

Springfield Trails, Greenways, Byways and Rural Economy Advisory
Committee

Meeting, March 27th, 2018

The meeting came to order at 7:03.

Present were George McNaughton (presiding), Randy Gray, Hallie Whitcomb, Bettina McCrady and Chuck Gregory. Public attending included Walter Wallace.

Minutes of the meeting of the meeting of February 27th were approved as submitted. (Whitcomb/Gray)

Report and Map to the Planning Commission and Selectboard regarding the Mineral Street walkway and pocket park. George McNaughton said he had found out that two parcels adjacent to the proposed site are owned respectively by Lovejoy Tool and the Springfield Housing Authority. He asked the group whether those two should be contacted about having those parcels included in the park. Hallie Whitcomb said she would be willing to chat with the president of Lovejoy. George wondered whether that would constitute a formal communication. Bettina McCrady said it ought not be. It was the consensus of the group to approach it informally, to leave it out of the Call for Action. Chuck Gregory reported that he broached to the Park/Union Street Association the idea of establishing a neighborhood pocket park on Mineral Street, and that it will revisit the proposal at the April meeting. Walter Wallace presented a short video of the rail line from the Connecticut River to the car barn formerly located on Mineral Street. George asked him to send him a copy of the 1920's map shown. Walter assented. Bettina asked George if he'd held conversations with the town manager. George said there has been some, but nothing substantial at this time.

Master Maps review: Randy Gray said he hoped to get agreement on the trails, and that most are now on the map, but there is a question as to the Park Street-Mineral Street path behind the state office building. George suggested making sub-maps after the master map is completed. Bettina

provided historical information about previous attempts to secure funding and draw up maps of trails around 1990. She suggested possible locations for existing copies of that application, which were for a route to North Springfield. She will call Amy Bell; George will contact the Regional Planning Commission.

Zoning by-laws and regulations amendments: George presented the town zoning by-laws and regulations which require amendments to allow for development and enhancement of present and potential walking/biking/ other trails (see addenda below, Section 4.19 and Table 2.16). He said they are “sprinkled throughout the town plan.” He explained the necessary amendments he had written into the document. Bettina asked if state regulations supersede town regulations. George replied that the town can push back on such issues. Walter Wallace invited the members to attend next Wednesday’s Planning Commission meeting’s review of Section 4. Moved to present the suggested amendments in Section 4.19 and Table 2.16 to the Planning Commission (McCrary/Gray). Passed.

Urban Forest Strategic Management Plan— Bettina McCrary

Basin Letter— George said the Basin Study will be put on the next month’s agenda.

Community Garden— George reported that Union/Park Association is working with Union Street School’s garden project and that Freedom Park and Wall Street neighborhood associations are both talking about having community gardens. Walter Wallace told of participating in a meeting about Union/Park Association and Union Street school’s plans. The school will create a vegetable and fruit garden and the association will do a flower garden.

Hemp Production— George reported that hemp production is not permitted without heavy regulation. Hallie asked what the problem is with hemp. George replied the problem is the classification of hemp

under Federal law. Randy Gray said he will report on the existing laws and rules at the next meeting.

New Business— Hallie asked about whether there had ever been any plans about having a biking trail on the east side of the Black River. George said that in the previous attempt on the west side, there was only one landowner holding out. Bettina said she remembered three holdouts. Bettina said one of the intentions for the trail to the Springfield dam was to connect Weathersfield bikers and walkers with Springfield. George said he will see if he can print out the study done on the Springfield-Springfield Dam trail and provide it to all.

Next Month's agenda:

Bettina to talk to Tom Kennedy to see what else the Regional Development Commission might have on bike trail creation activity
Bettina to report on the 1990 application.
Union/Park and Union Street School report
Randy to report on the laws and regulations regarding hemp.
Bettina to report on her talks with Montpelier and Tom Yenerell

The meeting adjourned at 8:38. (McCrary/Whitcomb)

Respectfully submitted,

chuck gregory, secretary

Addenda:

Section 4.19 Streams and Surface Waters

(A) Streams & Water Courses. No structure shall be placed, and no land shall be excavated, filled or graded in any zoning district within a distance of 25 feet measured horizontally from the following surface

waters except with approval of the Development Review Board, subject to review under Article 5:

1. top of slope, where the channel runs adjacent to a valley wall or high terrace, or top of the normal bank, where the channel has access to its floodplain, of any stream or watercourse shown on town plan maps; or
2. the delineated boundary of a Class 3 wetland, as shown on the Natural Resource map in the Springfield Town Plan and as defined under the Vermont Wetland Rules.

For purposes of this section this rule shall not apply to Town approved multi-use or pedestrian trails, paths, or walkways.

Class 1 and 2 wetlands shall be regulated by the Vermont Wetland Rules. Land within the Riverfront Protection Overlay District must also comply with the provisions of that district (see Table 2.16).

