

Sugar Hill Planning Board

October 11, 2023

Members: Arthur Chase, David Thurston, Amy Venezia, Mike Valentine, Jim Keefe, Margo Connors, Steve Monsein, Rob Hayward

Guests: Tara Bamford (via Zoom), Nick De Mayo, Patty Robertson, Nancy Martland, Carl Martland

Chairman Rob Hayward called the meeting to order at 5:30PM on Wednesday, October 11, 2023.

Nick De Mayo requested that the Pledge of Allegiance be said before the start of the meeting. Chairman Rob Hayward stated that it is not part of the usual procedure of the Board and will not be changed tonight. Board members were polled and all were in agreement to not say the Pledge of Allegiance before Planning Board meetings.

Zoning Amendments Discussion with Tara Bamford

The Board reviewed the 2nd draft of the Zoning Amendments to increase housing opportunities. Tara noted that the edits made since the meeting last week were highlighted in yellow in the document.

Amendment #1

Would reduce the required width of a parking space from 12ft. to 9ft., provide the Planning Board some flexibility in determining the required number of parking spaces, and make the requirement for all residential uses 2 spaces per dwelling unit, except one space for accessory dwelling units.

No changes from last meeting. All in favor, no further discussion

Amendment #2

Would correct the terminology used in the Ordinance regarding Two-Family Dwellings, eliminate the need for a Two-Family Dwelling to have double the acreage of a single-family home, and eliminate the requirement for a Special Exception from the Zoning Board of Adjustment when an existing single-family home is converted to a two-family home.

No changes from last meeting. All in favor, no discussion

Amendment #3

The Zoning Ordinance currently allows the Zoning Board of Adjustment to grant a Special Exception for a multifamily dwelling in the GR or RR1 Districts. This amendment would provide the opportunity for the owner of a two-family dwelling to apply for a Special Exception to add

one accessory dwelling unit to a duplex, or to add a second accessory dwelling unit to a single family home under certain conditions.

No changes since last meeting. Margo asked if this allowed for and ADU in the primary house and one in a garage. The answer is with a special exception by the ZBA.

No further discussion, all in favor.

Amendment #4

Would make two changes to increase the opportunity to add an accessory dwelling unit. The first would remove the requirement that property with an accessory dwelling unit be owner-occupied. The second would allow lots that do not meet the current minimum lot size to locate accessory dwelling units in existing accessory buildings.

No changes to the wording since last meeting. This takes away the requirement of owner occupancy.

Lots of discussion and it was decided to move on to Amendment #6 and come back to this one.

Amendment #6

Would establish Short-Term Rentals as a Permitted Use in any Single-Family Dwelling, or in one unit in an Owner-Occupied Two-Family Dwelling or Single-Family Dwelling with Accessory Dwelling Unit, with some basic health and safety requirements and a Zoning Permit.

Long discussion about this amendment. Tara noted that the current building permit could be modified to include the zoning permit as well. It was mentioned that the Selectboard could adopt short term rental regulations. It was noted that residency of 6 months would not be enforceable. It was decided to add the language 'subject to regulations', Tara will review and decide where to place this language before the next meeting.

Long discussion on 1402A.1

The property owner must occupy either the primary dwelling unit or the accessory dwelling unit as his/her principle place of abode. A temporary leave of absence is permitted, provided the owner-occupied unit is not rented or occupied by anyone other than the property owner during such a leave of absence. Prior to the issuance of an occupancy permit, the owner shall record in The Grafton County Registry of Deeds an acknowledgement of the above owner occupancy requirement in a form satisfactory to the Selectmen, in order to put prospective buyers on notice of the prohibition against renting both units.

Board members were polled on removing 1402A.1. All in favor PASSED

Amendment #5

Would reduce the required number of homes in a Cluster Development from 5 to 3, allow the Planning Board to reduce setbacks between lots and roads created within the Cluster Development and to increase setbacks and/or require screening from abutters and other roads, and provides more guidance regarding use of the open space in a Cluster Development. Would also allow a new kind of Cluster Development with small homes on a single lot and a 25% density bonus with some restrictions.

After much discussion, the Board agreed on the reduction from 5 homes to 3 and to remove the current setbacks, noted as being greater than the setbacks required for a single lot. The Board voted to change the minimum of 20' between buildings to 50' minimum between buildings. The sentence will now read: Dwellings shall be separated by a minimum of 50 feet, measured at the nearest point of any architectural feature such as eave, deck, or bulkhead. The Board decided to remove Section 605 entirely. The Board decided to remove the paragraphs in Section 604 that discuss what can be done with common open spaces.

Amendment #4 Continued

The Board went back to Amendment #4 for further discussion. No short term rentals would be allowed in cluster developments. It was decided to remove the 25% density bonus.

Other Business

Carl Martland thanked Tara and the Board and stated he enjoyed Tara's thorough discussion. He stated that although the Board decided to remove the density bonus he would be in favor of having this.

Tara stated that at the November meeting we would be addressing the housekeeping items handout that Kayla shared with the Board at the September meeting.

With no further discussion, meeting adjourned at 7:55PM.

Submitted by:

Amy Venezia

Secretary