

APPROVED



HUNTINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes May 23, 2016
Public Meeting on Draft Zoning Regulations
Community Church of Huntington, 7 pm

PRESENT: Everett Marshall, Terry Ryan, Mark Smith. Shayne Jaquith, Joe Segale

ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: Gordon Miller, Megs Keir, Duncan Keir, Brett Lindemuth, Bart Howe, Shawn Smith, Melissa Hoffman, Jim Christiansen

MINUTES: Heidi Racht

The meeting began at 7 pm; chaired by Everett Marshall.

Marshall introduced the topics of the meeting: Rural Residential, Woodland, Conservation, Performance Standards. He clarified the villages Lower Village and Upper Village (aka Huntington Center).

Rural Residential:

Joe Segale explained that 85% of the undeveloped land in the town is in the Rural Residential District, which is a five-acre zone. He noted that this would be an area of development challenge, which could lead to residential sprawl. He explained that the regs would attempt to encourage the presentation of open space.

Megs Keir asked if a duplex was part of a density bonus. Terry Ryan responded that it would not because a duplex is an allowable use. Segale disagreed. Ryan disagreed with Segale. Keir then asked what is the goal. This zoning has led to an image of the potential of more than five acres.

Shawn Smith asked about the purpose of Rural Residential. If there is a PUD, this involves both commercial and residential. Ryan responded that all commercial uses are conditional/ Keir asked if someone had a five-acre parcel and then applies to build a separate structure, would that be a non-permitted use? She then asked about the limitation on heights. Ryan responded that the DRB would have to follow the criteria to allow creative Cottage Industry. He pointed out that Section 5 details what is allowed and what isn't. Mark Smith added that he has confidence in their ability

Heidi Racht talked about condos in the RR district, explaining that condos aren't rural. She also said she objected to the 15-room bed and breakfast conditional use as there is really only one or two buildings in town (Brewster-Pierce School and the Jubilee barn) that are big enough for 15 rooms. The impact in traffic alone could be 60 extra cars/day – a huge impact on neighbors. Smith agreed, stating that he

was a cautious proponent of 15 bedrooms and the DRB review would be part of Conditional Use. Shawn Smith suggested a cost-benefit analysis.

Ryan noted that any bed and breakfast would have to go through Conditional Use Review. Duncan Keir asked what language is in place. Is increased traffic enough to support the DRB turning down a project like this? The reg has to have language. Mark Smith responded that the project went away for the Lodge [Delfrate Road] and there were neighbors' concerns.

Megs Keir said the regs are clear enough that outcomes are predictable. Brett Lindemuth commented that it would be helpful to know what things would be considered negative to the process.

Woodland District, 1500-2000 feet:

New Conditional Use is year round residences, a "fairly significant" change. Maximum size is 1500 square foot footprint. It was pointed out that this could be 4500 square feet with three stories. Lindemuth objected, saying that a 20x30 footprint is more appropriate. Ryan agreed to strike the word footprint. Megs Keir asked about seasonal dwellings, saying, this is "fuzzy." Racht commented that it is defined in statute. Lindemuth added that it is not enforced. Ryan then added that it has to do with number of days of occupancy and wastewater permitting.

Duncan Keir pointed out that the development pressure is in RR and Woodland, while the "buzz" is on the Village District. If we want sprawl that we are seeing, we are gradually losing the open spaces. Shawn Smith pointed out that allowable lot size is the single more important factor in how an area is developed. She asked whether the HPC was making the minimum acreage bigger or smaller. Lindemuth commented that he thought of sprawl as equaling tract housing. He is more interested in mitigating the effects of single-family residence building. Segale said we're not pushing it; we are creating an opportunity.

Megs Keir said that after Act 250, people developed with 10 acres per house. The town has five-acre lots which breaks up open fields. In the woods, you don't see houses and this could allow for smaller lots. Maybe restrict cutting of woods. She said she wanted to see if we have the right paradigm with density in the village then sprawling out. Shayne Jaquith responded to think about the road network, which is more expensive in the steeper areas. Lindemuth commented that the town should think about mitigating the expense of town roads that now have only one house.

Segale talked about Rural by Design.

Megs Keir said she didn't think that we should increase the minimum lot size. Shawn Smith disagreed, saying that there is a dangerous focus on live landscape: water, forestland, steeper areas. There is soil erosion and impact on ecosystems in proposing development in the more remote areas, so we don't see development. Keir agreed.

Bart How asked we aren't talking about making lot sizes smaller, are we? Megs Keir responded to consider the impact of five-acre lots in all places. There are different ecosystems at different elevations. There is plenty of ag damage that gets a lot of publicity. There are issues no matter where you build your house. Jaquith agreed. Lindemuth stated that the RR lot size should be bigger. Segale

differed, remarking that this should be dealt with in the new Town Plan and changing lot size would be significant.

Conservation:

Goals are to conserve ridgelines and views. Not accessible by car; no conditional uses.

Shawn Smith asked about dropping the Conservation District to 1500 feet. Marshall replied that the Town Plan could be amended. Smith said that the woodland could then be dropped. Segale said there needed to be a bigger discussion about what we want to do. Lindemuth said if you thought as the Planning Commission it was better to change the RR District from five acres to 10 acres, you could change the Town Plan on the back end.

Lindemuth then pointed out that development is anything; it is an activity.

Planning Standards:

Segale and Marshall discussed Section 5.03 briefly.

One topic discussed was merger of small lots with Lindemuth pointing out that it may be illegal. Marshall responded that it's legal; it's a question as to whether we want it.

Moving along toward the conclusion of the evening's discussion Marshall said the next discussion will be on the role of the Administrative Officer and the DRB. Lindemuth asked that the HPC encourage the enforcement officer to do more enforcing. Ryan responded that the Administrative Officer may or may not be forward leaning toward enforcement.

Adjournment: The Commission adjourned the meeting at 8:32 pm.

Draft Minutes on town website: June 7, 2016

Unapproved Minutes to HPC: June 8, 2016

Minutes Approved: June 13, 2016

Minutes submitted to Town Clerk: June 14, 2016