(B) General Standards. It is the objective of this Section to promote the establishment and protection of heavily vegetated areas of native or historically common non-invasive vegetation and trees along the Town's waterbodies to reduce the impact of stormwater runoff, prevent soil erosion, protect wildlife and fish habitat, and maintain water quality

1. Except as provided in Subsection (2) below, all lands within a riparian buffer shall be left in an undisturbed, vegetated condition.
2. Removal of dead trees or trees of immediate threat to human safety as well as reasonable pruning of existing trees and the planting of trees or pollinator habitat according to an approved plan is permitted.
3. The creation of new lawn areas within riparian buffers is not permitted. Property owners already encroaching on the riparian buffer are encouraged to return mowed areas to their naturally vegetated state. Supplemental planting with appropriate native or historically common non-invasive vegetation to restore and enhance the effective filtering and bank stabilization functions of a riparian buffer is encouraged.
4. Any areas within a riparian buffer that are not vegetated or that are disturbed during construction shall be seeded with a naturalized mix of grasses rather than standard lawn grass, unless such would not be in accordance with a proposed and approved beautification project.

(C) Buffer Management. The Board may require for review and approval, in addition to other required application materials, the submission of a buffer management plan describing the long-term

management of land within required setback areas to protect surface water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and stormwater management systems. It is understood that buffer management shall also take into consideration that the Town places a high value on the human enjoyment of and ability to view, access, and utilize its river fronts and the lands along the same.

(D) Development Review Board Determination. Prior to granting such approval, the Board shall find that the proposed construction, earth excavation, filling or grading, will not contribute to any impeded drainage, flood hazard, erosion silting, or other substantial adverse effect on natural conditions, or on fish or wildlife habitat, nor interfere with the present or planned storm water drainage system of the town.

(E) Modification of Setback Standards. The Development Review Board may approve modification to the setback standards set forth in subsection (A) in accordance with Article 5, and after a determination that the proposed modification meets the following standards:

1. The proposed development is in the CB District. No buffer is required for properties that are already developed in this district; or
2. the proposed development is located within the RC, HDR, GB, IND, IND/C, or E7 Districts and is a redevelopment project or located on a site of a size and shape that does not allow for the full buffer requirement or is part of a Town approved multi-use or pedestrian trail, path or walkway; and
2. measures are undertaken to protect water quality, such as, but not limited to, the planting of shade trees adjacent to stream banks, establishing vegetated buffer areas along stream banks and within a minimum of 15 feet from the top of the bank (exempt in CB district), minimizing the use of impervious surfaces (paving and other development except with regard to Town approved multi-use trails or paths), and/or implementing stormwater management provisions to collect and disperse stormwater away from the stream or river; or
3. The project is part of a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) approved by the EPA or the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

(F) Exemptions from Buffer Requirements. Required setback areas are to be maintained in a vegetated, undisturbed state, unless otherwise permitted by the Development Review Board as part of an approved

buffer management plan, Town approved multi-use trail or path, or Town approved buffer beautification plan. The following structures or uses may also be allowed, subject to approval by the Development Review Board, within setback areas required under this Section:

1. road, multi-use paths and trails, driveway and utility crossings,
2. bank stabilization and restoration projects, in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations, or town approved buffer beautification projects and rain gardens.
3. stormwater management and flood control facilities, in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations,
4. structures specifically intended to provide access to or view of surface waters and wetlands (such as docks, boardwalks, multi-use paths or trails or boat launches).

(G) Wetlands. The application for a proposed project which may impact a Class 1 or 2 wetland, a designated floodplain area, or would impound or alter a stream watercourse, shall be referred to the Agency of Natural Resources, prior to review and approval by the Development Review Board in accordance with Article 5. Notice for proposed watercourse alterations or relocations also shall be given to adjacent, up and downstream communities.

Table 2.16 RPD Riverfront Protection Overlay District

(A) Location: The RPD shall include all land located between the edges of the Connecticut and Black Rivers and the nearest 400 foot elevation contour up to Goulds Mills Falls on the Black River.

(B) Dimensional Requirements. Dimensional requirements shall conform to those specified in the underlying districts.

(C) Permitted and Conditional Uses. Permitted and Conditional Uses shall conform to those specified in the underlying districts.

(D) Special Provisions. The following special provisions shall apply to all new construction and reconstruction started after the adoption of these Bylaws.

1. For purposes of computing lot area, the area between the water's edge and the top of the bank shall not be included.

2. No structure shall be placed, and no land shall be excavated, filled or graded between the water's edge and within a distance of 25 feet measured horizontally from the top of the bank. Vegetation shall not be removed, and ground cover of indigenous species shall be introduced to cover bare spots. Walkways and paths shall be discouraged. Each lot may have one stairway leading to the water's edge, and one dock, if desired, and if in accordance with all applicable State and Federal regulations. This provision shall not apply to Town approved multi-use or pedestrian trails or paths.

3. Between the top of the bank and a line seventy-five (75) feet horizontally from the top of the bank, construction shall be prohibited. This provision shall not apply to Town approved multi-use or pedestrian trails or paths. Approval by the Zoning Administrator is required prior to selective pruning or removal of trees to enhance views or to protect the riverbank from further erosion. This shall not be construed to prohibit the planting of trees or pollinator habitats in accordance with a Town approved beautification plan.

4. Septic systems shall be separated from the top of the riverbank by the minimum separation distance from watercourses as set forth in the Vermont State Health regulations.

5. For proposed developments for which Site Plan Review is required by these Bylaws, the Development Review Board shall consider tree removal and other aesthetic aspects of the development project as part of its site plan review.

(E) Input from Conservation Commission. If the Town of Springfield chooses to create a Conservation Commission in accordance with 24 V.S.A., Section 4501, the Planning Commission may request that the Conservation Commission review proposed development in the RPD District. The Commission may also request the Springfield Trails, Greenways, Byways and Rural Economic Advisory Committee to review the proposed development.