

Fair Haven Planning Commission
Town of Fair Haven - February 17, 2025 - SPECIAL Meeting

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

Commissioners Absent: Jason Coupal - Vicechair, Patrick Frazier

Others Present: Phil Adams - Zoning Administrator, Jennifer Jackson - Minute-taker,

Hand outs:

1. Draft Local Historic District Section & State Law Requirements for This Type of Regulation; From Logan Solomon - RRPC Representative (does not include the map for the suggested Downtown Designation)
2. Cover Letter Draft for the DownTown Designation Application Packet; From Chairman Richards and Mrs. Sienkiewicz
3. Poultney Downtown Revitalization Committee 5 Year Plan as an example from Logan Solomon - RRPC Representative

Agenda

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Chairman Richards.

2. Review of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Approval of Minutes: Regular meeting - February 5, 2025

Mrs. Pritchard motioned to accept the minutes of February 5th as written. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Sienkiewicz. All were in favor and the motion passed.

3. New Business:

Review and discussion of Potential Historic District regulations for inclusion in the Fair Haven Zoning Regulations. Continue work on required components for Fair Haven to qualify for a Downtown Designation.

DownTown Designation Application Packet

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

Chairman Richards guided the Planning Commission to the Draft Local Historic District Section Handout and explained that the handout is example language drafted by Mr. Solomon for consideration by the PC. It, if adopted, would be added to the Zoning Bylaws as Sections 203 and 929. He asked if everyone had time to read the document before the meeting and if there was anything that stood out.

Mrs. Sienkiewicz stated that under section 929 part 4a, she was confused as to which "architectural style" the document was referring to as Fair Haven has many different styles. Chairman Richards explained that he understood the bylaw to state that buildings do not need to all fit into one historical style or time frame, but that they do need to work into the plan for the town. He likes the idea of broad regulations with lesser restrictions. Mrs. Pritchard mentioned

how she really doesn't want to see Fair Haven's Downtown become a "mish-mash" of styles. She believes Fair Haven is unique and would like to see it stay that way.

Chairman Richards asked if there was anything else that stood out. There needs to be a map included with the additional bylaws. ZA Adams stated that was what he was going to ask the PC about if the map, does the map of Fair Haven's historical district cover what is needed. Mrs. Pritchard stated she appreciated Mr. Solomon's map that was shared. She agreed with the additions to the Historical District of Northwest along Washington Street and North along N. Main Street and the minor additions out Liberty Street that were explained at the February 5 meeting. She then asked which parts of the handout need to be adopted as the bylaws; the map and the first two pages of the Draft Local Historic District Section & State Law Requirements for This Type of Regulation or the map and the entirety of the handout. Chairman Richards stated he would clarify that with Mr. Solomon before the Wednesday meeting. The entire PC agreed with the modifications to the Historic District Map. The general consensus was that the State Regs do not need to be added, just referenced as was the case with the majority of the Zoning Regulations already adopted.

ZA Adams asked a question about 24 V.S.A. §4414(1)(F)(i). He was concerned that the law wasn't being met as written. Chairman Richards would clarify with Mr. Solomon; as he understood that the draft bylaws did follow the law as stated.

ZA Adams asked about general procedure for application; does the ZA just refer all applications for this district to the PC or does the ZA have any role in the approval or denial of applications within the Historic District? Chairman Richards stated that it appeared under Section 929 (4)(a) that all applications go to the Planning Commission. ZA Adams clarified by asking; a person would come to the ZA with an application for a building within the Historic District, the ZA would receive the application, refer the applicant to the PC, and make sure it was added to the PC agenda. He asked if the ZA had to issue a special permit. Chairman Richards stated that he did not believe a special permit would be issued, he understands that buildings in that district would just have another criteria to hit before a permit was issued, but he will clarify in his meeting with Mr. Solomon.

Mr. Richards asked for more questions on the draft. There weren't any. He summed up the next steps by asking the PC if they felt ready to approve the changes for adoption on Wednesday and start the process. They felt confident. Chairman Richards will ask Mr. Solomon to create a map that is clear and understandable for the inclusion to the Zoning Bylaws for the historic district. He also stated that he'd ask Mr. Solomon to edit the Cover Letter as well.

Mrs. Pritchard stated she approves of the Draft Cover Letter for the Downtown Designation Application Packet.

