

Sugar Hill Planning Board

August 2, 2023

Members: Arthur Chase, David Thurston, Amy Venezia, Mike Valentine, Jim Keefe

Guests: Tara Bamford (via Zoom)

Vice Chairman David Thurston called the meeting to order at 5:30PM on Wednesday, August 2, 2023. On a motion made by Jim Keefe, seconded by Arthur Chase the minutes of the July meeting were approved and accepted. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Master Plan Discussion

The Board completed Task 1 review of Zoning Ordinance with Tara. This review included discussion on accessory dwelling units, manufactured homes, two family homes, multifamily homes, flexible lot sizes and parking requirements. At the September meeting we will discuss the survey responses on housing.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

- Currently are permitted with only a few restrictions. One is allowed for each single family home meeting the minimum lot size. The ADU can be attached or detached. The maximum size is 1000 sq ft with two bedrooms and one unit must be occupied by the owner as their principal residence.
- Suggestions discussed: opportunity for special exception for a 2nd ADU where 1 is attached and 1 is in existing attached or detached accessory building (garage or barn). Restrict the use of ADU for short term rentals. Remove owner occupancy requirement. Allow detached ADUs on substandard lots if in existing accessory building. Provide some opportunities for special exceptions to add an ADU to a two-family dwelling.
- Board members present were in agreement with suggestions.

Manufactured Homes

- Currently only allowed in RR1 where the minimum lot size of 3 acres and in RR2 where the minimum lot size is 5 acres.
- Suggestions discussed: allow manufactured homes in GR where the minimum lot size is 2 acres.
- Board had mixed views on if this would be supported in town.

Two Family Homes

- Current zoning discourages two-family homes by including them in the definition of “multifamily dwelling” and requiring double the usual lot size- 4 acres in GR and 6 acres in RR1. Duplexes are not allowed at all in RR2.

- Suggestions discussed: separate two family out from multifamily into a separate use category. Multifamily is generally defined in a way consistent with the site plan review enabling statute which is 3 or more dwelling units. Allow as a permitted use in GR, RR1 and RR2. Require no more than the usual minimum lot size unless required by NHDES for onsite water and wastewater.

Multifamily Homes

- Current zoning provides the opportunity to apply for a special exception for a multifamily home in the GR and RR1 districts.
- Suggestions discussed: allow as a permitted use in GR rather than requiring a special exception. Require no more than the usual minimum lot size unless required by NHDES for onsite water and wastewater. Allow more than one per lot, but apply the minimum lot size requirements to each building, e.g. two triplexes would need 4 acres in GR and 6 acres in RR1. Reduce parking requirements to be same per unit as single family homes.

Flexible Lot Sizes

- Cluster developments are a permitted use only in the GR and RR1 zoning districts. Cluster developments have to be 5 lots or larger and each lot has to be a minimum of 1 acre. Side and rear setbacks currently need to be larger than on a traditional lot, 35 feet in a cluster vs. 25 feet on a traditional lot.
- Suggestions discussed: Allow cluster developments in RR2 as a permitted use. Allow individual lot sizes smaller than 1 acre when water and wastewater disposal is shared. Enable multiple small homes on one large lot with shared water and wastewater rather than requiring small individual lots. Reduce the setback between homes in the cluster development while requiring a buffer strip between the development and other properties. Omit the 5 lot minimum size so the landowner with a large piece of forest or agricultural land could sell one acre for a housing lot rather than needing to cut off 2, 3 or 5 acres. Offer a density bonus for smaller homes.

Parking Requirements

- The current zoning ordinance contains rigid requirements for the number of parking spaces required for each type of land use, and a parking space size of 12x18 feet which is much larger than any recommended standard.
- Suggestions discussed: move parking requirements for everything except single and two-family homes to site plan regulations and authorize the Planning Board to allow some flexibility. Reduce the typical parking space size to 9x18 with adjustments as needed for specific vehicle types or arrangement of spaces.
- The Board was in favor of suggestions.

Discussed getting word of the survey out to any and all residents. Board members encouraged to share this with everyone in town they come into contact with. Other suggestions were to possibly use the sandwich board at the town hall and adding a bold announcement in the town newsletter if one is being sent out within the next couple of weeks.

With no more business the meeting was adjourned at 6:35PM.

Submitted by:

Amy Venezia

Secretary