

Town of Dorset, Vermont



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Chartered 1761

Town of Dorset Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of February 28, 2023

Present: Gay Squire (Chair), Scott Thompson (Vice Chair), Connor Welch, Natalie Quigley, David McAneny, Kit Wallace, Scott Durgin, David Berard, Scott Ross

Also Present: Tyler Yandow (ZA), Ray Petry, Mark Phillips, Brent Herrmann, Ryan Downey, Sandy & Mike Neal, Tom & Sylvia Smith, Megan Thörn, Lindy Bowden, Anna Johansen, Scout Proft, Cliff Beebe, Tim Ward, Nancy Faesy, Henry Chandler, Jim & Marilyn Hand, Ruth Stewart, Daniel Fitzpatrick, Peter Kinder, Bill Drunsic, Rich Corner, Kathy Galvin Hogstrom, Rheo & Mary Jane Verdery, Ian Jensen, Joann Rooney, Paul Colleary, Jim Calder, Deb Mithoefer, Constance Beaty, Ken Gilbert, Bruce Ketcham, Jennifer Rich, Bill Verdery, Alan & Nancy Benoit, Marty Hersam, Rob Gaiotti, David Poindexter, Evan Proft, Ida Mae Specker, Barack Evans, Justine Cook, GNAT film technician

Chair Gay Squire opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Chair to Note Any Changes in Agenda
No changes.

Disclosure of Any Conflicts of Interest
No conflicts of interest were disclosed.

Recording of Meeting
GNAT and the town filmed/recorded the meeting.

Public Hearing – Amendments to Town Plan

G. Squire opened the public hearing and read the proposed changes as noted on the public hearing notice. J. Hand asked whether the prohibition on landing areas would apply to medivac aircraft. B. Saxton responded that it did not. R. Downey noted an existing landing strip exists in a field on the west side of Route 30, across from Paul's Way but that improvements would not be allowed. It was questioned when the strip was last used but no one in attendance knew.

G. Squire closed the public hearing.

Public Hearing – Amendments to Town Bylaw

G. Squire opened the hearing.
D. Fitzpatrick asked what zoning district his property would be in under the proposed bylaw. B. Saxton responded it would be in the Rural Residential district.
Mark Phillips, Evan Proft, I. Specker, and K. Hogstrom expressed concern that lots shown

in the General Business district near Dorset Hill Rd and Squirrel Hollow Rd are not appropriately zoned because they are surrounded by residential development, and some undeveloped land is managed as a forest. They suggested moving the western boundary of the GB district to the east so that no business could be established near residential lots and managed forest land.

C. Beebe expressed concern the Beebe farm property, now in the CI-1 district, would lose value and have fewer permitted uses if changed to Rural Mixed Use and Rural Residential. He requested the zoning district be changed to General Business. Others spoke of the farm's economic importance to the town and the revenue the horse show produces.

M. Hand questioned why single-family residences are not permitted in the General Business district when housing is so badly needed. B. Saxton responded that the district is designed to promote business and that the permitted uses would not be compatible with residential development. M. Hand also stated that the General Business district near Dorset Hill Rd and Squirrel Hollow Rd is not appropriate, given the residences nearby.

R. Downey stated that single family residences should be allowed in all zoning districts.

B. Evans asked how the "maximum lot coverage" is determined for each lot. B. Saxton responded that coverage includes all impervious surfaces including but not limited to buildings, driveways, parking areas, and other structures. Evans also noted the urgent need for housing, and questioned why it was not permitted in some districts. B. Saxton responded that the PC has discussed this on several occasions but like the remainder of the State, there is no easy answer.

M. Hand and R. Downey asked why the minimum lot size and minimum road frontage in the Rural Residential district have increased. B. Saxton responded potable water supply and waste water systems will affect whether a lot can be developed much more than the lot size. She also noted that lots with more road frontage tend to have more desirable proportions than those which do not. The increase in road frontage will also affect how lots can be subdivided.

J. Cook felt the maximum lot coverage for small, pre-existing/non-conforming lots should be increased. This seemed to be a reasonable request. B. Saxton will look into this.