Mrs. Sienkiewicz asked about the Poultney Downtown Revitalization Committee 5 year plan. Mrs. Pritchard stated that she had paperwork from Lorraine Brown that would help the Fair Haven Town Plan be a living document and help the PC and Selectboard make sure they are working on achieving the goals that were created. Chairman Richards said he knew she did

this and told her once the process of the Downtown Designation was finished the PC would spend time on her document.

Chairman Richards suggested inviting Mr. Solomon back after town meeting is complete to review what is completed and see if April is still a good time to set up the pre meeting with the State. ZA Adams stated that an organizational meeting is needed after town meeting. Chairman Richards agreed and reviewed that Mrs. Sienkiewicz appointment is expiring and she would like to continue with the planning commission. He stated that he had recommended to the Selectboard to advertise openings/ends of appointments to keep the PC active. ZA Adams also asked because there is no PC clerk, who would create notices as needed. Chairman Richards stated he would ask both Mr. Solomon and Fair Haven Manager Gunter.

4. Other Business:

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

5. Adjournment:

Mrs. Pritchard made a **motion to adjourn at 7:42 pm.** Mrs. Sienkiewicz seconded the adjournment motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Jackson, Minute-taker

The Next Regular Commission Meeting will be held on February 19, 2025

HANDOUTS:

****DRAFT** LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT SECTION &
STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS TYPE OF REGULATION**

Section 203 (DRAFT) – Zoning District Description

10. Downtown Fair Haven Local Historic District

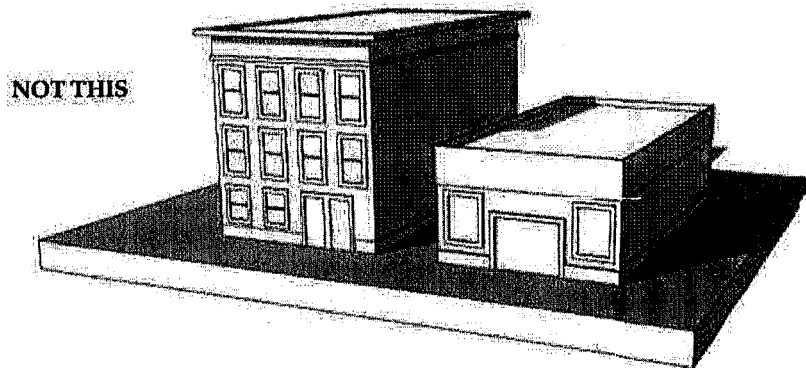
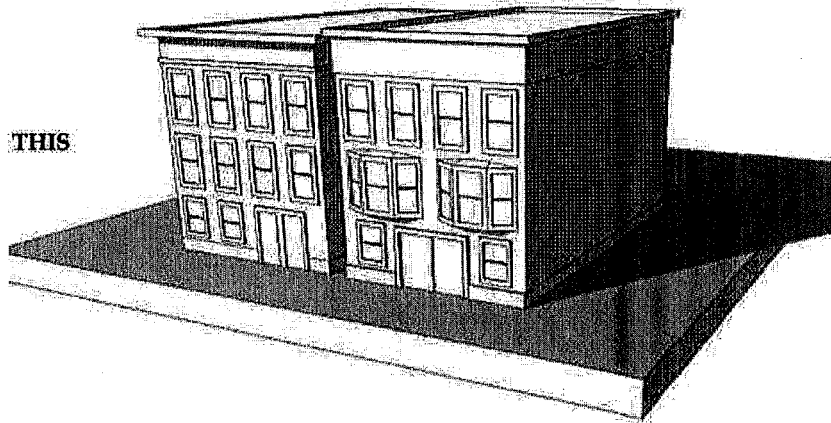
Purpose: Protect and preserve the historic architecture and area of Downtown Fair Haven.

