

BETHEL PLANNING COMMISSION  
**Minutes: Meeting of 08/19/15**

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Attending: Fred Dieffenbach (serving as Chair), Peter Dohrn, Carla Hodgdon, Chris Sargent (TRORC).

1. **Call to Order:** 7:00 PM.
2. **Review / Revise Agenda:** No changes to draft distributed on 08/13/15.
3. **Minutes of 07/15/15 Meeting:** Approved as distributed in draft on 07/17/15.
4. **Correspondence:** (a) Copy of letter from Bethel Historical Society to Select Board Chair Hall regarding retaining wall, South Main Street, at the juncture of VT Routes 12 & 107- file; (2) Copy, Act 250 application from Pike Industries to Natural Resources Board regarding requests for Randolph land use (office staging, cold 'pug' mill, placement of clean waste earth fill) during Route 12 paving project- file.
5. **Finish Review of Revised Chapter 3 [*Requirements for all Districts*]:** Tabled until next meeting.
6. **Review Other Available Revisions:** None available prior to meeting.
7. **Other:**
  - a) **Discussion, Chapter 4 (*Land Use*), and Guidance for Chris Sargent as this is revised:**
    - (1) Under existing 'Use Categories', gasoline station will be removed from 'Roadside Commercial'.
    - (2) Non-exempt agricultural activities will be defined and categorized as conditional use.
    - (3) An area within the Village District where there is no setback will be delineated [currently as such in the 'Village Commercial' District]. This might be described as the 'core business district'.
    - (4) Commission members will think about whether to include any height restrictions in any Districts. Carla will check with Fire Chief Aldrighetti for his perspective on this.
    - (5) Chris and Commission Members will ascertain actual setbacks in residential areas. Current zoning requires 25 feet, probably due to grandfathering when the original Ordinance was adopted. Should any existing buildings be destroyed or demolished, 25 feet in front and on sides is unreasonable for most residential lots. We will look for an existing 'average' and adjust minimum requirements accordingly... re-building outside those parameters would then go to the DRB for a Variance.
    - (6) Commission members will consider minimum criteria for the 'Hamlet Districts' including: allowable use categories, possible limits or restrictions on retail space, and language to assure the main village area is not negatively impacted.
    - (7) Commission members confirmed that minimum lot size for the 'new' Medium Density Residential Area will increase from 2 to 4 acres.

- (8) We will eliminate the 'Steep Slope' overlay. This is irrelevant, as development restrictions are spelled out in other portions of the Ordinance.
- (9) 'Floodplain' and 'river corridor' will be combined as one overlay.
- (10) Will adoption of the 'River Corridor' area preclude improvements at the Pleasant Street Trailer Park? [For example: replacing single-wide trailers with double-wide.] Chris will check evolving State guidance/clarifications. Similar questions have arisen in other towns, and he believes that flexibility is being considered for 'Village Districts'. The Pleasant Street Trailer Park does fall within the proposed Village District. He will hope to have more information at our next meeting.

**b) Town of Bethel 'Conflict of Interest' Policy:** Commission members acknowledged receipt and understanding of the policy.

**8. Next Meeting: September 16, 2015 (7:00 PM at the Bethel Town Office).**

**Agenda Items:** Review proposed revisions to Zoning Ordinance.

**9. Adjourn: 8:25 PM.**