

ROCKINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION 3/28/2024 Meeting Minutes

PC Present: Chair, Deborah Wright, Jana Bryan, John Dunbar, Jim Mullen, Guy Payne, Taylor Pichette, Dalila Hall; Staff Gary Fox,
Zoom: Planning Administrator, Halle Abuayyash

1. Call Meeting to Order -Wright called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Public Comment for items not on the agenda- None were made before the recording stated.
3. Approval of February 29, 2024, minutes. Payne moved to approve the minutes of 2/29/24, Dunbar seconded, and motion carried.
4. Addition to Agenda- S11 Home Act add as Agenda Item 6
5. Summary of Recommended Amendments to the Rockingham Zoning Ordinance - The Committee looked at the Town Plan while reviewing regulations and including DRB members helped avoid errors. The Island and Under the Hill districts need updating. Reviewing the Home Act, the Be Home Act tries to clarify but the language is confusing. Mullen offered to email legislators for more clarification before it is passed. PC agreed that examples would be helpful. It was noted that places like Griswold Drive would not be appropriate for the mandated 12 units/acre, as they lacked sidewalks, and due to location would not benefit the Village. The Commission agreed language could be added to require 20/unit plus to create the multi-story mixed use and density desired on the Island.

Recommended changes:

1326. Waivers pp. 8-10 ADD- allow Waivers of all dimensional requirements in all zoning districts, with examples from other Towns.

1335. The cap on renewals for temporary uses and structures is 6 months, which is too short. Clean-up inconsistent language (ex. Single family dwelling vs. one-family)

2320- Zoning Admin. can approve or refer to DRB.

2400. Zoning District Use Regulations, pp. 21-52- highlights

In general, update all districts to comply with the Home Act.

In CB-7 zoning district, increase Coverage Maximum from 50% to N/A p. 43

Home occupation is permitted use in all zoning. Is “should” too general, change to “must”.

“Should” is a suggestion, but not a requirement. For the purposes of Town charts, SR is recognized as a “public water system”, due to not having Village water.

2600. Any encroachment would require a waiver or variance

3132. Section B.: ADD-Allow home occupation to be conducted in an accessory structure (rather than only in a home/principal dwelling). Update language: changing telephone to phone. The committee suggested removing the home occupancy permit renewal process.

3142. Add -a totally new section regarding Accessory On-Farm Business

3200. Allow number of required parking spaces to be adjusted downward by the DRB for proximity to 'nearby public parking lots as well as proximity to on-street parking spaces for uses not needing overnight parking'.

Allow "stacked parking" (one behind the other for appropriate situations with approval of DRB) A discussion about the half parking space required is confusing, Wright was concerned about the people who had vehicles but needed housing, was this too restrictive. Dunbar said zoning by parking is putting cars before people that need housing, suggesting they can be more flexible to house people, forcing different thought. Hall said without the parking requirements, owners have more flexibility with outside space, i.e. community gardens, green space and lot size to accommodate tenants needs. Suggestions for more opportunities to discuss parking.

3380. Prohibited Signs p 78 Decision on LED signs

Current sign regulations are from the 1960s, suggestion to look at other Town's zoning ordinances. Fox said two gas stations updated their LED signs, with requirements on how it was programmed to set brightness, and motion activated at certain times.

4425. PUD- eliminate the requirement that each phase of development must be completed within 2 years, instead, require the Applicant to propose a timetable for each phase of development.

4515. Residential Accessory Buildings p. 89 Change regulation to require zoning permits only for residential accessory structure **that is 100sq ft or larger**. Relax setback regulations for residential accessory structures that are located behind the front line of the principal building on the lot. Height restrictions are involved.

Subdivision Regulations 420. p. 20

Increase the number of lots without road frontage that may be served by a private driveway from 2-4.

6. Bylaw Updates- Consultant update- (Addition to Agenda- Discussed in Item #5) Fox said Innes Associates were finishing their proposal. Recommendation that zoning should match the built environment. Mullen said the big task should be rezoning the Island, for mixed use, and density changes on regulations. At the Kick-off meeting, the Commission and a DRB representative would form the Committee to write and enforce the regulations with recommendations from Halle and Fox. They agreed that the bylaws should fit the vision of the Town Plan. The MAY PC Meeting, Add more discussion on the 'Be Home Act.'

7. Act 250 submission for Barber Park Solar- Like Town Plan, must send to abutting Towns, Statutory piece (like preferred site piece). If PC has issues, they can be addressed.
8. Town Plan Update and Adoption Schedule- Fox explained if the Report Update is satisfactory to abutting Towns, the schedule is set for Tuesday, April 30 at 5:00 pm. Payne asked when it gets sent to WRC. Fox said they will clarify that. Warning should be posted 15 days prior to April 30.
 - Town Plan Update Report- On the Page after subdivision regulations, introduction and overview of Town Plan, there are Five bullet points required to share. There are no impacts or proposed changes. *Dunbar moved to accept the Town Plan Assessment Report, seconded by Hall, motion carried.*
9. Other Business- None discussed.
10. Next Meeting: Thursday, April 25, 2024 at 6 pm, 3rd Floor Conference Room
11. Adjourn -*At 7:33 pm, Payne moved to adjourn, Hall seconded, and motion carried.*

Recording Clerk Betsy Thurston