Section 929 (DRAFT) – Downtown Fair Haven Local Historic District Regulations

1. These regulations are in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4414(1)(F) and only apply within the Downtown Fair Haven Local Historic District, shown on the Fair Haven Zoning Map.
2. With respect to external appearances within the Downtown Fair Haven Historic District, no structure may be rehabilitated, substantially altered, restored, moved, demolished, or changed, and no new structure within the Downtown Fair Haven Historic District may be erected without approval of the plans therefore by the Fair Haven Planning Commission. This provision shall exclude normal maintenance of a structure.
3. The Fair Haven Planning Commission may approve an application even if it conflicts with Section 929 (4)(c) and Section 929 (5); However, the Fair Haven Planning Commission may only approve if it determines that application of the section would:
 - a. deter or result in preventing a major improvement program that will be of clear and substantial benefit to the municipality; and/or
 - b. would cause undue financial hardship to the owner of the property
4. The Fair Haven Planning Commission shall:
 - a. Be strict in its judgement of plans for those structures within the Downtown Fair Haven Local Historic District, but is not required to limit new construction, alteration, or repairs to the architectural style to any one period.
 - b. Meet with the owner of the structure to devise an economically feasible plan for the preservation of the structure if an application is submitted for the alteration of the exterior appearance of a structure, moving or demolition of a structure
 - c. Approve an application when the Planning Commission is satisfied that the proposed plan will not materially impair the historic or architectural significance of the structure or surrounding area.
5. Unless Section 929 (3) applies, within the Downtown Fair Haven Local Historic District:
 - a. Historic architectural details or elements shall be preserved whenever possible. These details and elements shall include specific details and elements

specified for a building by the Vermont State Register of Historic Places in the publication: Historic Architecture of Rutland County: Vermont State Register of Historic Places, Montpelier, VT, 1988.

- b. The demolition of any structure (or portion thereof) listed in the Vermont State Register of Historic Places shall only occur if the structure or portion of the structure represents public health or safety concern.
- c. New buildings shall maintain form, scale, mass, and rhythm with surrounding structures and parts thereof, including having similar rooflines and window spacing with surrounding structures. See definitions/diagram below.
 - i. Form – Shape and arrangement of a structure
 - ii. Scale - Relative structure magnitude in relation to surrounding elements
 - iii. Mass – the combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings; the overall bulk, size, physical volume, or magnitude of a structure or project.
 - iv. Rhythm - The organization of building elements, or spaces between them.



STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS - 24 V.S.A. §4414(1)(F)

(i) Bylaws may contain provisions for the establishment of historic districts and the designation of historic landmarks. Historic districts shall include structures and areas of historic or architectural significance and may include distinctive design or landscape characteristics, areas, and structures with a particular relationship to the historic and cultural values of the surrounding area, and structures whose exterior architectural features bear a significant relationship to the remainder of the structures or to the surrounding area. Bylaws may reference National and State Registers of Historic Places, properties, and districts. A report prepared under section 4441 of this title with respect to the establishment of a local historic district or designation of an historic landmark shall contain a map that clearly delineates the boundaries of the local historic district or landmark, justification for the boundary, a description of the elements of the resources that are integral to its historical, architectural, and cultural significance, and a statement of the significance of the local historic district or landmark.

(ii) With respect to external appearances and other than normal maintenance, no structure within a designated historic district may be rehabilitated, substantially altered, restored, moved, demolished, or changed, and no new structure within an historic district may be erected without approval of the plans therefor by the appropriate municipal panel. The panel shall consider the following in its review of plans submitted:

(I) The historic or architectural significance of the structure, its distinctive characteristics, and its relationship to the historic significance of the surrounding area.

(II) The relationship of the proposed changes in the exterior architectural features of the structure to the remainder of the structure and to the surrounding area.

(III) The general compatibility of the proposed exterior design, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used.

(IV) Any other factors, including the environmental setting and aesthetic factors that the panel deems to be pertinent.

(iii) When an appropriate municipal panel is reviewing an application relating to an historic district, the panel:

(I) Shall be strict in its judgment of plans for those structures deemed to be valuable under subdivision (1)(F)(i) of this section, but is not required to limit new construction, alteration, or repairs to the architectural style of any one period, but may encourage compatible new design.

(II) If an application is submitted for the alteration of the exterior appearance of a structure or for the moving or demolition of a structure deemed to be significant under subdivision (1)(F)(i) of this section, shall meet with the owner of the structure to devise an economically feasible plan for the preservation of the structure.

(III) Shall approve an application only when the panel is satisfied that the proposed plan will not materially impair the historic or architectural significance of the structure or surrounding area.

(IV) In the case of a structure deemed to be significant under subdivision (1)(F)(i) of this section, may approve the proposed alteration despite subdivision (1)(F)(ii)(III) of this section if the panel finds either or both of the following:

(aa) The structure is a deterrent to a major improvement program that will be of clear and substantial benefit to the municipality.

