

**Fair Haven Planning Commission**  
Town of Fair Haven - March 19, 2025 - Regular Meeting

**Commissioners Present:** Robert Richards - Chair, Linda Sienkiewicz, Deb Laiacona

**Commissioners Absent:** Jason Coupal - Vicechair

**Others Present:** Phil Adams - Zoning Administrator, Jennifer Jackson - Minute-taker, Glen Traverse - Fair Haven Selectboard Member and Chair of the EDC and DT Partnership

Hand outs:

1. Preliminary Memorandum to RRPC and CEDRR
2. Preliminary Letter to Vermont Community Investment Board announcing application

**Agenda**

**1. Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Richards.

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

**Approval of Minutes: Regular meeting - March 5, 2025**

Mrs. Sienkiewicz motioned to accept the minutes of March 5<sup>th</sup> as written. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Laiacona. Chairman Richards asked for additions or deletions from the minutes. Mrs. Sienkiewicz asked about her term length. Mr. Traverse stated at the Selectboard meeting she was reappointed for a three year term. All were in favor and the motion passed at 7:03 pm.

**3. New Business:**

**a. Planning Commission annual organizational meeting.**

Mrs. Laiacona nominated Robert Richards to be the Chair of the Planning Commission. Mrs. Sienkiewicz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed at 7:07PM.

Mrs. Laiacona nominated Linda Sienkiewicz to be the Clerk of the Planning Commission. Chair Richards second the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed at 7:08 PM.

Mrs. Sienkiewicz nominated Deborah Laiacona to be the Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission. Chair Richards second the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed at 7:09 PM.

Chairman Richards asked Mr. Traverse if the Selectboard would be advertising for the open positions on the Planning Commission. Mr. Traverse stated they would but also gave a few suggestions of people the PC could approach for interest in appointment.

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

Mrs. Sienkiewicz mentioned the email she created for the notice of intent to apply. Chairman Richards stated it was clear and appeared to be a basic email, another check off on the Downtown Designation Checklist. Mrs. Laiacona noted a punctuation error at the bottom of the first paragraph; "Town of Fair Haven ' ; therefore ' , ' this notice". Mrs. Sienkiewicz corrected the semicolon and comma issue. The PC was in agreement with the letter. They were pleased.

Chairman Richards asked the PC to turn their attention to reviewing the sample Subdivision Regulations that the RRPC shared with the Fair Haven PC. Mr. Traverse added that he believed a bigger question the PC should ask themselves is about the decision making around what the Zoning Administrator is empowered to make - allowing him more is a good choice. The ZA passed out a working copy of the sample Subdivision Regulations.

Chairman Richards asked Mr. Traverse his overall opinion of the sample regulations. Mr. Traverse noted that Mr. Solomon did a great job of putting them all together. ZA Adams stated he had highlighted some questions in the document he would like answered. Mrs. Laiacona asked about the process for approval and if the public hearing for the historic district and the subdivision regs would be at the same time. They will be. ZA Adams stated that the public hearings might create more changes to be made to the document. He hoped the public realized that the changes are to help the public, not just fickle reasons.

Chairman Richards had hoped everyone had had a chance to look over the document before today's meeting, but with the difficulty of understanding the suggestions in the document people are starting at different levels of knowledge so he suggested just starting from the beginning of the document and reading through asking questions and making suggestions as they come up.

*Section I: Statutory Authority Purpose, Exemptions, and Applicability*

4. Exemptions. Chairman Richards had a question about the 10 acres mentioned for exemptions; was this the size they wanted to work with? ZA Adams stated that lot line adjustments are what are seen the most with transferring land between family members.

*Section II: Subdivision Types (Major vs Minor)* Chairman Richards wanted to see how the process gives impartiality that is needed, he noted that the *minor* subdivision bullets help to give that impartiality.

*Section III: Application Requirements*

1.d. ZA Adams had a question about "waivers" at this point. Chairman Richards stated that this is a good question to run by Mr. Solomon, if this is the norm for the application.

1.f. Should read "*letters from utility providers*" for clarity.

Chairman Richards stated we need to put a packet together for ZA to give to applicants with a checklist. ZA Adams stated he looked through the Town Plan to make sure these regs would fit these regulations.

1.g. Mr. Traverse thought maybe Mr. Solomon meant "zoning regulations." ZA Adams stated yes it should read Town Plan because it is how the town would look like in the long term.

Mrs. Laiacona stated the application really requires a lot of documentation production. Chairman Richards stated that is good because it could be a big change for the town. ZA Adams stated it is written in that if it is too big a proposal, outside help can be hired out at the applicants cost.

2. Major Subdivisions. Chairman Richards likes all their needs. There was a question on needing a letter from the supervisory board approving subdivision. ZA stated that the zoning board looks at letters like these as well.

#### *Section IV: Subdivision Application Procedures*

1.a. ZA for pre application meetings. It was believed that this is a good requirement because there is potential for catching issues before Planning Commission meetings. Chairman Richards stated they would be able to ring concerns to the next meeting.

1.b. Mrs. Laiacona stated there is a lot to do, but it makes it easier on the PC end. ZA Adams asked if the "within 45 days" need to be written in? Chairman Richards stated yes, because it is warned. But yes we need to ask exactly what we need to supply, are the minutes enough? ZA Adams stated through a public hearing applicants should be able to adjust their plan due to information gathered.

1.c. Mrs. Laiacona asked if we should require notification to abutting landowners. The PC agreed with this change.

ZA Adams asked what is the avenue for appeal with subdivision issues. Chairman Richards stated they would ask Mr. Solomon. Then ZA Adams asked if the timeframes given need to stay or are they flexible? As he is a part-time zoning administrator and some might be tight timelines. He agreed that 45 days would be helpful for a part-time position. Mrs. Laiacona had questions on the "right to appeal."

2.c. Mrs. Sienkiewicz asked about the 75 day timeframe for determining minor subdivision. ZA Adam stated he is ok with more time. Chairman Richards stated its all on the ZA, its a lot of work and having more time is ok. Mr. Traverse stated he also believed that more time is always good. Mrs. Laiacona asked ZA Adams what a reasonable time was. ZA Adams stated he really didn't know; but he tries with zoning applications to complete the week they come in. Chairman Richards did a mockwalk through application to determine if the timeline was sufficient. He figured it was appropriate.

2.d. ZA Adams asked what this regulation looked like in practice. Chairman Richards believed that it meant he would give the application to the PC. ZA Adams asked if it meant that he would NOT wait for another PC Meeting. Chairman Richards

suggested an email to the chair notifying them of an application completion; but he will asked Mr. Solomon for clarification.

Chairman Richards stated that the PC would need to be prepared for a public hearing within 30 days of receipt of a zoning application. ZA Adams asked if a 15 day time period was needed to notice. Chairman Richards stated he will double check with Mr. Solomon, but he believed that the preliminary hearing would help with this noticing. Mrs. Laiacona stated that the ZA has some flexibility when they say an application is complete. ZA Adams stated not completely as he has a timeline also to complete his work.

Chairman Richards stated they'd reach a good stopping point. He believed that the PC could complete the sample subdivision regulation read through by April 16th meeting. Mr. Traverse asked if the EDC and DT Partnership were to meet with Greg Hollaway at their May meeting if that would work with the PC's work timeline. Chairman Richards stated that yes it should work as it would give the PC the summer to finalize the application before the September deadline.

**4. Other Business:**

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

**5. Adjournment:**

Mrs. Sienkiewicz made a **motion to adjourn at 8:39 pm**. Mrs. Laiacona 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 April 2, 2025\*\*\*