

**PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC MEETING
TOWN OF LITCHFIELD**

Held on November 16, 2021

minutes approved on 12/07/2021

The Litchfield Planning Board held a meeting in the Town Hall conference room, 2 Liberty Way, Litchfield, NH 03052 on Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Croteau - Chairman, Kate Stevens - Vice Chairman, James Boffetti, Curtis Sampson, Kimberly Queenan - Selectmen's Rep. Sam Terrill - Alternate

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ronn Stephens

ALSO PRESENT: Joan McKibben (P.B. Admin. Assistant), Jay Minkarah (Executive Director Nashua Regional Planning Commission - NRPC), Rick Chabonneau - Public

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Croteau called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call of members.

Chairman Croteau appoints Sam Terrill as a voting member for this meeting.

Public Input: No Public input on non-agenda items.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Work Session Zoning Regulations

Flood Plain ordinance correction

Flood Plain Ordinance Section 1103.00 add "residential" to Special Exceptions Section 1. Would read: The erection of new and the enlargement of existing *residential* or non-residential buildings and structures.

Southwestern Commercial District The intent is for warehouse and distribution centers to be restricted in size and be allowed only as an accessory to a permitted use. Size of a warehouse was discussed but consensus was not reached.

Northern Commercial Zone (NCZ)

Jay went over the changes to this zone.

Item 3 under fast-food restaurants was: The Planning Board shall determine whether building design and landscaping is compatible with mixed commercial/residential and historic character of the area. This will be moved to general provisions for all uses in this zone.

Warehouse or fulfillment or distribution facilities greater than 75,000 square feet will need a conditional use permit that will give the Board more discretion regarding the structure.

Northern Commercial Zone Suggested language for new Conditional Use to permit limited residential development in the NCZ.

The only change from a previous version was to state a maximum of six residential units per building instead of four. A fiscal impact study was discussed the net positive fiscal impact would look at tax impact and tax revenue.

Kim Q. had researched prior warrant articles relating to zoning. She has put those items in a spreadsheet by year.

Public Comment Chairman Croteau read an email into the record from Jayson Brennen as follows:

For the record, my name is Jayson Brennen and I live at 23 Aldrich Street. I am writing to provide comment on the proposed zoning changes. Unfortunately, I am traveling this week and am unable to attend in person. So, I am sending this email.

I have watched the workshops over the last few months and found them to be very informative and the discussion has been thoughtful. In addition, I got reacquainted with the Town's zoning regulations and spent time studying zoning, parcel, and aerial imagery information provided on the NRPC GIS website. In short, I think the application of mixed use makes sense in sections of the Northern Commercial zone, particularly in areas on the east side of Route 3A. Here are four general thoughts:

1. The first thing is that we should probably ask ourselves one simple question; "knowing that this area will be developed some day, what would you like to see when you make the trek down 3A and turn onto Albuquerque?" Sure, it would be great if there was a big park there but as the land is privately held, that's probably not feasible in the long term. So, when turning onto Albuquerque, would you rather see a storage facility, a warehouse, a strip mall, Walgreens, or something more unique that has a mix of uses and fits within with the

character of the town? I think this is where mixed use comes into play and makes sense.

