

TOWN OF TAGHKANIC
ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
January 6, 2020

Members present: Joyce Thompson, Chair; Linda Swartz, Co-Chair and Secretary; Members: Al Huehnel, John Roberts, Donn Critchell, Kathy Bainer, Moisha Blechman, Elizabeth O'Donnell (via video conference, joined meeting at 5:00)

Excused: ZC Consultant Ted Fink

The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m. by Joyce Thompson.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to accept the Minutes of the November 18, 2019 meeting, as presented, was made by Donn Critchell, and seconded by John Roberts.

Ayes: 5 (*Critchell, Roberts, Huehnel, Bainer, Blechman*) **Nays:** 0 **Abstained:** 0

Drop Box:

Files have recently been deleted from Drop Box. Ted advised Joyce that he re-deposited the current working copy of the draft zoning into Drop Box this afternoon. Note: The document in Drop Box does not contain updates as discussed during this final review; this is our "working copy".

Short-term Rentals:

Ted has been busy researching short-term rentals, including how other towns are handling this use and legal challenges that have been filed or decided. Ted assured Joyce that he will provide us with a summary of the issues and a list of the pros and cons at our next meeting. In the meantime, Joyce will be looking at Hillsdale's short-term rental law and will try to come up with some language for our zoning code so we can continue to move it forward. In response to a question from Susan Raymond, Joyce explained how the local law process serves to amend the zoning.

Ridgelines:

Moisha said that addressing ridgelines should not be difficult. She referred to Q&A sheet provided at the December workshop pointed to the Salisbury model, which she feels is "very good". Ted told Joyce that zoning for ridgeline development is at least a 6-month process. The difficulties associated with regulating ridgelines was discussed at the November 18, 2019 meeting. Joyce recommends that we carefully check the draft code sections noted at that meeting and make sure they are as tight as possible, no loopholes. This will give us time to properly address ridgelines.

As an aside, Joyce said that the town needs to do a new five-year plan for financial planning. Issues to be considered include: What are the goals? What would we like to do (projects)? Is a new town hall a priority? How important is development of the business district? What would the residents like to see? The Town Board may want to hold a public Saturday workshop-type meeting to get ideas and feedback. This will give the Town Board some guidance for planning and jump start a committee to review the Comprehensive Plan. Kathy suggested that when reviewing the Comprehensive Plan thought should be given to what parts of agriculture are acceptable and what is not.

Affordable Housing:

The ZC had a very long discussion about Section 60-Q. Affordable Housing. Linda had done a brief review of this section and found a few areas which may need to be addressed for clarification:

- 60-Q.1.a and b. both seem to apply only to Accessory Dwelling Units in existing structures. Need a regulation for Accessory Dwelling Units in new construction or not allowed to build new for this use?
- 60-Q.4.b. is not in conformance with Bulk Regs (Section 50).
- The ZC had considered a requirement for double lot size for accessory dwellings, however, this would limit the ability of lower income families to establish affordable housing for family members or for rental income.

Moisha cited an entry in **Section 90-E.1.**, letter (d) within the boxed area, which sounds like we are endorsing the use of pesticides. She recommends, and the ZC agrees, that that sentence be deleted.

Elizabeth recommends that short-term rentals and ridgelines be treated like urgent business, requiring a high level of attention. She reminded the ZC that there is a third urgent issue that Moisha has kept front and center, and that is climate change. Taghkanic has natural resources that are combatting climate change and helping to mitigate heat and maintain water resources. Elizabeth would like to see a policy statement in the zoning code. (Such statements can be found in Section 10-C. Purposes.) Perhaps this is another topic for the CAC to look into and maybe a committee could look at what other towns and government entities are doing.

Prior to this meeting, Donn had sent out an email in regards to growing crops under solar panels (Agrivoltaics), which increases energy production up to 7% due to the cooling effect from transpired water from the plants, uses less water, and provides food. Also, farmers can run tractors under the solar panels.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the ZC is scheduled for Monday, January 20, 2020. THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 4:00.

- ZC Members are instructed to review Section 60-Q. Affordable Housing, checking for clarity, conflicts, and how well it addresses affordable housing. ***Be sure this section does not leave a loophole that allows for short-term rentals.*** (NOTE: At the December 16, 2019 meeting, the following sentence was added to Section 60-Q.1.: "Rental of an accessory dwelling unit must be a minimum of not less than 30 days.")
- Ted will bring information on Short-Term Rentals. The ZC will come to a decision as to how we will treat STRs in this code or as a local law so that we can continue to move forward to complete the draft zoning code.

Motion to adjourn: Al Huehnel

Seconded by: Donn Critchell

Ayes: 5 (Huehnel, Critchell, Blechman, Bainer, Roberts)

Nays: 0

Abstained: 0

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Public Audience: Susan Raymond

Minutes Prepared by: Linda Swartz