

Approved As Written
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
May 16, 2018
7:00 PM
Jamestown Town Hall
93 Narragansett Ave.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and the following members were present:

Michael Swistak – Chair	Duncan Pendlebury – Vice Chair
Rosemary Enright – Secretary	Mick Cochran
Bernie Pfeiffer	Dana Prestigiacomo
Michael Smith – arrived at 7:15	

Also present:

Lisa Bryer, AICP – Town Planner
Wyatt Brochu – Town Solicitor
Cinthia Reppe – Planning Assistant
Jeff Davis – Consultant – Horsley Witten
Nate Kelley – Consultant – Horsley Witten

II. Approval of Minutes May 2, 2018; review, discussion and/or action and/or vote

A motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Commissioner Enright and seconded by Commissioner Cochran. So unanimously voted.

III. Correspondence – nothing at this time

IV. Citizen's Non-Agenda Item – nothing at this time

V. Reports

1. Town Planner's Report -we had our community Solarize Jamestown meeting last night. We selected Newport Solar through the public bidding process and they talked about the process and the bulk purchasing option which makes it cheaper for everyone. The playground is under construction. CDBG is being submitted tomorrow. Commissioner Enright asked about a deadline for solarize Jamestown and it is in September.
2. Chairpersons report
3. Town Committees
4. Sub Committees

VI. Old Business

1. Zoning Ordinance Update with Horsley Witten

Consultant Nate Kelley said tonight they are going to speak about housing and core policy questions, and formative issues related to each of these topics. He is going to go through them as they appear in the packet. We will start with the big picture then we will go a layer at a time deeper.

a. Article 10. Multifamily Dwellings:

The core issues are feasibility, market and financial impact, the way it is written now you require a certain square footage per bedroom. They have worked in communities with the same, which means the lots are required to get really big, really fast because of the way the zoning is written currently. It makes the use prohibitive especially in a place like Jamestown where land is at a premium. If you are trying to weave in single and multi in neighborhoods, let's move to a system so scale of the lot does not move as much. In terms of density and design: there are many different models of multifamily and some do not go over 1 ½ stories. Commissioner Swistak said multi-family was frowned upon in Jamestown 15-20 years ago. He thinks it has shifted because of age and population. Still there are many people in town that are against multi-family Swistak said.

Lisa Bryer said when we talked about the big "A" and little "a" affordable, the community needs to understand that we have our State mandated 10% and then we have our community obligation of allowing housing types that serve the needs of the community. Swistak said what about air bnb? He does not want to allow multi-family if they are just going to be rented short term.

Pendlebury noted that there was a restriction on short term rentals at Jamestown Terrace. Multi-family ordinance Nate said it would make sense to take it off the table it is a policy decision, he does not think we are losing anything. Swistak said there may be somebody with the means to put that in so why should we take it out? Nate says it is something they can look at. Commissioner Smith does not think multi-family should be anywhere but where town water is. Commissioner Pendlebury says the village area is where the intense development should be. He thinks until the comp plan makes a change we should not put multi-family in the rural area. Its much easier to add it on later then take it away Nate said.

Town Solicitor Wyatt Brochu said when talking about zoning requirements in zoning at the Zoning Board nothing is absolute, so keep it in the back of your mind. For instance, if they do not have public water they can ask for a variance. Sometimes policy makers think it is absolute but in zoning it is not.

Commissioner Cochran said we are going to set a standard and then they can go to court. Often people come into Lisa's office before they buy and they ask what can be done with this property. A developer in our town is always looking for the "highest and best" use. The developer is not generally looking for variances, because time is money. They want to get in and get out. And when they look at our multi-family dwelling ordinance, they never pursue it because it is not worth it. Nate asked are there people you know that are intimately involved in real estate that know this market, let's talk to them. Commissioner Pendlebury asked if you put parking standards on bedroom count. Keep it low Nate said.

Design – What are the standards that are going to determine the standards for zoning? You have your existing design guidelines. What do you want in the body of the zoning? Lisa Bryer noted that if we are going to be increasing density in our residential neighborhoods, we want them to fit in as much as possible and we will need some kind of standards. She feels that we should rely on our design guidelines since they are specific to our style in Jamestown. We could introduce general standards similar to what we do for review of homes on undersized lots in the Village District.

Commissioner Swistak stated that we use our design guidelines now as a guide, should we do that here or put specific guidelines under this section of the ordinance?

Ms. Bryer noted the use of shall and may need to be carefully used for example the use of shall (below) in section 2 indicates industrial materials shall be used in contrast to natural materials.

2. Changes in color and materials should generally occur between horizontal bands and shall be used to clearly establish "base", "middle", and "top" portions of the building. Where more than one material is used, traditionally heavier materials (stone, brick, etc.) shall be located below lighter materials (wood, fiber cement board, siding, etc.). The change in material shall occur along a horizontal line, preferably at the floor level. Natural materials, such as brick, stone, wood, and slate shall be used as the primary finished surface in contrast with industrial materials such as unfinished concrete, sheet metal, vinyl and plastic synthetic siding

b. Article 11. Jamestown Village Special Development District

Add “Administrative Officer” to the Definitions in Zoning.

c. Article 14. Accessory Family Dwelling Units

This article was adopted due to the need in town. The critical question is what are you going to do when you don't need the unit anymore? Reintegration needs to be addressed in the ordinance. Is it the removal of the stove when it is not considered a dwelling? Commissioner Enright said she thought we are trying to maintain 1 house per lot. This is all family on one lot and they have to share utilities so it is not considered a separate dwelling unit; it is accessory to the main use. There is a shortage of year-round rentals so it would be good if you have a stipulation that they have to be rented for a year minimum. Nate said they worked a lot on the sustainable Jamestown plan and got lots of information from some of the different groups they came into contact with regarding affordable housing.

Another issue is the idea of how these applications are reviewed, they want to revisit this. He thinks you need to identify what the complaint is before you say all complaints result in a denial. Start with TRC then bump to DPR to increase scrutiny.

d. Article 15. Bed and Breakfast Homes

e. Article 17. Low and Moderate Income Housing

Part of density bonus is lot size. Does anybody remember that this is the way it goes? I believe that it is that if we reduce your lot size therefore, if you offer more units it can work. Commissioner Pfeiffer said if I reduce the lot size what happens to the space that is created due to the reduction? It goes to bonus units.

Commissioner Pendlebury wants to go back and say 40 years minimum number of years for affordable housing.

They have been hearing a lot about how the low moderate act qualifies folks at 120% of median income and Jamestown also accepts affordable housing at 120% of median income. We may want to reconsider this because many towns are not able to sell these units as affordable since you can go to adjacent towns and buy un-restricted homes for about the same price. So we need to think about this. With affordable housing, you are giving up some market appreciation (limited equity) but it may be worth it for some. Lisa gave example at 80, 100 and 120.

We will continue the discussion of B&B's in June at the second meeting.

VII. New Business

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Enright and seconded by Commissioner Cochran at 9:02 p.m. to adjourn. So unanimously voted.

Attest:


Cinthia L. Reppe