Town of Stoddard

**PLANNING BOARD**

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY PLANNING ORDINANCE**

March 19, 2024

Town Hall – 7:00 PM

**MINUTES**

**Pledge of Allegiance –** Bob Maden started the meeting at 7 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance

**Roll call**:

**Present** – Bob Maden – Chair, Jason Kovarik – Vice Chair, Terri LaRoche – Selectmen Representative, Rex Rodanas – Member, and Harry Power – Alternate (moved to board to replace absent member)

**Excused** – Vickie Williams – Member/Secretary

**PublicAttendance:** Joe Traniello, Marc Belland

Bob Maden explained the intent of the Public Hearing is to review proposed changes to three sections of the Community Planning Ordinances. He outlined that each would be reviewed and public comment or questions are welcomed. He also noted that changes can be made, minor or clarifying changes could move forward but any major changes will require an additional public hearing.

**Article III:3:E Accessory Dwelling Units**

Bob outlined that the changes 1) add that the provision included an ADU in New Construction, 2)clarifies that the 1000 Square Foot maximum for an ADU is “living area”, and 3) that the notice of occupancy would be required to be provided in writing to the ZBA. He opened it up for comments and questions.

Terri indicated that the changes are more to provide clarity to residents as this situation arose and Legal had advised that although it wasn’t clear, the current CPO does in fact apply to both conversions and new builds. Bob Confirmed.

Bob shared “mocked up” draft that showed the exact changes. A question was posed on if the maximum is 1000 square feet, is there a minimum. Harry indicated it can’t be under 750 Square Feet by State Law. It was then questioned if we need to indicate minimum. Jason and Bob reviewed and read the current law out loud, it indicates if a minimum is set it can not be less than 750 Square Feet. We do not have a minimum set, no changes are needed.

Harry motioned to move the Article forward to Town voting as written, seconded by Jason. Motion passed unanimously.

**Article VI Non Conforming Lots**

Bob explained the changes are primarily “clean up” to remove the seven “sub items” below item number one as those items are repetitive and covered under building permits, and to remove the references to requiring contiguous non conforming lots owned by the same owner to be merged. The language requiring the lot mergers is old, and the State prohibits this requirement. He shared a draft that clearly showed the proposed changes and opened it up for comments and questions.

There was minor discussion regarding taxes and that merging would be better for an owner for privacy, it was clarified we are only removing the language indicating it is a requirement, people can still voluntarily merge their lots if they choose to do so.

Terri made a motion to move forward with the proposed Article changes as written, Jason seconded. Motion Passed unanimously.

**Article XIV:V Signs Permitted as Special Exceptions**

Bob explained this is a very minor change to the section on signs permitted by special exception. Currently Exceptions can be granted by the ZBA in the rural district, and the language is being changed to indicate in “any District”. Terri shared a draft that shows the exact change, and Bob opened it up for comments and questions.

There were minor questions on this regarding exceptions, and it was clarified that as of right now no one can grant exceptions outside of the Rural District (neither the ZBA or Select Board). It was noted that elsewhere there is language that allows the Town to have exceptions for “required signs” such as at the Dump.

Jason made a motion to move forward with the proposed Article changes as written, Harry seconded. Motion Passed unanimously.

Terri made a motion to close the public session and adjourn, seconded by Jason. Bob thanked the public for their attendance and the meeting was adjourned at 7:28 PM.