I. Specker asked why lots near the end of Dorset Hill Rd with houses have been changed from A&RR and Forest 2 to Rural Resource Protection. It was noted that the Town Plan discourages development on class IV roads. R. Stewart noted there are also several lots in the same area which, under the current bylaw, can be developed. H. Chandler noted that residents near the end of Dorset Hill Rd do not want the road improved to class III. I. Specker felt people should be allowed to live on property they own, especially because of the need for reasonably affordable housing. M. Hand suggested allowing lots with frontage on the road be developable.

P. Colleary expressed concern about the need for housing. He also requested his property, the Marbledge Inn, be changed to be in a district similar to the current Village Commercial, which has more permitted uses than the proposed General Business district.

J. Calder, who lives on Pine Rd, is concerned that potential development of lots to the north of Pine Rd could create more traffic, noise, and safety hazards on Pine Rd. He felt this should not be allowed. G. Squire responded that if proposed development meets the bylaw and subdivision requirements, the town cannot prevent development based solely on J. Calder's concerns. It was noted that if the landowner wants to subdivide this property, a public hearing is required and that this is the forum for neighbors to express their concerns. There was also discussion about whether Pine Rd was a class IV or class III road. R. Gaiotti said that Pine Rd is a class III road.

T. Smith requested clarification of the differences between farming, agricultural enterprise, and on-farm business. He felt that the 6 acre minimum lot size for agricultural enterprises was too big and that many existing enterprises do not meet this requirement. Hence, existing agricultural

enterprises on less than 6 acres would not be permitted to expand. Further, he felt there was no need for agricultural enterprise as a use, and farming and on-farm business were the only farming related uses needed in the regulations. He also noted that agricultural enterprise was a conditional use in the Rural Residential district and thought it should be a permitted use. B. Saxton replied that the reason for having agricultural enterprise as a separate use is to provide more opportunities for farming which are not considered either farming or an on-farm business. These two latter uses are regulated by the State. Agricultural enterprise would only be regulated by the town.

B. Verdery is concerned his property on Dorset West Rd being zoned Rural Resource Protection is not appropriate. There are four heirs to these lots and the hope is that the property on the east side of the road could be subdivided so that each would own a parcel. He also felt the value of the property would be reduced. He requested the lots be zoned Rural Residential. G. Squire noted there are significant wetlands on the parcel on the east side of Dorset West Rd and this was likely the reason the land was put in the RRP zone. K. Wallace suggested only the portion of land in the mapped wetlands be in the Rural Resource Protection district. Others felt the entire parcel could be in the Rural Residential district and that the wetland would “self-regulate” development on this area of the parcel. B. Saxton noted the zoning map is intended to illustrate realistic potential development areas in the town.

H. Chandler felt there are too many parcels in the Rural Resource Protection district. The Planning Commission will discuss this at their next meeting on March 7th.

B. Drunsic asked why his property at 22 Blue Spruce Ln has been changed from Village Business to Rural Mixed Use. B. Saxton replied the benefit of being in RMU is that there is no limit on building size. B. Drunsic also noted that if the use was changed to residential, the number of units would be limited by the requirement of one unit per acre. The lot is only 1.8 acres in size, preventing multi-family housing to be created. He requested the zone be changed.

G. Squire closed the public hearing at approximately 9:20pm.

Adjournment

S. Thompson made a motion seconded by S. Durgin to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 9 – 0.

Next PC meeting

The next Planning Commission meeting will be March 7, 2023 at 7:00pm.

An audio/video recording of this meeting was made and is kept at the Dorset town office.

Respectfully submitted,
Tyler Yandow
Zoning Administrator

Sign In Sheet

Dorset Planning Commission
Town Plan & Bylaw Amendments Public Hearings
February 28, 2023

NAME USPS MAILING ADDRESS & EMAIL REPRESENTING

USE 2 LINES IF NEEDED, PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Ray Pety	Box 729 E Dorset VT 05253	
MARK PHILLIPS	652 Squirrel Hollow Rd	MARK HENRY Phillips.com
Brent Herrmann	746 Squirrels Rd	
EVAN DAWSON	1245 KIRBY Hollow Rd	evandawson@911.com
Sandy + Mike Neal	1728 Dorset Hill Rd, E Dorset	
Tom & Sylvia Smith	2615 Mad Tom Road, E Dorset	
Megan Thorn	Dorset	
Lindy Bowden	3092 Rt. 30 Dorset	
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