

**MINUTES  
JOINT SWANTON  
PLANNING COMMISSION, SELECTBOARD & VILLAGE TRUSTEE'S  
MEETING**

**Wednesday, January 22, 2025  
120 First St, Village Complex & TEAMS  
5:30 p.m.**

Present: Ross Lavoie, Jim Pratt, Heather Buczkowski, Andy LaRocque-Planning Commission Members, Earl Fournier, Steve Bourgeois, Brendan Long-Selectboard Members, David Winchester-Village President, Adam Paxman, Suzie Kelleher, Eugene LaBombard-Village Trustees, Corey Parent. Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator, Bill Sheets, Heidi Britch-Valenta, Judy Paxman

Absent: Joel Clark

Teams: Oliver Manning (PC), Robin Pierce (Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity), Nicole Draper (SLB) Julia Tinganeli,

1. Call to Order

Mr. Lavoie called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

Mr. Fournier called the Selectboard meeting to order at 5:33 pm.

Mr. Winchester called the Trustees' meeting to order at 5:33 pm.

2. Agenda Review

Mr. Lavoie reviewed the agenda, with no additions.

3. Land Use & Development Regulations Review

Mr. Parent & Mr. Lavoie reviewed the Land Use & Development Regulations in an open discussion. Mr. Lavoie said the linked State statutes as much as possible in the plan, this eliminates the need for updates at the State makes changes. Mr. Parent said many of the changes are to align with the changes the Vermont Legislator has made to increase housing in Vermont. Listed below are highlighted changes in the current draft.

- Consolidation of residential districts from three to two districts with and without residential water and sewer. Wherever municipal water and sewer are available you cannot require a lot to be larger than 1/5<sup>th</sup> (8700 sqft) of an acre and allow up to four units on that lot.
- Increase lot coverage to 65%- all impervious surface.
- Shrunk setbacks.
- Add industrial/light manufacturing to Southern Growth district!
- Combine all shoreline districts.
- Eliminated Travel Service Area district, combined with Central Business district.
- Eliminated Neighborhood Commercial Light district, combined with Neighborhood Commercial district.
- Eliminated Moderate Density district (R3), State housing law either you have water & sewer or don't.
- Increase administrative review before sending to the Development Review Board
- Reduce setbacks to eliminate the need for variance.
- Increase building height in line with fire department accessibility.
- Driveway/Private Roads require road after 3-lots.

- Definition changes & alignment with State statute
- Consolidate the definitions for “Adaptive Reuse” of existing buildings.
- Adjust the setbacks in the Village for new structures to be “average to structures on each side” to keep building aligned, corner lot issues.
- Defer all shoreline to the State, if the State approves it then its permissible. This will help protect the shoreline. The State requires Shoreland Permits for any development on the lake already.
- Discussion with Selectboard on enforcement with zoning/public safety of roads
- Increase time to replace/permit for structures due to a fire from 12 months to 18 months and 3 years to rebuild.
- Reduce road frontage requirement for lots from 200’ to 150’ allow deeper lots.
- No commercial rights-of-way, or lots to the center of the road, i.e. pipelines & power line easements.
- Change of the definition of seasonal from 180 days to 200 days

#### 4. Public Comment

Mr. Paxman asked if they included sidewalk requirements in new subdivisions? No, sidewalks are a regional plan, but an added considerable cost to residential development (roughly \$500 per linear foot) Ms. Buczkowski said the cost of housing is very high currently and that added cost to a home, to make it mandatory is not something she supports. Other board members agreed. Mr. Long suggested adding in an easement to allow for sidewalks for pedestrian walkways in the future.

Mr. Lavoie explained not allowing the lots to the center of the road to increase the lot size, this is not good practice and eliminates space. Not allowing rights-of-way on lots eliminates homeowners from using their own land, for example gas lines.

Mr. Pratt would like to have building envelopes on mylars. Mr. Lavoie said the issue with those envelopes is when you change the bylaws those envelopes are no longer valid.

