

## RPC\_Minutes\_2019.05.07

### Members Present:

Stuart Levasseur  
Mark Wood  
Geo Honigford  
David Brandau  
Jim Rikert  
Sarah Danly  
Bushrod Powers

### Other Attendees:

Sandy Conrad, Royalton Selectboard

### Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Stuart Levasseur, Chair.

#### Driveway Permit

The commission reviewed a driveway permit application for Gilman Road.

- Several PC members had been able to visit the site.
- It was noted that, while it could theoretically be tied into the neighboring driveway if permission was granted, the new proposed location will actually have a better line of sight than the existing adjacent driveway does, although brush will need to be cleared.
- There is a stream nearby but the proposed location seems to be the furthest it could get from the stream before hitting the property line. However, clearing the brush for the sight lines could increase runoff into the stream, so the approval will include provisions for erosion control.
- The grade is already flat enough for town requirements.
- An 18 inch culvert will be needed where it meets the road, so that will need to be wide enough to allow truck access for the fire department.
- The application was accepted with the conditions to “clear brush to maintain a line of sight in both directions; maintain a 40 foot distance from the edge of the stream; recommended 18 inch culvert at the driveway access with minimum 20 foot width; and erosion control between the culvert and the stream.” Bushrod Powers moved to approve the application with this language, David Brandau seconded, and the PC voted to approve.

#### Town Plan Updates

##### Demographics Section:

- Per a request at the last PC meeting, Kimberly Gilbert (TRORC) sent population projections for two different scenarios.

Sandy Conrad attended the meeting to discuss the Housing section.

- She noted that not only was senior housing an important issue during the creation of the last Town Plan, but housing has also been selected as one of the three priorities for the VCRD 4-town future project. There are currently 17 people signed up to be on that committee.
- One of the ideas that the committee will be discussing is to consider the Hope property for a senior housing site. The preliminary idea is for the town to own the site but have it remain as a taxable property, with private development.
  - Sandy and members of the PC briefly discussed how this relates to the plans for the fire department. Sandy pointed out that the town owns many properties and that the fire chief seems willing to give up this property.
  - The next meeting of the VCRD process will be on May 21 at which time the committee will meet and begin working through more details.

Economic Development Section:

- The group discussed and accepted a proposed goal number 4: to increase business in Royalton's two village areas.
- Sandy noted that the town will be moving forward with the sidewalk project at the next Selectboard meeting by applying for a design grant, as at the last meeting regarding the sidewalk improvement study attendees were in favor.
  - The proposed design would actually increase parking by 22 spaces by switching existing parallel parking to angled parking.
- Sandy noted that economic development is another of the 3 goals of the VCRD process and the plan should align with the projects from that committee. Stuart noted that the plan does have to align with the Regional Plan as well which may be more restrictive.
- The PC discussed a draft of the proposed new land use area around the Welch's area that Sarah Danly had prepared and shared in advance of the meeting. The area in question would be put into this land use area and removed from the designated village area of Royalton Village, to be better in compliance with the regional plan's village designations. The group agreed to move forward with this approach but offered feedback on the initial draft:
  - Examples given could be limited to grocery and pharmacy, ie retail types that currently would not be allowed in other commercial land use areas; office services are currently allowed in other places like the commercial area near 107.
  - The PC discussed whether a new business in this area should be required or encouraged to share the existing driveway access and parking lot. Concerns were that a requirement for a shared driveway could effectively prevent a new retail location, but a shared driveway would be preferable.
  - The PC also discussed the extent of the area that should be included in this land use area, and whether it should be the entire section currently in the Town's village designation but not the Region's, or whether it should be more limited in scope to the two parcels that seem most appropriate for retail.
  - Several members felt that keeping the entire area available for retail without requiring the driveways to be shared would still be in conflict with the regional plan.

- The group decided that a good balance between allowing beneficial new retail while limiting sprawl & remaining aligned with the Regional Plan is to limit the area to only the two most appropriate parcels, but to recommend shared driveways where feasible, rather than definitively require them.
- It was noted that the flood plain may also limit development for a large portion of this area, especially if the flood zone is expanded to the 500 year zone.
- The group discussed several other examples of types of retail that could theoretically use this area, but ultimately decided to keep the examples simple as it is impossible to know all the potential opportunities that may arise in the future.
- Sarah will adjust the proposed land use area section based on these decisions and share at the next meeting.

#### Economic Development Section:

- A reference to the new Limited Additional Retail area (around Welch's) was added to the listing of land use areas under policies and on Page 45.
- A reference to developing the former Crawford property was removed as out-of-date.
- A reference to the new Limited Additional Retail area was added to page 45.
- It was noted that there is actually a workforce shortage in this area, but the jobs are not well paying – people are able to find jobs, but need to have multiple jobs.

#### Housing Section:

- The PC discussed the old Grain Mill as the law school had historically be interested in using it for housing. However, that interest has been waning and it is unclear what could be done with the structure in its current state.
- It was noted that the demand for housing currently is more for single family homes than for apartments.
  - However, there is still some need for more apartments. Additionally, many law students will find roommates and rent single family homes together; additional apartments, which may be more attractive to them anyway, could accommodate those students and free up more existing single family homes.
- Ultimately the demand is for more low to moderate income housing – like in most of the state.
- There are at least 9 new apartments that will be developed in the near future.
- Elderly housing is also a key need and as Sandy Conrad noted will be the topic of one of the committees forming from the VCRD process.
  - The second Recommendation was to “thoroughly examine whether adequate senior citizen housing exists within Royalton.” As there was clear group consensus that there is not adequate senior housing, this recommendation was changed to “pursue adequate senior citizen housing.”
- A table about Senior Housing on pg. 65 did not actually show any facilities in Royalton; the table was removed and can be addressed in text instead.
- Kimberly Gilbert recommended the PC add references to AirBnBs and Tiny Houses, which the group discussed.
  - It was noted that AirBnBs can provide a good income stream, but on the other hand pull housing off the market. There are an increasing number in Royalton. There is also a

concern around AirBnBs not facing the same regulations or taxes as other rentals, but the state legislature has recently passed some standards and taxes.

- The group noted that it's not just AirBnBs but there are other "unlicensed short term rentals" to consider as well.
- The group decided to address this by acknowledging the potential but also the drawbacks re: housing, and will follow up with TRORC to see if there is good sample language.
- The PC also discussed tiny houses and it was noted that anything that is occupied for more than 180 days of the year must meet all the requirements for permanent housing.
- General consensus was to support tiny houses to the extent that they abide by the same codes as all other housing.

#### Minutes and Next Meeting:

- As the next planned meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> would conflict with the VCRD 4-towns meeting, the PC is cancelled for that date. Instead the PC will have a second meeting in June, on June 18<sup>th</sup>.
- The next PC meeting will be on June 4.
- PC members had reviewed the previous meeting's minutes online in advance. Bushrod Powers moved to approve them as posted, David Brandau seconded, and all PC members voted aye or abstained.
- Bushrod Powers moved to adjourn, Jim Rikert seconded, and the PC voted to adjourn at 8:44 pm.