(bb) Retention of the structure would cause undue financial hardship to the owner.

(iv) This subdivision (1)(F), and bylaws issued pursuant to it, shall apply to designation of individual landmarks as well as to designation of local historic districts. A landmark is any individual building, structure, or site that by itself has a special historic, architectural, or cultural value.

(v) The provisions of this subdivision (1)(F) shall not in any way apply to or affect buildings, structures, or land within the "Capitol complex," as defined in 29 V.S.A. chapter 6.

To whom it may concern,

The Town of Fair Haven intends to apply for a Downtown Designation Program through the Department of Housing and Community Development.

We will have three primary contacts,

Joe Gunter Town Manager, 5 Park Place, Fair Haven, VT 05743 Fhmanager@comcast.net, (802) 265-3010 ext.5. Robert J. Richards, Chairman, Planning Commission, 59 South Main St., Fair Haven, VT 05743, Brichards2355@gmail.com, 802-683-6378; Philip Adams, Zoning Administrator, 5 Park Place, Fair Haven, VT 05743, Fhza@comcast.net, 802-265-3010, Ext 7.

Fair Haven has a vibrant downtown which is highlighted by our town green known to all as "The Park". Our retail establishments are anchored by Carl Durfee's Department Store, three restaurants, a brewery, a flooring store, a laundromat, a walk in veterinary service as well as other retail establishment. Our downtown area is the center of Fair Haven and has been from the beginning of Fair Haven's charter. Over the years there have been two major chain food stores, Shaws Supermarket and the A&P. A&P closed and Shaws moved to another location in town. Each of those footprints has been filled by other retail businesses. The above-mentioned establishments are all ground floor, with apartments above, and the yet to be redeveloped Opera House waiting to join the Park as another jewel in Fair Haven's downtown.

Fair Haven sees the Downtown Designation as the next step in our downtown revitalization and as a go-to destination for western Rutland County and the state in general. We have added language to our zoning regulations to preserve the historic nature of downtown. We have begun improvements to the infrastructure including a 2.0 million waterline upgrade, a just completed revamp of our parking lot on the southern end of the park and the addition of period street lighting in and around the park. There are more improvements being considered to calm traffic on route 4a (Main St.) The proprietors of the individual businesses do an outstanding job of both promoting and maintaining their properties and the town tries to help them when able.

Enclosed in the packet are documents to attest to the commitment of Fair Haven to both maintaining the historic quality of our downtown and to encourage downtown improvements both individual and town sponsored infrastructures.

We as a town have also established a volunteer committee, the Economic Development/Fair Haven Partnership to facilitate improvements with direct action such as administering a loan program and as a forum for brainstorming future developments downtown.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS (NOT COMPLETE AT THIS TIME)

Water and sewer endorsements

Zoning doc

Town plan

Town budgets to include general town, public work, and water and sewer

Minutes of the Selectboard meeting instructing the planning commission to peruse Downtown Designation

Water and Sewer Capital budget and one year and five year plans

An all-department overview of capital projects

Tax stabilization policy document.

Poultney Downtown Revitalization Committee

Strategic 5-Year Plan

GOALS + OBJECTIVES + PROGRAMS

1. GOAL: Job Creation: To provide meaningful, permanent jobs for area residents.

1.1 Objective: To retain and preserve existing jobs in all sectors

1.1.1 *Program:* Provide online assistance to Downtown businesses by identifying training opportunities through VT State Colleges, VT Small Business Development Center

Task: Hold an annual, free workshop to get businesses online, starting August 2015.

1.2 Objective: Foster entrepreneurship, promote small businesses, support new businesses

1.2.1

Host workshops on starting, financing and managing your own business using the resources of VT Small Business Development Center, REDC and/or RRPC

Task: Hold an annual, free workshop to support small businesses, starting October 2015. 1.2.2

Establish a competitive, localized micro-grant & match opportunity for Poultney businesses

Task: Research and draft the program in Winter 2015/2016, launch by Fall 2016.

1.3 Objective: To promote job growth through expansion of existing businesses and the attraction of new manufacturers to the community.

1.3.1

Re-establish an aggressive broad-based business recruitment program that would seek specialty manufacturers with Vermont Image and/or specialty service firms. **Task:** Promotions Subcommittee to meet every two months to discuss this ongoing campaign.

