

## **Fair Haven Planning Commission**

Town of Fair Haven - September 17, 2025 - Regular Meeting

**Commissioners Present:** Robert Richards - Chair, Deborah Laiacona - Vicechair, Ann Finley, Sam Lucci

**Commissioners Absent:** Linda Sienkiewicz - clerk

**Others Present:** Phil Adams - Zoning Administrator, Jennifer Jackson - Minute-taker, Paul Jardine - ZBA Member, Robert Workman - applicant

### **Agenda**

#### **1. Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm by Chair Richards.

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

##### **Approval of Minutes: Special and Regular meeting - September 10, 2025**

A few grammatical errors were noted in the September 10<sup>th</sup> minutes:

- Page 3 1st black bullet point change "Richards" to "Richards"
- Page 2, section 2, second bullet point, last sentence change excluded as because 1. It was not old enough and 2. Asbestos," to "excluded **was** because; ***it was not old enough and asbestos,***".

Mrs. Finley **motioned to accept the minutes of September 10<sup>th</sup> with the noted corrections.** The motion was seconded by Mrs. Laiacona. All were in favor and the motion passed.

#### **3. New Business:**

- Application #A2025-042, Robert Workman requests review of a proposal for a new Bagel Bakery and café, with a new replacement commercial sign. Property owner: Fair Haven Properties, LLC. Location: 73 Main Street. Tax Map number 24-51-30.**

ZA Adams explained the application stating Mr. Workman would like to put a new restaurant bagel bakery business into the location last occupied by Ruby's Bistro. He then asked Mr. Workman to elaborate on parking and employee plans. ZA Adams stated he told Mr. Workman about the parking restrictions in the downtown area, to which Mr. Workman added the stipulation to his application of owner and employee utilizing the free parking spaces, not the spaces in front of downtown business. ZA Adams stated Mr. Workman is also applying for a new sign - a different panel to be added to in the location already established for a sign. There is a copy of the sign application in the application packet distributed.

Mr. Workman explained his business as a bagel shop bakery café. He currently does his business from his home, selling bagels and bread goods. He currently sells through a REKO market. The business is getting bigger than his kitchen will allow and he's looking to expand.

His plan is to walk to work, make really good New York style bagels, breads, and traditional pastries. He's been in the restaurant business for 60 years. All of his creations will be made with organic flour and sugar. He wants to make healthy good food. The café will seat 25 people. He will serve breakfast and lunch. The menu will include; breakfast sandwiches, bagels, muffins, paninis, panuozzos, cold sandwiches and bagel related foods.

He stated he has last been working in the school cafeterias.

Mrs. Finley asked about the business hours. Mr. Workman stated he was planning on being open from 6:00am - 2:30 pm. Mrs. Laiacona asked about which days the business would be open. Mr. Workman explained Wednesday through Sunday, but would consider changing if there was demand. He explained he is working on having his meals be lower in cost than local fast food companies. He also stated he is unhappy with the food given to children and will offer a boxed organic lunch to go for the kids.

Mr. Workman explained he will only have one employee currently, with family also helping to run the business. His wife will be taking a sabbatical from work to help get the business up and running. He will be in the kitchen at 4 am to get it ready for the day.

Chairman Richards asked about parking. Mr. Workman stated he would park as far away from downtown as possible and since there is only one other employee they will do the same.

Mr. Workman stated that the same people who made Ruby's Bistro sign are currently making his sign. Mrs. Laiacona asked if he would be repairing the box light? Mr. Workman stated not currently but may come back to it.

Chair Richards asked the PC if they believed a site visit was warranted. Mrs. Laiacona at 7:51 pm **motioned to consider the application as a minor change application and therefore exempt from site plan review.** Mrs. Finley seconded the motion. Mr. Lucci asked what a site visit entails and why the PC would have one. Chair Richards explained the process. ZA Adams urged Mr. Lucci to read the site plan review process in the zoning bylaws. All were in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

Mrs. Laiacona at 7:53 pm **motioned to accept the application as written.** ZA Adams asked about the condition for parking. Chair Richards stated he believed that it wasn't needed if the applicant wrote the condition in the application. ZA Adams stated without the condition he has no ability to enforce the request. Mrs. Laiacona revised her motion to state **to accept the application with the condition that all owners and employees agree to utilize public free parking spaces that are not 2-hour limited spaces.** Mrs. Finley seconded the motion. Chairman Richards called for any final discussion. Mr. Lucci asked about wholesale business. Mr. Workman stated he had been selling to the new market on Rt 4, Hampton Harvest, and to Frog Hollow farmstand. But he is going to concentrate on the business now. Chairman Richards asked for more questions. There were none so he called for a vote. All were in favor and the motion passed. Mr. Workman stated there will be a social media presence and he is hoping to open for business November 1.

Chairman Richards stated he would adjust the agenda to allow Mr. Jardine to have his public comment first before going over the scheduled business.

#### **4. Other Business:**

- a. **Public Comment:** Mr. Jardine stated he stopped by to let the PC know he found a need for correction in the zoning bylaws. He has just joined the Zoning Board of Adjustment as the clerk. In researching for two applications they will be hearing he noticed in the floodzone map that a parcel is listed as commercial; the corner of Cottage and Maple. On the FEMA website the parcel is listed in a flood hazard zone. The Fair Haven map has the line cutting around that parcel and he suggests that RRPC might need to change the map. Chairman Richards stated he will send the information on to RRPC, it was a good time to be caught as the RRPC is working on maps. Mr. Jardine gave a copy of the map to the PC for their records. Chairman Richards asked if this correction was holding up the applicant? Mr. Jardine stated no, it was just something he noticed he then asked ZA Adams the process for correcting it. ZA Adams stated the PC would change their map and alert the RRPC. Chairman Richards delegated the notification work to ZA Adams. ZA Adams stated he would do that and would ask for a review and update. Mr. Jardine thanked the PC and left at 8:12pm.

