

Rupert Planning Commission
May 3, 2021

Commissioners: Present: Jed Rubin, Chair ☒; Bob Bain ☐; Jean Ceglowski ☒; Kim Davis ☒; Phil Mazzucco ☒; Peter Pelton ☒; Charlie Rockwell ☒; Val Almosnino, Clerk ☒

Zoning Administrator: John La Vecchia ☒

Public: Don Lewis

Meeting called to order at 7:06 PM.

Val read the April Minutes. Motion by Jean to accept minutes as read, 2nd by Charlie – approved.

John gave Zoning Administrator's Report (which is available in its entirety at: <https://rupert.vt.gov/documents/meeting-minutes/zoning-administrator-reports/>)

John approved zoning applications for Elizabeth Winters and Ed & Kate Canning.

An application from Richard and Sharon Rishell for a 12 × 28 garden shed was denied because zoning regulations call for accessory building to be located behind the principal building frontline. They will probably meet with the Design Review Board in June to discuss a course of action.

White Doe Farm Event Barn/Wedding Venue: Tiva and Jamie Lovemark are submitting a change of use application for their property in order to use the second floor of one of the existing outbuildings as a wedding/event space. The building previously housed retail space and a workshop of the former property owners. The Lovemark's property manager has been in contact with the fire marshal regarding their permitting requirements and code compliance. The space will be limited to an occupancy of less than 50 people. There are no plans for on-site restrooms, portable sanitation facilities will be used. Parking provisions were briefly discussed during a site meeting. The DRB may take up the application at a June meeting.

Surveyor Ryan Downey delivered an application on behalf of Mikel and Linda Rollyson for a two-lot subdivision of their property last month. The applicant withdrew their request to modify the RM/FCO district boundary to accommodate the house location as part of this application. They may revisit the issue separately in the future. They expect to provide a revised survey with density allocation information to complete the application.

John mentioned a potential addition by the Scarnecchia family. Anne & Peter Buck expect to submit an application to replace the existing camp on their property. Rob Terry from Merck Forest & Farmland Center contacted John regarding potential new projects they may be considering.

There was an inquiry regard permitting requirements for a pole barn in the FHO or FEHO. John said our regs do not permit new buildings in these areas. Any farm structures would require an ANR permit.

Hub66 has contacted residents on Antone Mountain View Rd about high-speed internet in their neighborhood. The ISP contacted the Town about locating equipment to provide these services on Town property. The select board felt a stand-alone equipment would be better than mounting the equipment on the Town Barn. More research on this potential project is being conducted.

Charlie said he felt there were enough proposed bylaw changes the Commission should act on now rather than at some point. In the future. He suggested that the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) could help with crafting the language of the changes instead of using a consultant. He also said the BCRC would help with changes in State statutes. Some changes that could be acted on are: removing the Forest Conservation Overlay, perhaps making it a district; revising fence placement; intensification of use; accessory buildings on lots where there is no dwelling; and discrepancies between what's written in the regs and what's in the charts regarding square footage and setbacks of accessory structures. Jed will discrepancies between what's in the regs and charts and have them for our June meeting.

Val brought up an email from a citizen inquiring about what zoning the town has to prevent an incident like Slate Ridge from happening in Rupert. There is not currently any zoning to prevent someone from setting up a similar operation in town. There was a discussion about what might be done and where to go for resources to help craft regulations that might dissuade such development.

Motion by Charlie, 2nd by Kim to adjourn at 8:35 pm. Motion Passed.

Next Meeting: June 7, 2021

Respectfully submitted,
Val Almosnino, Clerk