**Mendon Planning Commission Minutes (Draft)**

**March 11, 2024**

**Present:** Fred Bagley**,** Justin Lindholm (by phone), Dick Howe, Lisa Swett and Teri Corsones were present via a GoToMeeting link . Zoning Administrator Steve Ellerin was also present via the link. Carol Gates was also present via the link as an observer.

**Econolodge:** Steve reported thathe and Fredhad plannedto meet at theEconolodge on Route 4 that afternoon with the new owner and state officials who were to inspect recent improvements made to the property. Prior to the meeting, however, the meeting was re-scheduled to a later date.

Steve advised that Econolodge ceased operations approximately ten years ago. Members discussed whether whatever permit Econolodge had when it ceased operations was still in effect, or whether a new permit is required after such a long period of inactivity. Steve will research the zoning files to see what use had been permitted, and when. He will inquire during the re-scheduled meeting at the site as to what use is planned. Teri will research whether a new permit is required, or whether a change of use permit or conditional use permit may be required depending on what use is planned.

Members noted that under the Mendon Zoning Regulations hotels are a permitted use in the Commercial District after site plan review, but no unit of a hotel, motel or lodge may be occupied as a residence except by the owner or operator. The new owner apparently operated the Cortina Inn in Rutland Town during a period when a number of alarming public health and public safety issues were reported in the media. The issues were reported to be associated with persons occupying the property as a residence through the state hotel voucher program. Steve will report back after the re-scheduled meeting and more details are known about the new owner’s plans. The new owner has not submitted any applications to the Mendon Planning Commission or to the Mendon Zoning Board of Adjustment regarding the property as of this date.

**Zoning Regulations Update**: Logan Solomon from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission attended the meeting via the GoToMeeting link. Members asked whether Logan knew whether a new permit is required once a business ceases operation for many years, or whether a new owner can proceed under the old permit. Logan indicated that he would be surprised if the original permit would be valid after many years of inactivity but he offered to check.

Logan reviewed the first two Articles of the Zoning Regulations in detail. He suggested minor word changes in red on a pdf version of the regulations and asked if a copy of the regulations was available in Word. Steve will provide a copy in Word. Logan will then forward a copy of his suggested revisions for members’ review.

One suggested change in Article 1, Section 104 has to do with whether local regulations can ever be more restrictive than state regulations. Examples of when local building codes might be more restrictive than state minimum standards were cited. Logan will check. Another question concerned what regulations apply if a property is located in more than one district and restrictions vary between the districts. Logan will provide examples of how other towns treat that situation.

Logan will also inquire regarding the Official Zoning Map and how we might update the map to provide more detail regarding boundaries between zoning districts. The date of the Official Zoning Map should be specified.

Teri reported that an application for a subdivision permit has been submitted that will be noticed for the April 1 MPC meeting at 5:30 pm. Logan indicated that he has another commitment that evening, but he will provide feedback regarding the questions raised above for members’ review on April 1. Members are asked to review Article III during the April 1 meeting after the noticed hearing, to provide specific questions for Logan to address at the May 6, 2024 MPC meeting

The next regular meeting of the Mendon Planning Commission is scheduled for Monday, April 1, 2024 at 5:15 p.m. All town body meetings, including MPC meetings, are to be held remotely until further notice.

 Respectfully submitted,

 Teri Corsones