Chairman Richards moved the PC on to the agenda items and asked what they prefer to do, as an email had come to them that morning from RRPC with modified documents. Mrs. Laiacona stated she needed to leave as close to 8:30 pm as she could. Mr. Lucci stated he didn't think the work could be completed in 20 minutes. Chairman Richards stated for the 5 year plan they should gather a list of ideas, he isn't sure the format to compile the ideas. Mrs. Finley shared her research ideas with the PC about placing street lights like the new ones in the park around the entirety of the Downtown area. Mrs. Laiacona stated she liked the idea, but Mr. Solomon had passed the Town of Hardwicks application including their 5 year strategic plan. The plan gave long term plans, short term plans and mid term plans. The plan gave the goals, who would implement them, who would pay for them, some goals were tangible and some were less tangible. She stated brainstorming specific ideas is a good start. Mrs. Finley stated creating specific events to generate interest in the town is a good idea. Chairman Richards stated there are a lot of people who have to work on funding - so how does that work with the application. He stated he is very interested in making sure the Opera House is going. He believes with this project the first year would be grant research. Mr. Lucci asked if step 1 would involve discussions between the town and the person who purchases the building. Chairman Richards didn't think the PC could be that involved. Mrs. Laiacona stated that the EDC Committee will be changing as the chair has stepped down. Chairman Richards stated maybe the PC should invite the EDC to a meeting so the two committees could come up with a template together. Mrs. Laiacona stated she believes that if an example was given on how to complete the application then it would be wise to follow it as closely as possible; the steps need to leave the ability to add research to a step. Mrs. Finley stated the town could possibly use the "Food Truck Frenzy" as a town fundraiser. Chairman Richards stated the need for an elevator in the Opera House. Mrs. Laiacona stated the building was exempt from the ADA requirement due to the expense of the addition of it. Mr. Lucci stated but to get the theater to a usable condition it needs an elevator to maximize its potential. The PC discussed possible avenues to obtain an elevator in the building/buildings. Chairman Richards stated the PC should come

back at the next meeting with proposals, they as a commission should add them together and see what is created. Mr. Lucci asked who the authorship of the 5 year plan falls to and who Gary Holloway is. Mrs. Laiacona stated Mr. Holloway is a State representative who has been advising on the Downtown application. He has met with the EDC.

Mr. Lucci stated that in respect to the historic designation paperwork, he has no argument with the State Historical Society comments. He asked if it was the PC's intent to take the comments made? Chairman Richards asked the PC to look over the document and be ready to discuss it at the next meeting. He stated the next meeting on October 1 the PC will discuss the Fair Haven Local Historic District Regulations and the Historical District Zoning Section. He then went over the procedure to include the changes in the bylaws. Mrs. Laiacona stated she will not be in attendance at the October 15th meeting.

Mrs. Laiacona asked what the PC homework was. Chairman Richards stated to go over the Historical District Regulations and Plan, look at comments and let questions or changes come via email.

ZA Adams asked if the next agenda should include approval of the report? Chairman Richards stated yes because new comments and suggestions were received. He also stated he will be spending time with Mr. Solomon to review where we are in the application process in general.

Mrs. Finley stated she needed a copy of the Hardwick application. Mr. Lucci stated he did as well.

**b. Approval of Historic District Report.**

**c. Work on Future Town Plan**

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))

**5. Other Business:**

**a. Review of Mail: None**

**b. Other: None**

**c. Public Comment: See above**

**5. Adjournment:**

Mrs. Finley **motioned to adjourn at 8:41 pm.** Mrs. Laiacona seconded the motion. ZA Adams asked if it was the Town 5 year plan they would be working on next session. Mrs. Laiacona stated no it would be the Strategic 5 Year Plan to be included with the Downtown Designation application.

ZA Adams also asked the PC if they would consider the zoning contradiction that was discovered at the next meeting.

The Table of Uses for Downtown has a “P” for permitted use. Whereas in section 926 it states conditional Use:

- *Section 926 – Dwelling Units in the Downtown District*
  1. *Dwellings are allowed in the Downtown District as conditional use on all non-street-level floors.*
    - i. *Off street parking is required for all Downtown District dwelling units that are on non-streetlevel floors.*
  2. *Dwellings are allowed in the Downtown District as conditional use at the street-level provided that no more then 50% of the gross square footage can be used for residential purposes.*
    - i. *Storefronts must be maintained for commercial use.*
    - ii. *Dwelling entrance and exit may not face Main Street.*
    - iii. *Dwellings must have adequate parking accessible from Liberty Street or Maple Street.*

ZA Adams stated he didn’t know the rationale behind the conflict, but there is another clause in the bylaws stating the more restrictive or the conflict should be used. Mr. Richards stated the PC will consider the issue at the next meeting. Mrs. Laiacona asked if a change of that nature would have to be warned? ZA Adams stated yes, but now is a great time to change it as there are many things that will be warned and this could be one of the changes. **At 8:50 PM. All were in favor of the motion to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jennifer Jackson, Minute-taker

\*\*\*The Next Commission Meeting will be held on October 1, 2025 at 7:30 pm\*\*\*