

Planning & Zoning Commission
Regulations Committee - Village District Sub-Committee
Minutes – June 5, 2008

Present: Sally Carlson-Crowell, Nancy Fischbach, Peter Howard, Cathie Jefferson, Mary Luscomb, Jane Samuels

Absent: Janet Edgerton, Paul Gurda, Richard King, Charlotte Lazor, Katie Russell, Bill Stamm

Guest: Torrance Downes (CRERPA)

The meeting convened at 4:10 p.m. with a review of the uses specified at the last meeting for the Village Commercial, Mixed Use on Main Street, Mixed Use off Main Street, and Residential zones, looking specifically for how the Mixed Use off Main varied from the Residential and how the Mixed Use on Main varied from the Mixed Use on Main in order to ascertain whether we really needed four areas rather than the three.

Since the only use differences between Village Residential and Village Mixed off Main were schools and museums, it was decided that a separate area for Mixed Use off Main was not needed and that all areas on the map of 5/05/08 which are shown as Mixed Use but which were not fronting on Main Street would be changed to Village Residential. This includes on the south side of Bridge St., both sides of High Street between River Street and Main Street, both sides of Village Street, both sides of Elm Street, the eastern side of Union Street, and both sides of Lafayette Street. In other words, eliminate all Mixed Use which does not front on Main Street.

Points made during the discussion included:

- The transition area gives elasticity to the proposal.
- At the public information meeting, it might be helpful to include one variation with the four areas instead of the three.
- It would be helpful to separate Personal Service uses from other retail, with Personal Service having to be defined since for the Village Residential it might be appropriate to have, for example, a personal trainer, but not appropriate to have a barber.
- Museums would be permitted by Special Permit in Village Residential with special standards (as to parking, lot size, buffer, and perhaps age of structure to ensure museum is of a historic character).
- It might be appropriate to allow some uses in Village Residential within XX feet (an amount to be determined, and which might vary depending on the specific use involved) from Main Street.

Next the committee discussed the Lot and Bulk Requirements, which were originally drafted only for the Village Residential and Village Commercial zones since the transition Mixed Use zone was developed more recently (see draft schedule dated 2/20/08). Initial discussion centered around the differences in character along Main Street, especially between the transition/Mixed use area to the north and the transition/mixed use area to the south, and that in some places the Mixed Use Lot Requirements might better resemble the commercial ones and in other areas might better resemble the residential ones.

There was an understanding that although the discussion as to zone boundaries so far has involved uses, the density “boundaries” may be different than the “use” boundaries, possibly necessitating the use of geographic boundaries (such as south of River Street) within districts for the Lot and Bulk Requirements. The discussion continued by defining the existing character, working along Main Street in segments and determining whether that character was appropriate going forward, using the hypothesis of what if there were a devastating fire and we were starting from scratch.

Discussing only the Lot Requirements (and not the structure bulk limitations), the committee determined the following:

Village Commercial

- Footnote 1 in the existing schedule (allowing waiver upon written permission of abutter) shall be eliminated.

- It would be desirable to design lot requirements to allow for vehicular access to the rear of parcels so that off-street parking would be behind structures. Thus, side yard requirements should allow for abutters to share a common access drive between their buildings.
- It was recognized that the area best suited for future Main St. commercial development would be the area between Lafayette and Essex Streets south to Church Street, therefore the lot requirements there should be the same as they are from Elm/River Streets south to Lafayette.

Village Transitional/Mixed Use

- Front set back requirements for either just the east side of Main St. south of Church Street or for both sides of the street should be same as for Village Residential. The actual set back numbers were not set, however, since there was an understanding that there might be two sets of Village Residential lot requirements reflecting the different character of the houses on or close to Main Street and those set further away from Main St. (see below).

Village Residential

- Different front setbacks might be appropriate depending on distance from Main Street, reflecting the greater density right off Main.

Main Street Segment	Village Zone	Any One Side Yd	Total of Both Side Yds	Front Setback
North of Elm/River Streets to Village St. on the west side and to opposite Village St. on the east side	Comm	0-5	15	0-10
North of Village to High Street on east side and opposite High on west side	Comm	0-5	15	0-10
North of High to Spring and Kirtland Streets	Mixed	0-5	15	0-10
South of Elm/River Streets to Lafayette and Essex Streets	Comm	0-5	15	0-10
South of Lafayette/Essex to church property on west side and opposite Church St. on east side	Comm	0-5	15	0-10
Church and south of Church St. on west side and opposite Church St. on east side to Union Street	Mixed	0-5	15	Tbd, maybe 15-25

The next meeting will be Thursday, July 3rd. Since this is the evening before the 4th of July, it was determined that if too many committee members are unable to attend, there would be no July meeting rather than trying to reschedule it. Everyone at the table thought they'd be able to attend.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Nancy Fischbach
 06/13/08