

Shaftsbury Planning Commission (PC) Public Hearing and Meeting
August 23, 2022

1) Call to order

The meeting came to order in person at Cole Hall and remotely via the Zoom platform at 6:01 p.m. Present in person were commissioners Chris Williams (chair), Naomi Miller, and Martha Cornwell. Also present was zoning administrator Shelly Stiles. Commissioner Mike Foley attended via Zoom.

2) Approval of minutes

Ms. Cornwell moved to approve the June 14 2022 minutes. Mr. Williams seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0. The May 24 minutes cannot be approved; present at that meeting were only Ms. Cornwell, Mr. Foley, and Ms. Cross, who has since resigned from the Commission.

3) Hearing, proposed bylaw revisions

Mr. Williams called the hearing to order at 6:15 p.m. He summarized the changes:

- A change in the definition of accessory dwelling unit
- An addition of “tiny houses” to the mobile home category of dwelling unit
- The prohibition of new facilities at which munitions are discharged
- Allowing the Zoning Administrator under certain circumstances to amend a permit or site plan.
- Requiring that open space subdivisions be proposed in certain delineated circumstances.

Mr. Williams noted that the revisions will next go to the Select Board for a public hearing. Those that are approved will appear on the March 2023 ballot. Ms. Cornwell reminded the commission that the ballot should ask for a vote on each item separately. There were no public comments. Mr. Williams closed the hearing. The zoning administrator will forward the proposed revisions to the Select Board.

4) Revisions to bylaw to promote housing

Mr. Williams presented a proposal to reduce the requirement for minimum frontage on a public highway in rural districts from 150' in R40 & R80 and 300' in R200 to 75'. He said this would allow housing on less land while still preserving the density requirement of minimum lot size (1 acre in R40, 2 acres in R80 and 5 acres in R200).

In discussion, Ms. Miller pointed out that the long driveways such a revision would encourage could increase forest fragmentation, by creating another interruption, in addition to the existing road, in forest cover. Mr. Foley suggested it could lead to the development of flag lots hosting expensive homes in the back country rather than additional workforce housing opportunities. He recommended that the creation of affordable home sites be encouraged by reducing road frontage requirements in the R40 and R80 zones to 75', where the new lots so created do not exceed in size the minimum for that zoning district. Mr. Williams tabled the discussion to a later date.

5) Other business

Ms. Cornwell moved to draft and sign a **letter in support of the Town's Recreational Facilities Grant application**. If approved, the application would fund drainage improvements at Howard Park that would allow the town to upgrade the Park's basketball and tennis courts. Mr. Williams seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The commission discussed **meeting schedules** going forward. Mr. Williams wants to meet twice monthly, and to focus in the near term on noise. (Ms. Stiles will try to find an old

noise ordinance Mr. Williams recollects.) Ms. Cornwell and Ms. Miller want to meet no more than once monthly, to do more work remotely, and set deadlines for project completion. Mr. Foley said he prefers the existing free-form format of PC meetings, and could not be depended upon to do homework. He wondered whether we could ask the Select Board to charge the PC with tasks. (Ms. Cornwell is on the Select Board.) It was agreed that the **PC will meet once monthly on a trial basis through Christmas**. Mr. Williams will distribute homework assignments according to each commissioner's interests and availability well ahead of each meeting. The **next meeting will be held September 27**.

Ms. Miller moved to adjourn at 7:20 p.m.