (staff), and Ken Belliveau.

The meeting was called to order by Chair M.Lonetto at 5:30 pm.

Adjustments to the Agenda & Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

none

Review Prior Meeting Minutes [07/31/2023]

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

Bylaw Modernization Grant- Continued Discussion

Staff provided an overview of three miscellaneous zoning amendment requests requiring the Commission's consideration. She presented suggested language regarding temporary sandwich board signs and noted the Planning & Zoning Office is currently trying to gain voluntary compliance with businesses which have non-complying signs. She mentioned the current language does not afford much relief to businesses within the village since buildings are often located close to the roadway. She asked the Commission to consider language allowing sandwich boards which are placed on decks and porches. Members reviewed the suggested language, suggested adding the word "attached" in front of decks and porches, and agreed to advance for public comment at a public hearing. Members inquired about public art and circumstances when artwork and signage blend together. Staff presented proposed language regarding drive-through facilities for pharmacies as suggested by Mary Black during a prior meeting. B.Davison noted that he thought the language was okay, however was opposed to allowing drive-throughs for additional uses. Members discussed curbside service and delivery options for prescription medicines. J.Muldoon noted that drive-through facilities add both a visual and functional difference. C.Ebel agreed it would open Pandora's box and is opposed to allowing them. C.Ebel motioned to keep the existing language. B.Davison seconded the motion. The motion did not pass- the Commission decided to keep the conversation open by including the suggested language within the packet of amendments for the public hearing. Advancing for the public hearing will allow the Commission to receive public comment, however, does not mean the Commission will ultimately recommend the amendment to the Selectboard. Lastly, staff presented suggested language regarding areas served by municipal water and sewer infrastructure. She explained that portions of Act 47 are now in effect and recommended the Commission consider basic language to guide the DRB and the Zoning Administrator when reviewing projects within areas served by municipal water and sewer infrastructure. She reported ultimately the Commission may decide it needs to redistrict based on these new requirements however that idea will need to be explored as part of the next Stowe Town Plan. The Commission made several changes to the language and decided to include within the packet of zoning amendments to advance to public hearing.

Members then reviewed the comprehensive packet of zoning amendments which includes recommendations from staff, the community, and revisions identified as part of the Bylaw Modernization Project. All of the amendments had previously been reviewed by the Commission at various meetings over the last year or so. A summary of the zoning amendments and related discussion included:

- Amendments to Section 2.5 to exempt trail surface structures and technical trail features, demolition of fences and small accessory structures, and trail kiosks. Staff worked with Stowe Trails Partnership to develop the recommended language.
- Amendments to separate site plan review and conditional use requirements. Site plan review criteria address the development of site specific elements, while conditional use criteria address how a particular use may impact off-site areas.
- Amendments to incorporate Act 47 provisions related to Environmental Court appeals, interested person definitions, and DRB decisions related to housing developments.
- Add dumpsters and recycling bins as items exempt from setback requirements.
- Revise the split lot provisions and add language to clarify when the DRB can waive requirements for split lots.
- Enhance the existing conditional use standards by providing additional detail and requirements.
- Amend the Affordable Housing Density Bonus to reflect Act 47 requirements and create standards for the “bonus floor”.
- Establish a new site plan review section by reformatting the existing language within the regulations. A long-term fix will be to improve the related standards.
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU). Members discussed ADU’s and owner-occupied/long-term lease provisions.
- Add Emergency Shelter as a protected public use per Act 47.
- Incorporate the interim regulations pertaining to cannabis establishments.
- Create a new mixed-use section to provide clarity on the review requirements pertaining to developments containing a mix of uses and multiple buildings on a single parcel.
- Expand the existing prohibition of helipads to all landing areas and remove the allowance for ten trips per year.
- Change the review process for developing more two or more residential buildings on a single lot from conditional use to either PUD or subdivision.
- Allow three and four unit buildings as a permitted use in areas served by municipal water and sewer infrastructure per Act 47.
- Incorporate cannabis establishments into the Use Table; add emergency shelter as a conditional use in commercial zoning districts and RR1.
- Reduce dimensional requirements in designated growth areas and related zoning districts.
- Modify the density requirements per Act 47 and in LVC, VC-10, MRV, and MRC districts.
- Clarify instances in which the DRB and HPC can waive building height in the Stowe Historic Overlay District.
- Reduce parking requirements per Act 47; add affordable housing developments and employer transit passes as special circumstances in which the DRB can modify the parking requirements.
- Amend uses allowed in the VIL-PUD to recognize cannabis testing laboratories and emergency shelters as allowed uses.
- Modify existing definitions of accessory dwelling unit, affordable housing, board housing, boarder, lot area/lot size, two-family dwelling, and multi-family dwelling.
- Create new definitions for affordable housing developments, all cannabis establishments per the interim zoning, emergency shelter per Act 47, landing area, mixed use development, area served by municipal sewer and water infrastructure per Act 47.

Following review and discussion, C.Ebel motioned to warn a public hearing for September 18, 2023. B.Davison seconded. The motion passed. Staff will make the suggested amendments and warn a public hearing for September 18th.

The meeting adjourned shortly after 7:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McShane, Planning & Zoning Director