Mr. Paxman asked if when new subdivisions are complete is the Town or Village required to take over the road? No, the Town has a road taken over policy and they are not obligated. There are standards that need to be met for the Town to consider. That includes stormwater permits. Mr. Fournier said the Selectboard has adopted this policy as these permits are costly. Mr. Parent said these permits are for developments that have over 3-acres of impervious surface, this is why St. Albans for example has a stormwater utility that funds permit. When developments/HOA’s do not keep up these permits it becomes a title issue when selling your home. Mr. Parent said an option would be to require the HOA to be recorded with the Town, this will require someone from the Town to follow up with this. Mr. Parent suggested this be a requirement for the developer to get the last Certificate of Occupancy they are required to turn over the HOA and record with the Town. Mr. Paxman also suggested requiring developers to hold the permit for a time period. Mr. Lavoie said they need to find a balance not to slow development. Mr. Long said putting verbiage in will protect homeowners as well as educate them about the requirements of these stormwater permits. Mr. Fournier said requiring them to

register annually with the Town is an option also. Mr. Parent suggested adding it to the Certificate of Compliance process.

Mr. Lavoie said owning to the center of the roads can cause problems with neighbors also.

Mr. Lavoie said they will discuss fees after this draft is complete, eliminating fees for the Town, Village and School District.

Mr. Lavoie said this update has been long because they went through it page by page as it was needed. Mr. Fournier said the current bylaws have been pieced together as things came up, this rewrite was needed.

The group discussed conserved land in the Town of Swanton, how much is conserved and the limitations of development this has caused. Mr. Bourgeois asked if they could stop the sale of development rights? Mr. Parent said he does not believe so but has had success in other communities where they invited the Land Trust to the conversation. This could be built into the Town Plan.

Ms. Britch-Valenta asked about the changes to TSA and do they have new maps? Mr. Parent said they removed TSA, adding it to Central Business district, and they are waiting for the maps from Regional Planning. Mr. Lavoie said they reviewed permitted and conditional use in both districts, and they were essentially the same requirements. They reviewed on the map the districts discussed. Ms. Britch-Valenta asked if residential housing is aloud in this district, this is due to brownfield requirements if it is aloud. Mr. Long asked if they are aware of how many lots this change will effect? Mr. Parent said the only district that does not allow residential housing is TSA, Industrial does not but they didn't make any changes with that district.

Mr. Pierce asked about single-family dwelling being aloud in R5 district in regard the Hotel Riv property. Mr. Pierce asked if that could be changes to dwelling(s) allowing for multi-family homes to be in permitted use. It is currently listed as Conditional Use and is referred to the DRB. This will be reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Ms. Paxman asked why home occupation will not be included in the district she lives in (NCL currently)? That district is proposed to be eliminated and become part of NC district and there are options it will fall under. This can be added in the NC district. Setbacks did not change from 15' in that district by lot coverage increased from 30% to 60%. This will also allow businesses to expand with the increased lot coverage.

##### 5. Adjournment

**Mr. Fournier made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 7:19 pm, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.**

**Mr. Pratt made a motion to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 7:19 pm, seconded by Ms. Buczkowski. Motion carried.**

**Mr. Paxman made a motion to adjourn the Village Trustees' meeting at 7:19 pm,  
seconded by Mr. LaBombard. Motion carried.**

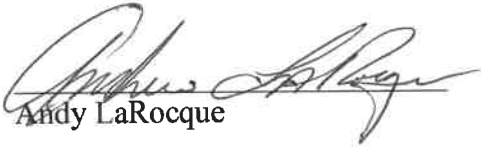
Respectfully Submitted by  
Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator



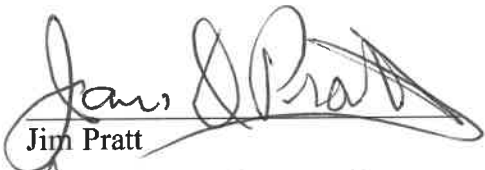
Ross Lavoie-Chair



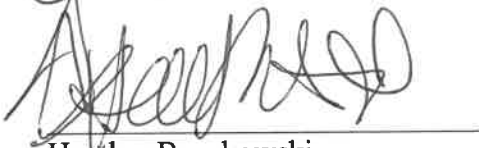
Oliver Manning-Vice Chair



Andy LaRocque



Jim Pratt



Heather Buczkowski