

Fair Haven Planning Commission

Town of Fair Haven - December 18, 2024 - Regular Meeting

Commissioners Present: Robert Richards - Chair, Linda Sienkiewicz, Cindy Pritchard, Jason Coupal - Vicechair

Commissioners Absent: Patrick Frazier

Others Present: Phil Adams - Zoning Administrator

Agenda

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm by Chairman Richards.

2. **Review of Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

Approval of Minutes: Regular meeting - December 4, 2024

Mrs. Pritchard **motioned to accept the minutes from the December 4th meeting as written.** Ms. Sienkiewicz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed. Mr. Coupal abstained from voting due to his absence from the previous meeting.

3. **New Business:**

Continue to work on items required for Fair Haven to qualify Downtown Designation.

Chairman Richards wanted to continue progress on the Downtown Designation packet. He asked if all had an opportunity to look at the subdivision regulations that were shared by the RRPC. The PC replied that they had. Chairman Richards asked if there was anything that jumped out to the PC. The Subdivision Regulations would become part of the Zoning Regulations as an addendum, confirmed ZA Adams. Chairman Richards stated that he invited Logan Solomon to come to a Planning Commission meeting on January 8th to give suggestions dealing with Major and Minor Subdivisions. At the January 8th meeting it would be a good time to finalize the subdivision regulations and share a copy with the selectboard. Chairman Richards sent a copy to Glen Traverse today. Chairman Richards stated the Bylaws shared by the RRPC were very helpful. Mr. Coupal asked if the PC anticipated any land or developments to be covered by the regulations in the future. Chairman Richards stated that there are a couple of plots of land that would fall into it, but he explained that to have a downtown designation you have to have subdivision rules. These Subdivision Regulations would be just an addition to our Zoning Bylaws. With these additions, from the Downtown area out 0.5 miles, the area would not have to submit to Act 250 laws. It really helps large development. There has been talk in the last few years with large plots of land developing. Half a mile from the current downtown area runs into the river, the hope is that the Town can shift the radius away from the river but still encompass the same area of land but north of town with an irregular shape. Chairman Richards hasn't heard much push back to the desired irregular shape. Mrs. Pritchard is wary of focusing the help too far away from the actual downtown. She fears people will want to open businesses closer to Rt 4 than in downtown. Chairman Richards states there are incentives for staying in the Downtown Designated area and the park is in the area and it is a draw. One need would be to keep Mary Durfee in town. Mrs. Pritchard fears with the laundromat closing that it will really hurt the downtown area. She doesn't want to plan something people won't utilize. Chairman

Richards states he believes that a “makers space” would be a great addition and draw to the downtown area. Mrs. Pritchard states that the landlords need to work with you to create something as impressive as Vergennes has. Chairman Richards believes that they should not do something just because it will be hard. Mr. Coupal asked if there was a map that has available land for development, he believes this knowledge would help to create the boundaries needed. ZA Adams states that the town only has so much infrastructure in place like sewer and water. There may be developable land, but the infrastructure would also need to be added. Mrs. Pritchard asks if the sewer is capable of additions. Chairman Richards states it is and ZA Adams affirms.

A discussion was had on the area of land needed for a single family development without town sewer and water vs the area needed for a single family dwelling with town sewer and water access. Chairman Richards stated the homework would be to go through the sample subdivision regulations and get even more familiar with them so the PC can proceed. He also re-stated not giving up just because something is difficult, but to make it function for the town the best they can. Mrs. Pritchard asked what happens if we do all this work and it isn't helpful or doesn't happen. Chairman Richards states that the town still has the subdivision regulations from it, which makes it easier for a sub-developer to come into the town. ZA Adams stated that there has also been two projects that have died because of Act 250, this might allow them to come back in and redevelop. Chairman Richards stated that there is all kind of money for housing from the State and Government now. There are people out there just waiting for available land.

Mrs. Pritchard asked about the January 8th meeting as the agenda states the next meeting should be January 15th. There was discussion and a decision that the next meeting would be January 15th. Chairman Richards stated he would get back with Logan Solomon and reschedule. He then asked if anyone made any progress on their Downtown Designation work. Mrs. Sienkiewicz stated she had. She looked at the statute from the State, 24 V.S.A. § 4414(1)(E) and (F) <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/24/117/04414>. Mrs. Sienkiewicz can't picture Fair Haven while reading any of 24 VSA 4414 (1)(E). Then 24 VSA 4414 (1)(F) was all about historical districts and rules and regulations on architecture for the area and she believes that would be the easier avenue to attempt. Chairman Richards stated that the EDC and Logan Solomon agree that the EDC can include the required Downtown Organization. Mrs. Pritchard states she has the National Historic District Information but she can't download it, so she'll work on it.

A lot of the Downtown Designation check list is created and Chairman Richards feels the PC is in pretty good shape. If they can finalize the subdivision regs next meeting the process can keep moving along.

ZA Adams states it is important for him for people to be able to go through the minor subdivision application easily. Line adjustment or cutting out of family properties is the kind of subdivisions that Fair Haven sees most often.

DownTown Designation Application Packet
(https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/State-Designation-Programs/CPR-DT-Application-Guidelines.pdf)

4. Other Business:

- a. **Review of Mail:** None
- b. **Public Comment:** None

5. Adjournment:

Mrs. Pritchard made a **motion to adjourn at 7:43 pm.** Mrs. Sienkiewicz seconded the adjournment motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Jackson, Minute-taker

**** Next Regular Meeting****
January 15, 2025

*****Regular Meeting of January 1, 2025 is Cancelled*****