

**Planning & Zoning Commission
Regulations Committee - Village District Sub-Committee
Minutes – April 11, 2011**

Present: Nancy Fischbach, Janet Edgerton, Peter Howard, Cathie Jefferson

Absent: Torrance Downes, Jane Samuels

The Village District Sub-Committee meeting convened at 3:40 pm in the small meeting room at Town Hall.

1. Review of Draft Regulations

Draft 5 dated 4/11/11 was reviewed.

The Committee confirmed the sections regarding new construction and substantial reconstruction were worded as intended and that the Lot Requirements intentionally did not distinguish between lots with and without public water supply or public sewer. There was a discussion regarding the maximum length of a building to face the street, and it was agreed the 50' limit was reasonable and would allow for side garages on residential structures.

A line by line review of the lot requirements followed, first of the residential village, then mixed-use. No changes were deemed needed for either. For the review of the commercial village, the following changes were made.

7B.8.11.F. Minimum for any one side yard changed from 5' to 0' for buildings fronting Main Street, to allow for buildings to butt up to each other as is now the case just north of the Elm Street/River Street intersection with Main Street. The minimum will remain at 5' for buildings not fronting Main.

7B.8.11.G. Minimum total of both side yards changed from 10' to 0" for buildings fronting Main Street, as above, with the minimum remaining at 10' for buildings not fronting Main.

7B.8.11.L. Maximum Impervious Surface for lots fronting Main Street to change from 60% to 70% considering the drainage regulation recently adopted. Maximum to remain 60% for lots not fronting Main.

7B.8.11.M Maximum footprint of any one building for lots not fronting Main to decrease from 5000 SF to 3500 SF. Maximum to remain at 5000 SF for lots fronting Main.

2. Schedule for Proposal

Although comments were not yet received from the Design Advisory Board, it was decided to proceed with distributing what will be Draft 6 to the full Commission on April 21 for members to review prior to the discussion of the Draft at the May regular meeting. Comments received from the DAB between today and April 21 will be reviewed by the Committee and shared with the Commission.

3. Design Advisory Board review

Peter noted the DAB was meeting this evening to review the draft and he would get the DAB's comments to the Committee within a day or two. He understands the DAB's comments will include a suggestion of another way to determine "substantial". In addition, he believes some members of the DAB consider the regulations regarding Building Form and Materials (7B.8.9.A (2)) to be too specific or rigid. A discussion ensued regarding each of these regulations, with explanations for Peter to pass on to the DAB, including the fact that some of these involve site design, not aesthetic design, that these are regulations which have withstood the test of time across the state, that these regulations give P&Z firm ground for determination regarding an application, that will contribute to the sense of continuity of existing regulations versus proposed regulations, i.e., less change being more acceptable. It was suggested that Peter ask the DAB whether there is anything wrong with the intent of each of these regulations. If the objection is primarily about the first, regarding unbroken facades, being too specific, the sentence listing the ways in which a facade could be broken up could be eliminated. He was asked to explain to the DAB that these seven items are intended to outline what should be done, not how it should be done, the first being a zoning regulatory issue, the second being a design advisory issue.

Revisiting the definition of "substantial", it was stressed that the differing requirements for residential and commercial was specifically required by the full P&Z Commission. The final proposal as to substantial and what will and will not be subject to review must be consistent with the presentations made to the public to date.

An extended discussion regarding the process followed. An example was used of a recent inquiry by a member of the DAB to change the front stoop to her home. Under the draft definition of substantial, a design review would not be required, however, if all residential zoning applications would trigger a design review, her application would have had to go through the review. It was noted the P&Z still is committed to the design review process not delaying the application process.

5. Next Steps

Nancy will make the changes to the draft and prepare Draft 6 for distribution to the full commission at its meeting on April 21st, with the discussion on the proposal to be scheduled for the May 19 meeting. Peter will ask the DAB to get back to the Village Committee with their comments this week; those comments will be shared with P&Z when Draft 6 is distributed.

6. Design Guidelines

There was a brief discussion of the draft Design Guidelines, with Nancy reminding Peter she was waiting to hear back as to which was the most recent draft so that all would be considering the same document. Peter will get a copy of the latest version to the Regulations Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Fischbach

04/14/11