

(Draft only – not approved by the Selectboard)

Greensboro Selectboard

August 25, 2021 Special Meeting – Minutes

[Meeting was held in person and via video conference]

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Romans (Chair), Gary Circosta, Tracy Collier, Matt McAllister, David Kelley

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Greaves, Brett Stanciu, Josh Karp, Aaron Green, Richard Lovett, Linda Romans, Sarah Lammert, Ellen Celnik, Christine Armstrong, Eric Hanson, Elizabeth Steel, Daniel Solomon, Jane Solomon, Penelope Doherty, Carol Fairbank, Harry Miller, Mary Young, Lise Armstrong, Alison Gardner, Nan Perron, MacNeil, Eric LaPoint, Zed Fatka, Clive Gray

CALLED TO ORDER: 6:30 PM

1. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: VOREC grant

2. CATERING PERMIT – Woodbelly Pizza. Gary made the following motion:

The Board approves the request from Woodbelly Pizza to cater an event on August 28, at 491 Country Club Rd.

Dave seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3. ZONING BYLAW – PROPOSED UPDATES

Peter explained that this is primarily an informational meeting for the Selectboard (SB) to become more familiar with changes to the town's Zoning Bylaw, as proposed by the Planning Commission (PC). The PC will make a presentation to the SB and then take questions from SB members, followed by a brief public comment period. Peter noted that the SB's required public hearing for these Bylaw proposals will come at a later date.

Eligo Resource District. PC member Linda Romans explained that as part of a review of the shoreline protection bylaws, PC members visited the east side of Lake Eligo. Much of this area is very steep, wooded, and not so developed. The area is clearly vulnerable to erosion.

She said that the PC is proposing to add an area of land, to the east of the lake, to the Resource District. This would change the minimum lot size from 10 to 25 acres. Town roads, the town line, and the east shore of Eligo were chosen as boundaries for the new district. Linda said that this area better falls under the description of the Resource District, rather than the Rural Lands District it's currently part of. This change was proposed to protect Eligo's water quality by minimizing development of the land. The PC notified all landowners last summer of this proposed change, and talked with many of them. Most were in favor.

Discussion of which lots would be grandfathered if this proposal was approved. Zoning Administrator (ZA) Brett Stanciu said that any existing lot smaller than 25 acres could be built on, assuming other requirements for development are met (setbacks, septic regulations, etc.).

Gary wondered how much meaningful, quantifiable water quality protection would result if the proposal was drawn up without data. He also asked whether the PC considered possible litigation costs when planning the expanded Resource District.

PC member Christine Armstrong asked those present to put some trust in PC members, who are volunteers doing a huge amount of work that they believe is good for the community. She said that PC members were appointed by the Selectboard to do the research, to put in the work, and to make proposals. She added that many decisions made by the PC are not easy ones to make, and that behind each proposal is many months of work and research.

PC member Ellen Celnik felt that the litigation potential shouldn't affect whether a Bylaw change is proposed. If the PC researches an issue and decides it's important for the town, the group should follow through with a proposal.

Christine and Brett said that the details of many discussions that informed this proposal can be found in PC meeting minutes and on the PC website

Christine added that while the PC spent many meetings reviewing relevant data, specific studies for Eligo were not done, and that such studies would be prohibitively expensive for a small town to undertake.

Linda added that the PC has statements from the VT Dept. of Fish and Wildlife showing support for this proposed change.

Gary asked whether the PC vote on this proposal was unanimous. Linda replied that the vote was not contentious.

Gary asked whether the PC responds to public comments. Brett said comments are often addressed to her, and that she responds to every one.

Gary asked whether the PC has analysis about the impact to property values. Linda said she spoke with the town assessor, who told her that there were too many variables to make a generalized conclusion.

Matt was concerned that if someone owned 47 acres and wanted to subdivide so their kid could build a house, they would be prohibited under this proposal. He felt that if it's your child and the land perks, you should be able to subdivide the property. Matt also felt that the area up by Bailey Hazen Rd. is flatter and should not be added to the Resource District.

Tracy said she wants to make an informed decision on the proposal, and asked if it reflects the least amount of new regulation that would give the town the greatest benefit, and wondered who is most impacted by the proposal.

Regarding the size of the new Resource District area, Linda said that choosing to make it a smaller area or not depends how much of the Eligo watershed you want to include.

Christine asked the Selectboard to send the PC specific questions, and the PC will do its best to provide detailed analysis. PC Chair Carol Fairbank added that there may be a certain amount of research people need to do on their own.

Public Comment. Eric LaPoint said he's all for conservation, but that in this case the PC has gone too far, by including areas above and beyond the cliffs, all the way up to Bailey Hazen Rd. where it's much flatter. He said this upper area should remain in the Rural Lands District, adding that the boundary should go from Lake Rd to Overlook Rd., not all the way to Bailey Hazen Rd.

