

Conway Planning Board
Thursday, September 1, 2022
via Zoom

Meeting convened at 7:04 p.m.

Members present: Chair Beth Girshman, Jennifer Mullins, Susan Fentin, William Moebius and George Forcier.

Absent: Associate member Joe Strzegowski

Public in attendance: none

Administration: August 8 minutes approved: Forcier moves, Moebius seconds; Girshman yes; Mullins, Fentin abstain.

The planned Sept. 15 meeting was canceled, but there will be meetings on Oct. 6 and 20.

Common Driveways: After some discussion about the merits of reviewing and possibly revising common driveway provisions in the zoning bylaw, the board decided it was not necessary at this time. If a resident felt strongly about possible revisions, the board could guide that person in the process of putting a proposal before town meeting.

Chair Girshman noted town council indicated the common driveway bylaw like ours was necessary town regulation.

The chair also looked at samples of other towns' bylaws and made copies available to the board. Most of the sample towns require special permits for driveways that serve more than one home. Requirements of some are more rigorous than ours.

The issue was raised at the last meeting by Roaring Brook Road landowner Michael Kurkulonis, who wants to create more lots off his current driveway but would need to upgrade his driveway if he adds any more lots. He had argued the more rigorous rules for a driveway serving 3 or more lots is unreasonable.

Fentin asked whether a subdivision bylaw would resolve the driveway complaint, but Girshman noted the town doesn't allow subdivisions, which was a conscious decision in the past by Conway to control large-scale residential development. But she's not sure it is working as intended and noted the board at some point could look at the broader question of residential development. Kurkulonis had argued that back-lot development has been discouraged because of the cost of common driveways for three or more lots.

Girshman wondered whether sensitive growth control would be achieved by something like cluster zoning or "natural resource zoning" so "everything isn't house lot after house lot."

Current zoning requires 200 feet of frontage and one acre for a house lot or four acres for a back lot that shares a driveway. Two homes can share a standard driveway, but after that the bylaw requires a more robust driveway.

No board member has heard complaints about common driveway rules, except from Kurkulonis. Fentin noted that he could propose changes at town meeting, which the board would comment on and work with him on.

Girshman will report the board's decision to Kurkulonis and explain he could develop a proposal through a town meeting petition.

Wireless telecom: Chris Waldo, who works in the telecom field, and Girshman plan to compare Conway's existing cell tower bylaw to other towns like Sturbridge and Provincetown that have relatively newer rules. Waldo has some ideas for change. They may have something for the board to review Oct. 6. Possible revisions might be ready to present to the annual town meeting next spring.

River Overlay District: The board hasn't heard from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments planners about help creating a river corridor overlay. We can't do much without their expertise, Girshman noted. She will reach out to the COG.

Cannabis bylaw revision: The town's only licensed pot farm, Roaring Glen Farms, required a Planning Board waiver when it change the membership of its craft cooperative. Now, the board is considering whether it should revise the Cannabis bylaw to account for such coop membership changes, which weren't adequately accounted for in the current bylaw.

At present, changes in ownership of a pot farm, including those run by craft cooperatives, requires issuance of a new Planning Board special permit.

Fentin raised the possibility of excepting coops from the ownership change rule, since issuing the waiver established a precedent. She said changing the form of ownership, from a coop to a corporation, for example, should trigger the need for a new permit.

The discussion led to board members wondering about the status of Roaring Glen Farms. Girshman will ask for an update.

New Business: Girshman noted that Town Administrator Véronique Blanchard may propose that Planning Board members get paid a stipend, since many other town volunteer board members get stipends.

Adjourned at 8:15. Fentin moved; Moebius seconded. Forcier, Girshman, Mullins, yes