

Draft Minutes
Hartford Planning Commission
Public Hearing
Draft Subdivision Regulations Update
1/25/16

Attendance: The following individuals attended the Planning Commission public hearing which was held at the Hartford Town Hall on Monday, January 25, 2016.

Planning Commission Members: Quinn Colgan, Toby Dayman, Robin Adair Logan, John Reid, Rich Kozlowski and chair Bruce Riddle.

Staff: Lori Hirshfield, Department of Planning and Development Services Director and Matt Osborn, Town Planner.

Others: Jon Bouton

Chair Bruce Riddle called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Public Hearing on the Draft Subdivision Regulations: Bruce Riddle opened the public hearing. He started by giving a PowerPoint presentation on the process to develop the Draft Subdivision Regulations. He provided background information on the update noting that the last amendment to the Subdivision Regulations occurred in 1987. He stated that staff and the Planning Commission agreed to start from scratch rather than update the existing regulations. Bruce noted that the Planning Commission and staff have been working on developing the draft for several years. In total, the Planning Commission held 48 workshops to develop the Draft. He noted that many of the changes come from the Master Plan update (2002-2007) and described the following vision for Hartford's future from the Master Plan:

- Encourage growth in already developed areas with infrastructure (water & sewer, close to community facilities & services and served by public transit).
- Protect scenic areas, open space and wildlife corridors.
- Manage growth throughout Hartford.
- Encourage traditional development patterns; compact village & urban centers separated by rural countryside.

Bruce Riddle noted that following the Master Plan adoption in 2007, major changes to the Zoning Regulations took place in 2008. They included:

- Created overlay districts (rural, agricultural & wildlife connector)
- Reduced density in rural areas
- Allowed clustering (small lots) in most rural areas while maintaining lower densities
- Increased density in villages/growth center

Matt Osborn proceeded to go through a list of the significant changes.

Bruce Riddle asked if there were any public comments.

Jon Bouton, a resident of Neal Road, introduced himself. Lori Hirshfield noted that Jon serves as the chair of the Hartford Conservation Commission. She asked if he is representing the Conservation Commission or himself. He responded that he is representing himself.

Jon noted that under Section 200-18.E.(1), the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department Natural Resource Atlas is referenced. He noted that the Natural Resource Atlas will be updated in the future. He asked if the intent is to use the updated map as it is released. Lori Hirshfield responded yes. Peter Merrill stated that the Planning Commission has attempted to reference throughout the regulations the most up-to-date information. Bruce Riddle suggested adding the word “current”. Quinn Colgan suggested using the term “most recent” instead. The Commission agreed. There was concern expressed about the map changing after an application is submitted. Lori Hirshfield responded that state statute dictates that it is the current map at the time the application is submitted. Bruce stated that there needs to be documentation of the map used when the application is submitted. The Commission agreed, and staff will develop the process for this documentation. Quinn stated that the Commission may want to add a legal statement pertaining to maps in the Subdivision Regulations text. The Commission decided against it.

Jon Bouton asked for clarification of significant habitat or wetlands that are not identified on a map. John Reid noted that under the definition of wetland, it refers to “those areas identified by the State” and under Significant Wildlife Habitat, it states, “habitat identified by the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife...” Toby Dayman asked about wetlands that are not identified on a map. Lori Hirshfield responded that the Subdivision Regulations state applications must “comply with the State of Vermont Wetland Rules”. She added that the Conservation Commission or neighbors might identify wet areas on the site which should be looked at. Matt Osborn added that the Planning Commission could identify wet areas during a site visit as well. Robin Adair Logan added that surveyors and engineers are licensed by the State and have a professional obligation to provide accurate site information such as wetlands or wet areas.

Jon Bouton asked if mylars of the approved subdivision approval are still required to be recorded. Lori Hirshfield responded yes and noted the Hartford Town Clerk also maintains the mylar as a digital file.

Regarding Section 200-25.C.(1) Stormwater Management, Bruce Riddle noted that the words “shall be required” were left out in the second sentence with the most recent revisions. He suggested inserting these prior to “if site specific considerations...” The Commission agreed.

Matt Osborn noted that consultant Andres Torizzo recommended the following changes to Section 200-25.C.(1)b. that are highlighted in bold.

“c. The additional runoff will not overload down gradient facilities (to a point where the receiving watershed is greater than **or equal** to ten (10) square miles) to cause **damage or** undue drainage onto other property.”

Rich Kozlowski expressed concern about the meaning of the word “damage”. The Commission discussed and agreed that it was unnecessary to define. The Commission agreed to the changes.

Matt Osborn noted that consultant Andres Torizzo also recommended eliminating d. since it is confusing. Lori Hirshfield agreed stating that it is challenging to determine.

“d. The capacity of the stormwater management system to accommodate future development within the impacted areas.”

The Commission discussed and agreed to eliminate it.

Bruce Riddle asked if there were any other comments. Being none, John Reid made a motion to approve the Subdivision Regulations Draft with changes to Section 200-25C1 noted above and the Draft Planning Commission Report for the Planning Commission, and allow staff to make minor editorial changes to each document which do not affect the substance. The motion was seconded by Quoinn Colgan and approved by a 7 to 0 vote. Lori Hirshfield noted that the next step is the Selectboard public hearing scheduled for Tuesday, February 16, 2016.

Rich Kozlowski made a motion to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Peter Merrill and approved by the Commission.

Solar Screening: Lori Hirshfield reported that staff is presently working on developing standards for screening solar facilities and will be discussing the subject with the Planning Commission at the February 23rd Planning Commission meeting. Matt Osborn noted that last year, the State Legislature granted municipalities the authority to develop screening standards for solar facilities. Lori Hirshfield asked the Commissioners if they support the development of solar screening standards. They agreed.

Peter Merrill made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by John Reid and approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.