

Mendon Planning Commission Minutes
January 6, 2025

Present: Justin Lindholm, Fred Bagley, Dick Howe and Teri Corsones were present in person. Sarah Buxton and Dennis O’Connell participated via the GoToMeeting platform. Acting Zoning Administrator Greg Smith was also present in person. The draft December 2, 2024 minutes were approved with no changes.

Sachdev Update: Neither Anil Sachdev nor his attorney Frank Urso were present to provide updated information. Present in person were Cindy Bergstrom, Mark Bergstrom and Brian Gates.

At the November 13, 2024 MPC meeting Mr. Sachdev had indicated that he had an extension until December 13, 2024 to resolve the safety deficiencies identified in the Agency of Natural Resources sanitation letter detailed in prior minutes. He was to report on the status of the deficiencies at the December 2 MPC meeting. He did not attend the December 2 MPC meeting and the matter was continued until the January 6 MPC meeting. Given his absence at the January 6 MPC meeting, the matter will be continued again until the February 3 MPC meeting.

Maine Drilling & Blasting Storage Inquiry: Brian “Guy” Keefe works for Maine Drilling & Blasting, Inc., a Maine company that was founded in 1966 that operates throughout the country, including in Vermont. MD&B works with Casella Construction, Inc. (CCI) on different projects that involve blasting. The company would like to store blasting materials at the Casella property sand quarry site at 25 Industrial Lane off of Route 4 in Mendon. Mr. Keefe explained that there are state and federal regulations that govern the storage of blasting materials, through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Vermont Department of Public Safety. A Federal Explosives License/Permit is required for the storage of blasting materials. As part of the license process Mr. Keefe would like to apply for and obtain whatever local permit might be needed for the storage activity.

The Casella property is located in the Commercial Zoning District. Section 304(e)(4) of the Mendon Zoning Regulations identifies sand or gravel pits as a conditional use requiring Zoning Board of Adjustment approval. Section 611

governs sand and gravel pits. Section 611(9) provides that no excavation, blasting or stockpiling of materials shall be located within 200 feet of any street or property line. Section 601 governs accessory structures in general.

Mr. Keefe provided a letter dated January 6, 2025 from Kyle Cornell, a Senior Project Manager at CCI, in support of the request to store blasting materials at the Casella property. Mr. Keefe explained that blasting materials are stored in federally approved metal plate structures called magazines. Magazines must be certified and regularly inspected. Mr. Keefe also provided an aerial photo of the Casella property depicting the proposed location of the magazines, photos of two sample magazines, and a copy of a Federal Explosives License/Permit issued to MD&B with an expiration date of February 1, 2027. The purpose of storing the materials at Casella is to minimize the distance needed to transport materials to different project sites in central Vermont. The location of storage magazines is governed by tables of distances that ATF requires in its regulations. MD&B would like to locate 2 – 3 magazines at the site. Mr. Keefe explained that blasting materials are separately stored from blasting agents and blasting caps. Security measures currently in place at the Casella property were discussed and will need to be clarified at any noticed hearing.

Members discussed whether site plan approval through the Mendon Planning Commission or conditional use approval through the Zoning Board of Adjustment would apply. Teri will confer with the Chair of the Zoning Board of Adjustment; if both bodies have jurisdiction it would be possible to schedule a concurrent hearing. Otherwise, a hearing before the Mendon Planning Commission could be scheduled for the next MPC meeting on February 3 if permit materials are timely submitted given notice requirements. Hearings before the Zoning Board of Adjustment are scheduled as needed, taking into consideration the same notice requirements. Mr. Keefe will be promptly notified of which body has jurisdiction so that he can proceed accordingly.

Acting Zoning Administrator Update: Acting ZA Greg Smith provided an update on the pending matters he is overseeing and inquiries to which he has responded. He discussed several topics with members, including the timing to apply for a subdivision permit if a person wishes to construct a second structure on a property. Greg also confirmed that the camper has been removed from the Econolodge property and that debris was removed from the property on Route 4 where there has been considerable debris in the past.

Zoning Regulations Update: Fred Bagley reported on the latest work of the subcommittee that is working with the RRPC consultant on the zoning update. He provided a draft map consolidating the 13 current zoning districts and the Ridgeline Overlay District into 7 proposed zoning districts. The 7 proposed districts include: Government Lands; Protected Lands (all areas in the Ridgeline Overlay District but not part of Government Lands as well as the Conservation II District and lands with 2000'+ elevation); Residential I (Robinwood Residential but not in the Ridgeline Overlay District) Residential II (combining the current Residential II and Residential III Districts but not in the Ridgeline Overlay District); Village (same as the current Village District but not in the Ridgeline Overlay District); Commercial (same as the current Commercial District but not in the Ridgeline Overlay District); and Rural (all remaining lands – largely the current Wheelerville District but not in the Ridgeline Overlay District).

The new districts are based on topography and terrain versus location within the Town. Once the new district locations are finalized, the focus will return to the language of the regulations where further clarification would be helpful including but not limited to short-term rentals, abandoned properties and appeals. The subcommittee and the RRPC consultant are reviewing the regulations of towns of similar size for sample language. The plan is to have a draft for public review and input before a Town Vote in March 2026.

The next meeting of the Mendon Planning Commission is scheduled for Monday, February 3, 2025 at 5:15 p.m. at the Mendon Town Office with a remote GoToMeeting option.

Respectfully submitted,

Teri Corsones