

Town of Warren
Planning Commission
Minutes of Meeting
Monday November 9, 2020

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Members Present: Camilla Behn, Mike Bridgewater, Jennifer Faillace, Randy Graves, Mike Ketchel, Dan Raddock, and Jim Sanford.

Others Present: Ruth Robbins (ZA), Richard Czaplinski, Kaziah Haviland, Kinny Perot, Quayl Rewinski, and Carol Chamberlin (Recording Secretary).

Agenda:

1. Kaziah Haviland-Montgomery of the MRV Housing Coalition
2. Kinny Perot and Richard Czaplinski of Friends of the Mad River
3. New/other business

The meeting came to order at 7:30 pm.

Kaziah Haviland was present to provide feedback on the draft Land Use and Development Regulations; she noted that her comments were stemming from an affordable housing standpoint. Kaziah had questions or comments regarding the following provisions:

- The minimum lot size in the Residential District is currently one acre. Kaziah indicated she was not very concerned about this, but was interested in why the minimum in this area is not smaller. She expressed a preference for smaller lot sizes where possible. Commission members explained that they had set an increasing rate of density moving out from the areas of the town's growth centers and that there are methods for increasing density on the Residential District lots where suitable.
- The minimum front setback in the Residential District is currently 40 feet. Kaziah pointed out that a smaller setback minimum would allow for shorter drives and creation of less impervious surface. Dan noted that in some cases this minimum could push a house site into meadowland, and therefore mandate an even longer setback to avoid building in the open area. It was decided to discuss this topic with Place Sense.
- The General Business District has a minimum lot size of 3 acres with maximum of 1 dwelling per acre. Kaziah questioned whether this might be adjusted to allow for more mixed use in this District. Commission members explained that the focus in this district is to create more business uses; it was decided to discuss with Place Sense the possibility of providing a residential incentive based on the establishment of a new business.
- Kaziah pointed out that a future consideration of lowering the number of required residential parking spaces might be useful, but only once there is a robust public transportation system in place.
- The open space and private/semi-private space requirements for multi-family dwellings was reviewed. These requirements in some cases may prohibit the development of new affordable housing, although it was also brought up that the potential for the construction of housing with poor aesthetics should be considered. Possibilities discussed included incrementally reducing the open space requirement as the number of units increases and reducing the percentage of private/semi-private space requirements. Both these topics were added to the list of items to be discussed with PlaceSense. There was also some discussion of what requirements might be waived for affordable housing

development, and it was noted that the income allowances for 'affordable housing' lead to a very limited definition.

- The bulk storage requirement of 60 square feet for multi-family housing was also discussed. Most members felt storage space is a critical requirement, but it was agreed that this might be something that could be waived for affordable housing developments.
- Kaziah raised the matter of potentially allowing for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) of larger dimensions than state statute requires must be a permitted use. Commission members noted that they have discussed this topic with Place Sense, and received feedback that anything larger should have standards created for approval. It has also been discussed that an ADU is meant to be subordinate to a dwelling, and is primarily to provide a means of affordable housing development.

There was further discussion about ADUs and how they relate to duplex and multi-family dwellings; any allowance for an ADU in association with these types of development would need to be specifically addressed in the Regulations, as the state requirement is for ADUs to be allowed as a permitted use in relation to a single-family dwelling. This topic will be discussed further with Place Sense.

- The centrally-located green space requirement that is currently part of the PUD design standard was pointed out by Kaziah to be potentially limiting depending upon the site being developed. Ruth noted that this standard is meant to create a more concentrated development footprint. It was discussed that the location of required green space might be made more flexible, and the topic will be brought up with Place Sense.

Kinny Connell and Richard Czaplinkski were present to represent Friends of the Mad River, and had reviewed the proposed Regulations and provided the Commission with several pages of feedback.

Kinny provided some background and context for the feedback provided, explaining the history of Friends' Ridge to River project and associated programs such as StormSmart and Road Crew Roundtables. Stormwater runoff has been a priority focus of the group for the past several years, and related documentation was provided to the Commission. Kinny noted that there is much private road and driveway mileage in the Mad River Watershed where stormwater runoff is created, and mentioned the correlation between loss of forest cover and water quality degradation. She explained that the state has initiated some regulatory framework to address these issues, but that there are gaps that might be addressed by local oversight.

Kinny remarked that the Ridge to River group has been missing the input and participation of a Warren PC member, and hoped that somebody would like to begin taking part in the group's meetings again.

Commission members expressed that they would like to take the time to peruse Richard's comments more thoroughly before having a discussion of the points he raised. Jim noted that the 10-acre farm minimum and conflict of use issues related to bike trails were topics that he noticed were raised by Richard which he thinks are critical for further discussion. It was decided to set up a Google Doc through which to ask questions of Richard, and for him to attend one of the next two meetings of the Commission to discuss his comments.

Dan pointed out that there are multiple maps, regulation sections, etc. that are all connected; it needs to be understood how all these layers come together and have a big-picture context available for discussion.

There was no other business to be covered.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Planning Commission

Camilla Behn date

Mike Bridgewater date

Jennifer Faillace date

Randy Graves date

Mike Ketchel date

Dan Raddock date

Jim Sanford date

