

Land Use Regulation Update Committee
Town of Ferrisburgh, Vt.

FINAL – Minutes for meeting of June 5, 2019; approved on June 25, 2019.

Members present: Arabella Holzapfel (chair), Bonnie Barnes, Bob Beach, Gail Blasius, Anne Cohn, Carl Cole, Karen Pettersen, Kurt Plank, Jean Richardson, Norm Smith.

1. Call to order. Arabella Holzapfel called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

2. Approval of minutes. Jean Richardson made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on May 1, 2019, as submitted. Anne Cohn seconded. All voted in favor. **Motion approved.**

Carl Cole made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on May 28, 2019, as submitted. Gail Blasius seconded. Bonnie Barnes, Bob Beach, Gail Blasius, Carl Cole, Arabella Holzapfel, Karen Pettersen and Norm Smith voted in favor. Anne Cohn, Jean Richardson and Kurt Plank abstained. **Motion approved.**

3. Road access issues: input from road foreman. Bonnie Barnes told the group that John Bull, road foreman, was unable to attend the meeting because his father had passed away.

4. Conserved land discussion. One issue raised at the previous meeting was whether the town should consider adding conserved land to the existing Conservation District. Arabella Holzapfel said those present had agreed it was not a good idea, but because some members had not been able to attend, she wanted to bring it up again. Jean Richardson said it had been noted at the last meeting that adding more land to the restrictive Conservation District, currently with 25-acre zoning, would be a tough sell for residents. Karen Pettersen said she had spoken about the issue with Craig Heindel, chair of the Conservation Commission, who had pointed out all conserved land was not created equal, with different requirements and restrictions on different parcels. Some of those parcels might be appropriate for inclusion in the Conservation District, while others would not.

Committee members felt it would be good to vote on the issue. Bob Beach made a motion to leave conserved parcels in their current zoning districts and not add them to the Conservation District. Carl Cole seconded. All voted in favor. **Motion approved.**

5. Route 7 corridor review. Documents on Route 7 development issues, compiled by the Citizens Advisory Committee a decade ago, were shared with committee members by Carl Cole and Arabella Holzapfel. Cole said that Katie Hill, who had headed up the group, was not able to join in the committee's discussions, but felt that the report mostly speaks for itself, and noted many of the recommendations had been incorporated in the recently adopted town plan.

Gail Blasius said it was clear a lot of thought, by developers and regulators, had gone into recent Route 7 developments, including the Champlain Oil Company facility and Dock

Doctors, to keep the new businesses as unobtrusive as possible. Jean Richardson said she felt the development helped Ferrisburgh appear to be a functioning town, and not all shuttered businesses along the Route 7 corridor. Kurt Plank said Dock Doctors was an example of a healthy mix of manufacturing and sales facilities, so that there are not just machines humming inside buildings and trucks taking the results elsewhere. Anne Cohn noted Dock Doctors also offers livable wages to its employees. Plank said a question for the committee is how the town attracts and encourages businesses judged to be positive contributors to the town. In so far as this is already happening, he said, it is a credit to the zoning board and planning commission. He said it's important for the town to have the flexibility to allow conditional uses in certain zoning districts.

Carl Cole said an important feature of Route 7 development is the break between the development in the north and south, with a large swath of the Route 7 frontage in between still zoned Rural Agricultural.

Jean Richardson said that in reading the Citizen's Advisory Committee report, she thought it was just as relevant today as when it was written a decade ago. Bob Beach said the COCO project, one of the proposals that led concerned Ferrisburgh residents to establish the committee, had involved a determined developer and required a large investment in time and money to win approval from the town. He said it would be appropriate for any similar proposal in the future to receive the same kind of scrutiny.

6. Village Center Designation Program announcement. Bonnie Barnes said she was working to have Richard Amore, from the state's Department of Housing and Community Development, attend the committee's next meeting on June 25 to brief the committee on the Village Center Designation Program. The plan is to have Amore and committee members take a quick tour of the North Ferrisburgh village area before the meeting. While reserving judgment on the program, committee members said it made sense to look into the pros and cons, including possible tax breaks and grant opportunities.

There was a brief discussion of the program's emphasis on walkability, something the town has examined in the past, and whether a gravel walkway would be enough, or whether the program requires actual sidewalks, and disabled accessibility. Jean Richardson thought it would make sense to contact towns that have used the village designation program and learn about their experiences, to allow the committee to ask informed questions.

While unsure whether it was an officially designated village, Kurt Plank thought an example of a successful mix of commercial and residential development could be found in East Middlebury along Route 125, with homes and a library coexisting with Goodro Lumber, the Waybury Inn and a few other businesses. He noted there are sidewalks on both sides of the road.

7. Other business/next meeting agenda. Committee members are looking forward to learning more about village designation at their next meeting, which will take place at 5:30 p.m. on June 25, with the village tour taking place before the meeting. They will also discuss consultant Brandy Saxton's draft language for several sections of the updated zoning

bylaws. Saxton has already shared a draft of revised standards for Conservation PUDs (Planned Unit Developments), and expects to send other drafts to committee members soon. She will be available for the committee's meeting on July 17, and committee members decided they will also meet the following week, on July 23.

8. Adjournment. Carl Cole made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 p.m. Anne Cohn seconded. All voted in favor. **Motion approved.**

— Respectfully submitted,

Tim Etchells