2. As we do not have a “commercial town center” in Litchfield, there is potentially an opportunity here to create something that is somewhat of a destination for residents that, in addition to a mixture of residential, could have sustainable commercial businesses (like a coffee shop, deli, or an antique shop) and service-based businesses (like a hair salon, exercise studio, or small rentable office space). What is great is that this area is served by the bike path and if the bike path were extended up to the horse farm and down towards Mel’s, that could tie-in neighborhoods and businesses that are currently disconnected and the whole area could be made easily accessible via different modes of transportation, and this “mixed use” area could potentially be a center point. Pie-in-the-sky idea... you may even be able to work in some sort of unique amenity into the plan, like a small area for a farmers market or for food trucks, or simply a monument or small pavilion where people could gather.
3. If you look at the land to the east of Route 3A in the 3A/Albuquerque area, there’s not a lot of acreage there, so I don’t think we are going to find that “magic bullet” industry that is going to dramatically decrease our taxes, and if we do, it’s going to change the look of that section of town significantly. We are protected on the east side of 3A as the backside of Warren’s Auto Body, the backside of the property that Mr. Charbonneau recently rehabbed, and the driving range all appear to be in the Northern Commercial/Industrial zone. So, we are dealing with a contained development area. I like the conceptual plan put forth by Mr. Charbonneau as it appears to include a thoughtful mix of 55+, 2BR condos/apartments, and commercial/service-based industries. If we keep it to these types of uses, I think impacts will be minimal and citizens will see benefit.
4. Regarding the land to the west side of 3A (which includes Moore’s Falls, the parcel where the gas station was proposed, the field by St. Francis and south to Mel’s and the old Durocher field) perhaps mixed use could work or, in my opinion, maybe it is better suited for uses included in the Northern Commercial & Industrial zone. To me, there are a few parcels there that could potentially support warehouses and light industrial, which is more of an NCI use. That is something to consider. On a side note, it’s unfortunate what happened to Baron’s and I think it would be worth talking to the State to get an

understanding of what happened and what could be built on that property so that it could be marketed appropriately.

In closing, whether we like it or not, the area of town that is being discussed (particularly the area on the east side of 3A) is going to be developed some day and the Planning Board, the citizens of this community, and the land owners have an opportunity here to work together to proactively “shape” how that part of town looks. I feel that this effort will allow us to preserve the feel of the community, limit impact, add services that citizens will benefit from, and support development that is mutually beneficial. Remember that the zoning regulations are decades old. Times change and we must adapt to new land use trends while balancing the needs of the community.

Lastly, the NRPC GIS application is a very useful tool can be used to help with these type of discussions. For the people watching on TV, it would be helpful to call up this app while discussing these types of items as it helps frame the discussion. I also think it would help the Planning Board members and folks in the audience. Maybe have Jay bookmark this!!

<https://nrpcnh.mapgeo.io/datasets/263-properties?latlng=42.85033%2C-71.453657>

Respectfully,
Jayson Brennen

The Board talked about publicity for the public hearings in January. We will post the dates on the reader board at Liberty Way and Hillcrest Road. Also on the web site.

Sidewalks

Rick Charbonneau spoke to Brian Desfosses at NHDOT Division 5 regarding sidewalks on NH Rt.3A. The Selectmen would have to agree for long term maintenance of any sidewalk in the State’s right of way.

Rick proposes that he would build the sidewalk on the west side of 3A from the horse farm south to the proposed gas station. He would also do the crossover on 3A to join Albuquerque Ave. Then south on the east side to Robyn Ave. six feet wide.

The northern commercial district has a general provision for a sidewalk. This is consistent with a walkable village concept.

The next zoning workshop will be Dec 21. The next regular Board meeting is Dec. 7.

Committee Reports

Budget Committee	Nov. 18
Board of Selectmen	Nov. 22 6:30 pm Town Hall
Capital Improvements	Dec.1
Conservation Comm.	Dec 2 6:30 Town Hall
NRPC Commission	Dec. 15 7:00 pm 30 Temple St.

The Conservation Comm. had a presentation by NRPC updating the Merrimack River Corridor plan. Mike will send the link to the old plan.

Approval of Minutes

Kim Q. makes a MOTION to approve the Nov. 2 meeting minutes. Seconded by Kate S. Motion passes 5-0-1.

Jay reported that on Nov. 17 there will be a zoom meeting regarding the passenger rail corridor from Lowell to Manchester. They are proposing 2 stops in Nashua, 1 in Manchester and 1 in Bedford near Wiczorek Dr.

Jay will send the link for the zoom meeting.

Curtis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by James. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm

Minutes transcribed by
J. McKibben