



City of Barre, Vermont

“Granite Center of the World”

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Planning Commission Meeting Minutes From the Special Meeting for Public Hearing January 23, 2019 at 6:30 P.M. Council Chambers, City Hall (6 N Main St)

A special meeting for a Public Hearing, of the Barre City Planning Commission was called to order by Commission Chair Jackie Calder at 6:30 pm at City Hall. In attendance were Commissioners Michael Hellein, Jim Hart, Dave Sichel, Rick Badem and Rachel Rudi. Also in attendance were Brandy Saxton of PlaceSense, Consultant to the Commission; Planning Director Janet Shatney and Permit Administrator Grandfield. Chair Calder determined that there was a quorum for the evening.

Visitors included Eileen Peltier of Downstreet Housing & Community Development on Keith Avenue; Peter Anthony of Scampini Square; Alicia Feiler of Malone Properties living on Country Way; Jamie Evans representing Barre City Elementary and Spaulding High Schools; Michael Buzzi of Buzzi’s Garage on Farwell Street; Richard Deep, Development Review Board Member from Franklin Street; and City Manager Steve Mackenzie from Woodland Drive.

Adjustments to the Agenda: None.

Open Public Hearing: Motion made by Commissioner Hellein and seconded by Commissioner Hart to open the public hearing to take comment and testimony on the Barre City Draft Unified Development Ordinance, *motion carried unanimously*.

Opening Remarks by the Planning Commission: Chair Calder took this time to introduce each one of the Commissioners, and recognized Ken Lunde, recent former Commissioner, Heather Grandfield and Janet Shatney for all their time and energy and meetings. She also recognized Ms. Brandy Saxton, our consultant working on this rewrite with the Commission, for her flexibility and perseverance through the project.

We held three public workshops as well as all meetings open to the public, and thought and hoped that this was ample time for the public to participate and have comment. She also thanked everyone that has taken the time to write in with comments and participate in the meetings with their ideas. Each comment was addressed on a table matrix that has been compiled and is on the website.

Chair Calder stated that the draft ordinance is a rewrite in its entirety. This rewrite is based on the City Plan that was adopted by Council in June of 2014. Many things have been changed based on

rules and regulations by the state government as well. While a plan and ordinance have a typical life of about ten years, there is always the ability to make changes. This draft is based, not only what is happening in Barre City now, but attempts to take a look into the future as well. Lastly, Chair Calder outlined the process that was being followed this evening, and the goals to get it to Council within the prescribed statutory timeline.

City Manager Steve Mackenzie asked about the timeline to Council, which the Chair outlined.

Presentation by Ms. Saxton of PlaceSense: Ms. Saxton gave a presentation, hitting the high points regarding the rewrite:

1. Streamlining the Permit Process: a technical review of the current ordinance took place and by streamlining the process, we mean the following:
 - More exemptions, meaning less zoning permits;
 - Increases in the administrative review means less applications going to the DRB, is actually faster and cheaper;
 - Cleaner, more clear standards; and
 - Written in plain English, not “legalese” so they are easier to follow and understand.
2. Density by Neighborhood:
 - How much housing can the neighborhood handle;
 - Currently two residential districts that the density is 21 dwelling units/acre, and the other is 4 dwelling units/acre;
 - Provides for 4 residential zoning districts and several multi-use neighborhoods;
 - Reflects the actual density that is there now.
3. Conversion of single-family to multi-family:
 - Added text to strengthen what people do with their “stuff” and requirements for sheds, garage, etc. so not just the house is contemplated, but where the car goes, where storage is, bike racks, common open space, etc.
 - It sets a minimum unit size and max. density by getting at the underlying issues;
 - Reduces the minimum unit size;
 - Sets a standard for 5+ multi-unit buildings that in the future there are requirements for outdoor open space, pedestrian access and parking for these uses (i.e., no more lots and parking in the front of buildings).

The Draft Zoning Map was shown in reference to what the presentation was about.

She then went over the 5 parts of the draft ordinance:

1. General Section: this is where the requires legalese goes, and “do I need a permit?” gets answered;
2. Zoning Districts Section: this answers “What can I do and where can I do it?”

3. Development Standards: most, but not all, applies to the commercial and mixed use areas and the specific uses for types of uses. It's the longest section, but answers most remaining questions.
4. Administrative Mechanisms Section: all the processes and procedures section
5. Definitions.

Questions, comments and testimony: At this point, Chair Calder opened the floor to testimony and questions.

Ms. Eileen Peltier, Executive Director for Downstreet Housing spoke and stated that she felt it was greatly apparent of all the efforts of everyone involved in the work, that it was a long haul getting to this point, and thanked each and every Commissioner as a resident volunteering their time and energy to be a part of the update. She voiced her support in the revision to reducing the required dwelling unit size, and appreciates that the Commission was creative in housing and trying to help others.

