Windham Planning Commission Minutes

3/10/25

Present: Bill Dunkel, Cathy Fales, John Finley, Tom Johnson, Dawn Bower, Vance Bell, Antje Ruppert

Bill Dunkel started the meeting at 6:11PM

**I. Act on Minutes of February Meeting**

Cathy moved to adopt the minutes, Dawn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**II. Set Date for Public Hearing on Fairclough Request for a Conditional Use Permit**

The Fairclough family would like to build a house in the Forest District in North Windham and Will (Zoning Administrator) notified Bill in an email that the site is at 1800 feet with a 20% slope. There is already a driveway, septic, and a barn on the property, and Cathy found on the Windham website that a permit for the barn was issued on 8/16/2021 by Alison Cummings (Permit no. 682). The permit looks like it was prepared by a professional surveyor, Gary Rapinotti.

In the forest district a dwelling requires a conditional use permit and a public hearing.

A discussion ensued who is responsible for a public hearing, the appellant or the PC. Cathy stated that it is the PC’s responsibility, which is why surrounding towns charge much more than Windham for public hearings ($150-$300 vs. $25). Bill said that he will check into who is responsible to warn the hearing.

Cathy noted that the PC would need some time to look over the application as there is a stream on the property and the run-off needs to be inspected.

Date option I: Monday 4/14/2025 at 6PM. Option II: 3/31/2025 at 6PM. Bill will check with Will about his availability.

**III. Status of Zoning Permit Application**

Bill noted that despite the PC’s recommendations to change the zoning application form from March 2024, the old application is still on the website.

John noted that since the PC had already approved all of the changes, the application would not have to be reviewed again.

Antje requested that the following language be added to the application form:

“During the time period that the permit is valid, the listers will visit the property for that purpose.” to make sure that property owners are aware of that fact.

John moved to add this additional sentence, and Cathy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Cathy voiced concern about the Fairclough family having perhaps filled out the old application form which did not include the revisions. Bill noted that it would not be fair to make them fill out the revised form if they have already submitted their application. He will check with Will if the form was already submitted and would offer his help if they have not.

**VI. Prioritize Next Steps**

At the meeting on November 10, 2024, the PC had put together a to-do list going forward regarding composting toilet regulations in zoning districts, short-term rentals (as requested by Michael Pelton at recent SB meeting), and tiny houses.

Bill noted that he is not aware of any issues, particularly with short-term rentals in Windham, but wanted to get a sense on how the PC feels about getting in to this discussion and research.

John asked what the purpose for this action is.

Antje asked if Michael gave any reason why he wanted the PC to look into short-term rentals. Bill thought that it pertained to the larger context of the housing crisis in Vermont. Bill will look further into the article he read in VT Digger about this issue and see to what extend it relates to Windham, and communicate with Michael again.

The changes to the zoning regulations will also require a public hearing held by the Select Board.

Cathy thanked Bill for all of his work and great leadership!

Vance moved to adjourn, Tom seconded. 7:09PM

Respectfully submitted,

Antje Ruppert