Planning Commission
Town of Ferrisburgh, Vt.

FINAL – Minutes for meeting of April 18, 2018; approved May 16, 2018.

Members present: Bob Beach (chair), Anne Cohn, Gail Blasius, Arabella Holzapfel, Mike Quinn, Walter Reed, Bessie Sessions, Keith Wagner. Absent: Al Chamberlain.

Visitors present: Jason Barnard, Heath Butler, Carl Cole, Bernard Perron, Dorothy Perron.

Town official present: Bonnie Barnes, zoning administrator.

Bob Beach, chair, opened the meeting at 7 p.m. He described his communication with Brandy Saxton, a land use planner and principal in the firm PlaceSense, about her interest in working with the town on a rewrite of its zoning bylaws. She has worked previously with the town on zoning and land use issues. Beach described some projects she had worked on lately, including a technical review of the town plan and zoning bylaws for Berlin, Vt., and a zoning audit for the town of Chester, Vt. He described her as having worked on a broad range of projects, and thought it made sense for the town to consider bringing her skills to bear on the zoning rewrite. He said commission members could discuss the matter further under “Other Business” later in the meeting.

Application No. 18-006 by Joseph and Jackie Rivers for final plat approval of a two-lot subdivision at 3838 Sand Road. The parcel is in the Rural Agricultural District (RA-5), and identified in Town of Ferrisburgh tax maps as parcel 08/01/12.2.

Bob Beach opened the hearing at 7:05 p.m. Jason Barnard of the consulting firm Barnard & Gervais was present to speak for the application. He said a survey had been completed and a wastewater permit application filed with the state. He presented plans for the subdivision creating two five-plus acre lots, and locating the building envelope on the currently undeveloped lot, as well as the septic system, a drilled well and curb cuts. The Planning Commission had requested, at its March meeting, that these items be included on the final plat for the project. Barnard also noted that the building envelope had been moved and reduced in size to minimize removal of trees from the wooded section of the property, another suggestion from commission members.

The public hearing was closed at 7:12 p.m. Gail Blasius made a motion to approve the final plat of the two-lot subdivision as submitted. Mike Quinn seconded. All voted in favor. Motion approved.

Approval of minutes from March 21, 2018: At 7:15 p.m., Walter Reed made a motion to approve the minutes of March 21, 2018, as submitted. Mike Quinn seconded. Bob Beach, Gail Blasius, Mike Quinn, Walter Reed, Bessie Sessions and Keith Wagner voted in favor. Anne Cohn and Arabella Holzapfel abstained. Motion approved.

Application No. 18-010 by Bernard and Dorothy Perron for sketch plan review of a four-lot subdivision at 2437 Middlebrook Road. The 50-acre parcel involved is partially in the Rural Agricultural District (RA-5) and partially in the Conservation
District (CON-25) and identified in Town of Ferrisburgh tax maps as parcel 10/01/55.

At 7:20 p.m., Bob Beach re-opened the sketch plan review, recessed from the meeting of March 21, 2018. Heath Butler and Dorothy and Bernard Perron were present to speak for the application. They presented three possible plans for subdividing the 50-acre parcel into four lots, taking into account that the parcel straddles two different zoning districts. The applicants and the commission members felt that a plan labeled No. 3-A offered the best solution. It includes one 25.3-acre lot, one 14.3-acre lot, and two lots of about 5 acres each. Both of the larger lots straddle the line between the Conservation and Rural Agricultural Districts. The two smaller lots are completely within the Rural Agricultural District.

There was a brief discussion of how some of the proposed new lots would be accessed. The sketch plan envisions access along what is referred to on the sketch plan map as “old town highway,” and then along a 60-foot right-of-way to the parcels in question. Planning Commission members wondered whether the town road was actually 60 feet wide, which is the required width for a ROW in the town’s zoning bylaws. Commission members suggested this question would need to be addressed in the final site plan.

The hearing was closed at 7:30 p.m. Gail Blasius made a motion to accept the sketch plan as presented, with the project defined as a minor subdivision requiring one more public hearing, and requiring the site plan to include building envelopes, septic and well locations, and curb cuts, as well as elevation information. Keith Wagner seconded. All voted in favor. Motion approved.

Other Business

Board members discussed the proposed rewrite of the town’s zoning bylaws. Arabella Holzapfel, the Planning Commission member who has taken the lead on this project, said she had discussed the revision process with Bonnie Barnes, zoning administrator. They were envisioning a committee to oversee the process, perhaps with two members from the Planning Commission, two from the Zoning Board of Adjustment and one at-large member. They thought a two-pronged process would see one group of committee members concentrating on public outreach, and another group dealing with the nitty-gritty work of moving the rewrite forward. The second group would work closely with whomever the town hired to help do the rewrite. Holzapfel said that if the committee could be appointed in May of this year, the aspiration would be to have a final draft of the new bylaws ready in May 2019.

Bonnie Barnes said she was keeping what she called an “oops” book, documenting issues that have come up in administering the current zoning bylaws. She also said that considering all the work that needed to be done, she wondered if it would be helpful to have a larger committee, perhaps seven members instead of five.

Bob Beach suggested the town send Brandy Saxton the new town plan and the existing zoning bylaws and ask her to send the town a proposal for her work on the project. He said there is some money available from the town for the project.
There was a brief discussion of who might want to represent the Planning Commission on the proposed zoning rewrite committee. Bob Beach said he would work closely with the committee, but would not be an official member. Bonnie Barnes said she would be willing to serve on the committee. She said it might be good to have a decision on Planning Commission membership before the May meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment, so that the ZBA could then pick its members and the committee could get to work next month.

At 7:45, Carl Cole said he was attending the meeting to bring up application No. 17-028 by David Shlansky for a four-lot Planned Residential Development on Satterly Road, involving parcels 10/01/57.1 and 23/01/34. The development would include two existing single family homes and two new residences with one accessory apartment each. He said he wanted to have the project appear on the agenda for the next meeting of the Planning Commission in May. He said he was near an agreement with Ferrisburgh Fire Chief Bill Wager on one of the outstanding issues, creating a road on the property that would be accessible by fire trucks.

The sketch plan for the project was approved in March 2017. But board members agreed that changes to the plans and the time elapsed argued for starting over from the sketch plan stage when the project comes up again. They agreed to waive the sketch plan fee, since the applicant had paid that previously, and asked to have the application added to the agenda for the meeting on May 16, 2018.

**Adjournment**

Bessie Sessions made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Mike Quinn seconded. All voted in favor. **Motion approved.**

— Respectfully submitted,

Tim Etchells