Zed Fatka said that he supports regulations that would protect Eligo, but added that perhaps setting the new boundary all the way up to Bailey Hazen Rd. is going too far.

Penelope Doherty lives on Eligo and has seen more sedimentation of the lake in recent years. As a former city planner in another state, and having studied the VT Shoreland Protection Act, she said that there are many planning tools available to municipal planning commissions. It is the norm for local boards to rely on these documents and reports, put together by experts, as they prepare town plans and zoning bylaws.

Jane Solomon lives in the area in question, and said that there's about 40 properties that would be included in the new Resource District area. She added that one opinion is that limiting the ability to subdivide properties would negatively affect landowners – but another opinion is that landowners would be positively impacted, because the ecosystem of the area would be more protected.

Regarding family subdivisions, she shared an example of a family that owned land for generations in the area and kept subdividing – so even if ownership stays within an extended family, you can still end up with quite a bit of development over a few generations.

Christine said that the question before the Selectboard is whether the proposal should be moved forward to a public hearing, and then on to a town vote.

Extended Village District. PC member MacNeil explained that this proposal covers three small areas in Greensboro and Greensboro Bend, and would change the minimum lot size from 10 acres to 2 acres in these areas. This proposal was made in the hopes that more housing opportunities will be created.

MacNeil said there's almost no land that can be developed in the village centers, and the PC had to identify new areas where buildable lots could be created.

Christine said that for years, there's been the opportunity to build PUDs in certain areas of town, but no one has taken advantage of this. By extending the village districts, the PC is trying to give landowners the opportunity to create smaller, more affordable lots. Quite a number of recent surveys have shown that the creation of more affordable housing is important to many residents.

Carol added that the Extended Village District is certainly not the only solution to affordable housing in town, but could be considered incremental change - one small thing that can be done right now.

The Extended Village District encompasses three distinct areas with a two-acre minimum lot size, with the width of the district being 500' from the road on either side.

The first segment runs down the length of the Bend Road, starting at the edge of the Greensboro Village District, and ending where the Greensboro Bend Village District begins.

The second segment begins on Cemetery Ridge Road where the Greensboro Village District ends, and continues up to Young Rd.

The third segment begins at the northern end of the Greensboro Bend Village District, and continues up Rt. 16 to Young Rd.

MacNeil said the PC looked at every single property that would be impacted and asked landowners for comments and concerns, and he could think of only one negative comment.

Gary asked how it was determined that these areas are best suited for two-acre zoning, and wondered why the PC didn't choose a strip up Craftsbury Rd. or Breezy Ave.

MacNeil said that the PC wanted to connect the two villages, and focused on areas where it seemed most likely that some development would actually take place.

Ellen said Craftsbury Rd. was not considered due to the proximity of the Shoreland District, and that further development adjacent to the lake is not desirable. She added that the potential for subdivisions

in that area is very low. MacNeil said the Greensboro Village district already goes up Breezy Ave. to the Four Corners, and that's just about at the town line.

Gary said that connecting the villages seems like sprawl. Peter said that the current 10-acre zoning in most of the town has actually served to fracture the whole landscape, and felt this proposal would offer a few potential spots for affordable housing, concentrated in a small area. He added that most parcels wouldn't change at all for a variety of reasons.

A consultant told the PC there might only be three or four new lots created and built on, if the Expanded Village District is created.

Gary wondered if any of the potential two-acre lots would actually be affordable. MacNeil said that the PC can't control market forces, that all it can do is provide opportunities.

David and Tracy thanked the PC for their work on these proposals.

During the public comment period, Eric LaPoint said that going from 10 acres down to two acres is too drastic a change, and suggested five-acre parcels instead.

Other changes throughout the Bylaw. Linda explained that many of these are smaller changes, requested by the ZA and DRB to make things run smoother on a day-to-day administrative level.

Discussed were proposed changes to subdivisions, signs, nonconforming lots, conditional uses, footprint definition, building height definition, and shoreland district violations.

Peter proposed to end the Bylaw discussion here, and asked Selectboard members to compile their questions for the PC, so the PC can begin working on answers.

4. VT OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIC COLLABORATIVE (VOREC) COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

John Schweizer submitted a letter of interest to the VOREC Community Grant Program. There was an apparent miscommunication or disagreement between John and Alison Gardner about the submission of this letter. Alison told the Board that John's submission is incomplete and threatens the viability of the town's application. She asked the Board for permission to submit a new letter of interest that would make the town's application more competitive.

Peter said he tried to clarify the situation prior to this meeting but didn't hear back from John, despite reaching out.

David made the following motion:

The Board approves Alison Gardner submitting an improved letter of interest for the VOREC grant.

Tracy seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Gary said he appreciates the work put in by both John and Alison and hopes they can work better together in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted: Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk