

**Minutes Rochester Planning Commission**  
**June 20, 2023**  
**Rochester Town Office and via Zoom**

**Present:** Chair Dan McKinley (by Zoom); Vice-Chair Sandy Haas; Maya Newroot, Recording Clerk

**Guests:** Sarah Wraight, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission; Kevin Geiger, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission

**Call to Order** Dan called the meeting to order at 6:13 (without a quorum)

**Approval of Minutes from 6/6/23 meeting:** Postponed until next meeting due to lack of quorum

**Continuing discussion of Draft Proposed Amendments to Zoning Bylaw:**

Updates will be presented at a public hearing later this summer, then submitted to Select Board for formal adoption.

Sarah Wraight, TRORC, again led the board in a review of proposed amendments, using her most recently revised draft of proposals to date and her suggestions. Sandy questioned whether an RV occupied in a driveway indefinitely could meet the proposed ADU rule. SW says no. It is temporary shelter, not ADU. Main concerns would be to do with septic. As of now, this is something to think about; action to be taken at a later date.

Revisiting previous discussion on home occupations vs home industry vs light industry:

>>Sarah proposes that PC allow 2 principal buildings per lot, to address the potential circumstance of a home and a large work building on one lot.

>>Home industries are conditional use in all districts.

Dan and Sandy are happy with definitions and language as presented in memo from SW.

Home occupation: Fine with DM & SH as presented in memo from SW.

Light Industrial:

>>Conservation-Residential District is Conditional Use right now. SH & DM propose prohibiting it in this district.

>>Current regulation prohibits outside display of stock or merchandise and no outdoor storage of equipment or supplies for light industry. This is inconsistent with home industry regulation, where outside storage is allowed with screening. DM & SH agreed to allow w/screening for both kinds of industry.

>>Double setbacks for light industry (as in Pomfret) are unnecessary with proper screening, says DM; SH concurs.

>>From Newbury's bylaws, SH agrees that 10 000 sq ft for light industrial footprint seems like a reasonable number.

**Addressing items from PC Wish List, created at start of re-write process:**

District Standards: "Clutter" and "strip development" at north and south ends of town: SW says these terms are vague and/or difficult to regulate. DM says south end of town is not an issue; concerns about north end do exist, as there is land there that could be developed. SH pointed out that this is Com-Ag, which does not allow for retail. SW confirmed that the draft has primary retail prohibited in Com-Ag zone.

General Standards:

Kevin is encouraging all towns to consider requiring permits for driveways and private roads; is this something this PC wants to consider? DM & SH think not.

access management techniques—skip

Discourage development of lands above 2,500 ft in elevation: will trigger Act 250, so PC will not address it.

Riparian buffers:

>>SH questions designation of 50' for structure-free corridor: feels that b/c of narrowness of valley, this number is too high. Would like to know what would be grandfathered, and would like to address practical concerns. DM says the 50' is a science-based measurement; maybe make allowances for small lots in the village. DM would like to leave it in and get community feedback.

>>Delete the last sentence from the first paragraph of "Riparian Buffers": "When siting commercial...will be doubled".

>>Unpaved recreation paths located at least 10 feet **from** [above—remove] top of bank.

Wetlands:

If it would be sufficient for bylaw to simply reinforce existing state regulations, SW suggests using language pulled from Pomfret's bylaw that refers applicants to state law—DM & SH like this language

Wildlife corridors: DM is hesitant to add this without community involvement and direction from state; SH agrees.

### Special Standards:

Child care facilities and group homes: Agreed to leave language as is.

Retail:

>> There are currently no retail-specific standards. DM & SH agreed to 4 000 sq ft limit, excluding storage areas (SH will check on square footage of grocery store).

>>Do not exclude drive-thrus (Credit Union);

>>agreement on not developing design standards.

>>Special standards for retail: parking in the rear is already addressed elsewhere, as are signs.

>>Lighting regulation: Kevin suggested general language to require fully shielded fixtures so that lightbulb cannot be seen unless on property; should be applied to all lighting (not just retail).

### Conditional Standards:

The renewable energy component of the statutorily-required conditional use standards: SW will pare the language down to “Development shall not have an undue adverse effect on the use of renewable energy, principally by blocking solar access to adjacent properties.” DM & SH agree with this new language.

Landscaping requirements: Need to be more specific, in terms of what kind of buffers in what kind of circumstances. Examination of Pomfret by-laws around visual impact. DM & SH like the idea of basing this rewrite on Pomfret’s visual impact standards (except fifth item)

Minimum landscaping requirements: p 51, delete a; for b & c, include “except where the minimum setback is less for the district”

Cons-Res Dist: Frontage requirements: as worded, allows for back-lot development. DM & SH agreed to leave with most recent amendments of 200’ frontage for both residential and non-residential, and no further changes.

Telecommunication facilities: town cannot regulate any networked facilities; Kevin suggests removing current 10 pages of standards entirely. SW wants to know what, exactly, the PC is trying to address. SH & DM would like to delete this section, with agreement of a quorum at next meeting.

SW notes that all this will need to be presented to full PC.

Up next: procedural provisions, and revisiting campgrounds.

Budget-wise, money is gone. SW proposes an additional \$3500, to allow her to continue working with PC until draft goes to Select Board. DM will speak with Doon about this needed funding.

**Discuss potential new planning commission members**

SH had hoped to propose candidate for seat that will soon be available, but this person is actually not available during regular meeting times/days.

**Adjourn:** 8:19 pm

Next meeting on July 3, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Maya Newroot

Recording Clerk