An email letter to the Planning Director in support of the draft ordinance was read. Ms. Mary Moulton of Washington County Mental Health Services wrote in favor of the minimum housing size being reduced.

Ms. Alicia Feiler, a resident on Country Way, and a professional engineer working for Malone Properties came forward with multiple questions with some asking for a revision. [Those questions that resulted in non-substantial edits to the draft are noted below.] She stated that this draft was a very easy read.

1. Lot Size, 2205.D, page 18: sought clarification regarding lot size and the potential to have easements attached to a parcel. No changes were made.
2. Street wall, 2201.E(3) page 37: question was asked if someone had a quarter-acre lot, would this still apply? Answered yes, would apply to both street frontages and have screening requirements. No changes were made.
3. Adaptive Reuse Overlay District, 2203.A, page 42: stated she was disappointed with the language used regarding vacant, obsolete or underutilized properties. Commissioner Hellein agreed the words used don't sound appealing, but believes that many of the properties chosen for Adaptive reuse were those affected by floodwaters in the past. Many of these properties are now nonconformities, and this option for them gives more flexibility and opportunity in the future, where there is none under the current ordinance. No change was made.
4. Retaining Walls, 3015.E(4), page 56: It was asked how separate walls were going to be measured. ***It was agreed to make the change to add language that they will be measured from face-to-face.***

5. Grading, Excavation or Fill, 3016.A, page 56: Questioned if this pertains to manufactured homes, and when. Clarified that yes, this would pertain to new, not preexisting manufactured homes. No changes were made.
6. Ponds, 3018, page 57: Confirmed that section 3018.C (1) does not apply to stormwater ponds and infrastructure. Figure 3-01 indicates stormwater infrastructure or practices may encroach setbacks. Confirmed that stormwater ponds and infrastructure is allowed within property line setbacks. No changes were made.
7. Stormwater Management, 3021.E, page 60: Questioned the rate of impervious surface created. Ms. Saxton stated that she had added information in the Parking Standards on page 74 that may trigger other standards, but 2500 sf is very small, and won't make a large impact, and that this pertained to new development, not old. ***Change made to add clarifying language in Section 3021.B(2) for new impervious or equivalent.***
8. Landscaping Plan, 3101.C(1), page 62: asked if this truly meant only a licensed landscape architect or certified horticulturalist, versus adding a registered professional engineer. It was agreed to and stated that this is the intent as written, and that only a licensed landscape architect or certified horticulturalist can submit a landscaping plan, not a registered professional engineer. No changes were made.
9. Landscaping, 3101, general question, pages 62-63: Questioned the threshold, would the landscaping needed pertain to existing versus proposed. It was explained that the trigger is if the project fell under Major Site Plan Review, then the whole site would need to be brought into conformance with the text as printed. No changes were made.
10. Parking, 3104.C(a-e), page 71: Verified how parking spaces were measured. No changes were made.
11. Location Standards (parking off street), 3104.E(3)(c), page 72: Verified locations of new loading docks. No changes made.
12. Electronic Message Signs, 3107.G(2), page 81: Verified signs being turned off by 10 pm or at the close of business. No changes were made.
13. Trash, Composting and Recycling Storage Areas, 3108.A(5), page 95: questioned the language, specific to using same exterior materials. Asked if it could perhaps be changed to "...same or complimentary materials..." but both Commissioners Hellein and Sichel agreed that their intent is same materials, as complimentary is too open to interpretation. No changes were made.
14. Fueling Station, 3215.B(4), page 104: Verified that no future fuel pumps or fuel pump islands will be located in the front of a building. No changes were made.

15. Fueling Station, 3215.C(3), page 105: Questioned not allowing franchising designs, such as the color strips used on a fuel canopy which are the brand's colors. No changes were made.
16. Car Wash, 3216.B(5), page 105: Questioned the language, asking if "Contain all wastewater..." as in a vault, or change to "Collect all wastewater..." to be able to connect to storm drains, other than collection tanks. ***Change word "Collect" to "Contain"***.

Janet Shatney, Planning Director asked to have 2 diagrams added to the zoning, both visual aids in measuring density and lot layout.

Close Public Hearing: Hearing no other comments or testimony, Commissioner Sichel made the motion to close the public hearing and end taking comments, seconded by Commissioner Hellein, ***motion carried unanimously at 7:34 pm.***

The summary of non-substantial changes made to the zoning are:

1. Clarify measuring separate retaining walls;
2. Adding clarifying language in the stormwater section regarding adding impervious surface;
3. Change a word in the Car Wash section from "collect" to "contain"; and
4. Add 2 diagrams at the beginning on page 19 to help visualize residential density standards.

Vote: Motion was made by Commissioner Hellein and seconded by Commissioner Sichel to make the 4 non-substantial changes and send the final draft and maps to the City Council for first reading, ***motion carried unanimously.***

Adjourn: A motion to adjourn at 7:40 pm was made by Commissioner Sichel and seconded by Commissioner Hart, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Janet Shatney, Planning Director