1.4 Objective: To fully utilize all of the available financing resources for business and manufacturing development.

1.4.1 Promote REDC technical assistance and loan packaging services to existing and

prospective manufacturing concerns.

Task: Ongoing, host information at PoultneyDowntown.com.

1.4.2 Maintain a list of business financing programs on [Poultney Downtown.com](http://PoultneyDowntown.com) for those seeking to expand or relocate to Poultney.

Task: Ongoing, host information at PoultneyDowntown.com.

2. GOAL: Increase Personal Incomes: To increase per capita and household incomes, thereby improving the quality of life.

2.1 Objective: To actively promote *tax credit programs* for property owners and lessees for building renovations, *capital equipment purchases* for new and expanding businesses, and *income tax credits* among existing employers and prospective new businesses to foster wage scale movement.

2.1.1

Maintain a summary outline of the tax credit programs on [Poultney Downtown.com](http://PoultneyDowntown.com) and direct businesses to the State Downtown Program website.

Task: Ongoing, host information at PoultneyDowntown.com.

2.2 Objective: To fully utilize all of the available job training resources for the benefit of Poultney residents and businesses

2.2.1 Survey existing employers to determine needed training and requirements. **Task:** Prepare a biennial survey of local employers, launch in January 2016.

2.3 Objective: To reduce seasonal and part-time employment through increased business activity.

2.3.1

Devise and implement promotional programs to increase our share of retail trade and tourist spending.

Task: Ongoing, Promotions subcommittee

2.3.2 Develop new attractions to expand the region's appeal as a four-season recreation area.

Task: Ongoing, Promotions subcommittee

2.3.3 Engage local businesses in data collection to determine tourism trends.

Task: Provide businesses with simple checklist for collection of zip codes from customers, launch in January 2016.

2.4 Objective: To ensure a decent, safe and sanitary supply of housing units of a quality that

encourages good maintenance and insures the character of the Town is maintained for area residents.

2.4.1 Promote Neighborworks of Western Vermont lending, weatherization and other programs to assist in financing rehab of existing units.

Task: Ongoing, host information at PoultneyDowntown.com.

2.4.2 Provide information to property owners about the Housing Trust of Rutland County.

Task: Ongoing, host information at PoultneyDowntown.com.

2.4.3

Continue to provide cost-effective opportunities and options for housing. **Task:**

Research Form Based Code during the next Town Plan Update, 2018. Task:

Research opportunities for affordable, first-level Senior Housing.

3. GOAL: Community Facilities: To increase the community's property tax base and ability to provide essential public services while stabilizing the tax burden on residential taxpayers.

3.1 Objective: To provide basic services and facilities required to attract private investment.

3.1.1

Construct improvements in the Village to better support retail trade and services. **Task: Ongoing, implement the Streetscape Improvement Program.**

3.1.2 Promote success and generally further communications with the outside

world.

Task: Ongoing, support the Poultney 2020 Newsletter efforts and FPF.

3.1.3 Provide Main Street park/green space as cited as a need in the Poultney 2020 Exercise

and the 2015 Public Input Survey.

Task: Continue to support Poultney 2020 Parks group efforts to site, plan for and implement a park on Main Street.

3.1.4 Prepare GIS maps for municipal infrastructure such as water mains, storm drains, sewer

manholes and bridge and culverts in the Village Center

Task: Ongoing, through GMC GIS Community Lab

3.1.5 Anticipate capital costs and plan for them through a capital budgeting program.

Task: Ongoing, through Village Trustees and Selectboard

3.1.6 Continue to address Stormwater Management Issues in the Village

Task: Take video surveillance of underground pipes, 2017.

3.2 Objective: Improve the quality of education and the image of the school system.

3.2.1 Develop programs with area employers and the High School that will identify basic

educational requirements in a world of rapid change and unforeseeable demands.

Task: Include this effort in survey from 2(2) above.

Task: Upon request, identify paid/unpaid internships and service learning opportunities. 3.2.2 Integrate technology and science skills with real world business applications.

Task: Partner with GMC; meet annually to discuss opportunities, start September 2015;

Task: Promote Student Mentorships as identified in annual meetings.

3.2.3 Promote Activities in the Arts and Sports

Task: Ongoing, help the Poultney Schools and GMC disseminate information