**LANDGROVE PLANNING COMMISSION**

Minutes of Meeting

February 17, 2022

**Attending:**

Harry Lux Jeff Cleary

Mary Licata Michael Morfit

William Goodwin (Zoning Administrator)

Applicants: Steve Finelli

Member of public: Lyn Tracy (abutting property owner)

Invited staff of BCRC: Catherine Bryer and Calle Fishburn

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 pm, with a quorum of 4 Commissioners and the Zoning Administrator present, in addition to the applicants , a member of the public and staff from the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC).

The minutes of the meeting of November 18, 2021, were approved with no changes.

**1. Public Hearing on application from Steve Finelli (16 Landgrove Road).** The Landgrove Planning Commission duly warned that it would hold public hearing for the purpose of receiving comments regarding the application to add to the north side of the existing structure. This property is within the Utley Flats Scenic Overlay District. Detailed information was also available to the public at the Town Office.

The Chair also invited ZBA members to announce any conflict of interest with this application. None were identified. The Chair also swore in prospective witnesses expecting to give testimony before the ZBA.

The Zoning Administrator reported the application is complete and in order. It seeks approval to add a 4 x 20 foot structure to the northside of the existing building. This would be on the opposite side from the existing court of the Landgrove Tennis Club. All set-back requirements are met. No changes to landscaping or planting are planned; no trees will be cut down. The building materials will be bleached wood to match with the existing structure. An existing floodlight would be replaced by a traditional barn lantern. All abutting property owners have been duly notified and none have registered any objections or concerns.

Questions from the ZBA focused on whether the proposed changes would be consistent with the existing character of the area. The only abutting property member attending, Lyn Tracy, expressed no concerns about the application.

The Chair adjourned the public hearing at 5:48 pm. Before moving to deliberative session, the ZBA took up the second item on the agenda, involving staff from the BCRC.

The ZBA deliberative session commenced at 6:28 pm. After a review of the application and findings of the ZBA Administrator, the ZBA was unanimous in approving the application. The deliberative session concluded at 6:33 pm. The Zoning Administrator’s Findings of Fact will be formally communicated within the mandatory 45-day period from the date of this hearing.

**2. Consultations with Bennington Country Regional Commission (BCRC) on town plan and by-laws.**

The Planning Commission is statutorily obliged periodically to review the town plan and by-laws to ensure that they are consistent with any new state requirements and are responsive to changing needs and conditions. BCRC staff have been assisting the Planning Commission in this effort.

BCRC staff did not identify any significant gaps or problems with the current town plan from the perspective of state laws and requirements. They did note that state law has recently elevated the importance of forest connectivity in an effort to preserve wildlife habitat.

In discussing possible revisions to the town plan and by-laws, Commission members observed that the town is encountering new enterprises and economic activity not envisioned in the current town plan (e.g., AirBnB rentals, event spaces).

BCRC reminded the Planning Commission that the state’s grant for by-law modernization requires that new by-laws be approved no later than January 1, 2024. Given the necessary public hearings and approval process, this means that substantive work should be completed no later than summer 2023.

State funding is available to update the town’s hazard mitigation plan. These would have to be used before the end of 2022. This appears to be a Select Board responsibility and John Ogden will be informed.

**Next Meeting:** assuming sufficient business, the Planning Commission and ZBA will next meet on Thursday, March 17, at 5:30 pm.