

Minutes
January 9, 2019

Present: Susan Schreibman (SS), *Larry Walter (LW), Alvin Figiel (AF), Dave Coppock (DC) and Patrick Griffin (PG).

Also Present: Tara Kelly, Planning Director and Zoning Administrator, Bob Tanner, Building Inspector and Barbara Spaulding, recording secretary. Aldermen Davis, Humphrey, *Whitcomb, *Ryan, Mattis and Mayor Allaire. Brennan Duffy, Dave Cooper and Mike Gauthier, all from the RRA. City Atty. Bloomer, City Treasurer Mary Markowski and Gordon Dritschilo of the Rutland Herald. Also attending **Bryan Sell, Pine Hill Partnership.

SS, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

I. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS – None.

II. SIGN ORDINANCE PRESENTATION TO COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

SS said the City's Planning Commission had worked on the draft for three years which included researching other sign ordinances and conducting a public meeting at the RRPC, geared toward members of the Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce and Rutland Economic Development Corp. A legal review has been conducted and the Commission consulted with sign professionals, as well as, Bob Tanner who has permitting and enforcement responsibilities for the existing Sign Ordinance. Taking into consideration all those comments the presentation and draft have been refined.

*Aldermen Ryan, Whitcomb and LW arrived.

Tara Kelly conducted most of the presentation which covered the need for the revision, sign districts, sign sizes, lighting, message boards, grandfathering of existing signs and triggers for signs to come into compliance. The following questions and/or comments were made:

- Should the zoning districts match the sign districts? – The PC considered this and decided that it was best, at this current time, to keep them separate. The Zoning Ordinance rewrite is considering a change to district boundaries.
- It may be prudent to build in an appeal process. This needs further thought about the purpose and how appeals would be conducted.

- The draft suggests window signs be limited to 25% of window space – BOA should consider this further.
- Limiting lumens within internally lighted signs may be one way of dealing with them.
- The hospital may need to be its own district in order to allow different signs than the other areas around it.
- How will the cost of sign compliance affect business owners – Mike Gauthier said if a business is transitioning from an existing sign that is larger and/or internally lit to a sign that is smaller and only externally illuminated, it would cost less than replacing with existing.
- How many signs will be non-conforming if the proposed ordinance passes as is? – Unknown.
- How will historic signs be affected i.e.: Swards? - The draft ordinance provides exceptions if the Architectural Review Committee determines a sign to have historic value.
- Will a new business be financially responsible for removal of an abandoned sign or can the City compel removal? Decision for BOA.
- How are Downtown signs addressed? – Downtown Business District, including Strongs Avenue has standards specific to it that are similar to what exists today. ARC review of signs in the designated downtown remains.
- What is the image/vision for this ordinance rewrite? To make Rutland look more like Vermont, less blighted, and a better overall visual environment that encourages business success.
- Are multi-business signs recognized in the draft? - Yes, if a property has multiple businesses on it the draft ordinance treats them differently than single business properties.
- How will neighborhoods be affected? – Proposed ordinance limits sign size within areas that are primarily residential. The current ordinance does not.
- Where should additional comments be made? – CED committee will ask for referral to Charter & Ordinance Committee for further review, comment, etc
- Will the triggers that cause a sign to need to come into conformance incentivize businesses not to maintain their existing signs? Discussion for BOA.

Mayor Allaire thanked the Planning Commission for their work on the draft sign ordinance.

Alderman Humphrey, Chair of the Community & Economic Development, asked for copies of the draft, map and sign presentation to be included in the materials she will forward to the Board at the next meeting on Jan. 22. Either she or Alderman Mattis will refer to Charter & Ordinance Committee.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 12, 2018.

LW moved to approve the minutes of December 12, 2018. PG seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

V. NEW BUSINESS – BETTER CONNECTIONS GRANT APPLICATION.

Brennan Duffy explained that the City was applying for a Better Connections grant for a multi-use trail network that will connect Killington with Downtown Rutland through Mendon and Rutland Town. All four municipalities are on board and support the concept and are pledging funds towards the required match.

*Bryan Sell arrived.

Bryan said he recognized the economic impact of connecting regional assets with a trail network from Killington to Downtown Rutland. He discussed how mountain bike tourists could shuttle ride up to Killington and ride down to the City and how there is nothing like this available on the East Coast. He has been able to substantiate \$1 million dollars being spent by through an economic study at Pine Hill Park. The Killington Bike Park is the largest in the East and a premier mountain bike destination and connecting to it with a direct route with no cars could be economically valuable to all communities.

PG asked how the grant would help. Brennan said the City would apply for a \$67,500 grant and with \$7,500 in matching funds hire a consultant to create an action plan of best options that would be implementable. Considerable public outreach would also need to be done as part of the project. Bryan added that a similar project by Mad River received an award a couple years ago and the City's application would be modeled after that project.

LW asked who would maintain the trail. Bryan said the Pine Hill Partnership has the ability to mobilize local groups and has the tools and equipment to maintain the trail.

SS said the application requires a resolution signed by the Board of Aldermen, as well as, the Chair of the Planning Commission upon endorsement by vote. She read the resolution aloud.

PG moved to have the Planning Commission Chair sign the resolution in support of the Better Connections application. AF seconded. Motion was approved.

LW suggested that Bryan take a look at the City's Complete Streets document.

VI. OLD BUSINESS – Tiny House Discussion.

Tara discussed the issue with classifying a tiny house in Zoning and how other ordinances beyond Zoning disallow tiny houses. She will prepare information for the next meeting at which Laura Maclachlan and the Stafford students plan to attend.

Sign Ordinance Presentation.

The Commission was pleased with the reception and discussed whether or not the triggers for compliance may incentivize some businesses to neglect signs.

Rutland City Master Plan.

Alderman Mattis asked when the plan expires and who is responsible for its update. The Master Plan expires in June of 2020 and the Planning Commission is responsible for the plan. Alderman Mattis would like to see climate change addressed in the plan with an energy committee established to work on conservation and resiliency planning.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE – None.

VIII. ADJOURN.

PG moved to adjourn. AF seconded. The meeting ended at 7:31 pm. The next meeting will be held January 23, 2019.

For the Commission:

Barbara Spaulding, Recording Secretary