

Woodstock Planning and Zoning Regulation Review Subcommittee Minutes

Thursday, March 3, 2011 Lower Level, Woodstock Town Hall 7:30 PM

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM
2. Roll Call: J. Anastasi; T. Sirrine; G. Dickinson; D. Fortin; S. Blodget; J. Adiletta, D. Durst, Staff: D. Fey, Planner Excused absences: J. Gordon, D. Young, F. Rich, K. Goldsmith
3. Minutes for February 3, 2011 were approved (J. Adiletta / G. Dickinson). Motion carries.
4. Citizen's comments

G. Leslie Sweetnam, 321 Rocky Hill Rd, stated his interest in the rural life and concern for light pollution. He used to see the lights from his former neighbor more than 200 feet away. He is concerned the light regulations will allow for exceptions that will permit light pollution.

Earl Brazeal, 518 Rte 169, submitted 2 documents, including a letter he wrote dated February 25, 2011 and a draft comparing the current draft lighting regulations prepared by the Town Planner to be considered by the PZC Subcommittee and a DRAFT he prepared based on the Model Lighting Ordinance. The Model Lighting Ordinance (MLO) was written by the International Dark Skies Association and the Illuminating Engineering Society over the past 7 years. The MLO incorporates specific metrics for maximum outdoor lighting intensity, measured in lumens and has a rating method with additional controls to limit Back-light and side Glare (BUG rating).

For example, in his DRAFT, Non-residential lighting section, page 2, the total site lumen limit is 700 lumens per parking space. If the parking lot had 6 parking spaces this would be a limit of 4,200 lumens. This could be two fixtures of 2,100 lumens each or some other combination not exceeding the maximum. The fixtures must meet the fully shielded design specifications with the full cut-off and glare prevention measures. In comparison, incandescent lamps, 10 lumens / watt, each fixture would be 210 watts, the parking lot in this example would be allowed 2 lamps equaling the same maximum number of lumens. Other lamp types could be used when taking into account the lumen output. He and his fellow citizens strongly urge the PZC to consider the second (his) draft as the model lighting ordinance for the Town. Mr. Brazeal shows the packaging for two different kinds of lights with the lumen rating on the side.

Beverly Brazeal, 518 Rte 169 strongly urges the adoption of the zone 0 and 1 guidelines from the Model Lighting Ordinance into the Town regulations. Existing lighting can be grandfathered and new lighting that comes before the board can follow these regulations.

Dan Atwood, 479 Rte 169, has not reviewed the draft regulations but is intrigued. He urges PZC to keep town's character in mind when considering these, particularly that of the Historic District. He mentioned the importance of athletics for young people but does not feel they require exterior/night lighting.

MaryLou Davis, 517 Rte 169, respectfully requests any letters submitted by the public in reference to this subject be submitted into the record.

D. Fortin, Chairman, states the receipt of letters in support of the in support of Mr. Brazeal's draft proposed regulation from Thomas & Linda Chase, 508 Rte 169; Judith & Robert Gries, 466 Rte 169; and Alexandra & Bruce Lyman, 231 Rte 169. Marylou Davis stated other letters were submitted and requests that they be entered into the record. [Letters from MaryLou Davis, 517 Rte 169; Stephen Gottlieb, 517 Rte 169; John Leavitt and Rebecca Leavitt were received on March 7, 2011; these were provided to PZC Subcommittee upon receipt.]

G. Dickinson clarified for the record that the expansion of the Bentley fields special permit, specifically prohibited outdoor lighting and in order for them to put up outdoor lighting regardless of any ordinances or regulation that is created since then they have to come back to PZC for a modification of the special permit which requires a public hearing.

5. Discussion Article VI, DRAFT Zoning Regulations on the following topics: MOTION to add item 5.F below re: overview of spreadsheet on Scenic Roads (S. Blodgett/J. Adiletta) all in favor, motion carries.

a. Lighting

It is requested that Mr. Brazeal explain his background relevant to lighting: He is a retired electrical engineer and has 2 degrees from UCONN. He has previously owned his own business where he created LED lights for scanning documents at high speed and was involved in developing the technology for fiber optic light systems. He has a working knowledge of how lighting works and how it is measured and controlled.

G. Dickinson states the purpose should be to regulate light to have public safety at same time as minimizing off-site impacts of lighting.

Clarification was requested on 'mounting height': is it a minimum setback for the light fixture from the boundary line or is it the height at which the light fixture is mounted on the support structure. Also, the regulation could be written so that the closer to the boundary line would only allow a lamp with lesser lumen rating. Some concerns involve how this could be incorporated in areas where there is interest in mixed-use zones because lighting would still need to provide a safe level for the businesses. G. Dickinson is interested in having feedback on this from our engineer. Mr. Brazeal states that residential lighting could have different standards than for businesses.

Other topics discussed included curfew for lighting, lighting permits, tying the light zone or limits to PA490 properties, putting LZ-0 regulations onto town owned land such as at Pond Factory or on the 50 acre wood, lighting on town and state roads, etc.. Discussion ensued on the proposed

lighting zones and the process required to establish these within the Zoning Regulations which would be in addition to land use zones. The consensus was that having 2 different kinds of zones would be too confusing. Woodstock would all be in the same rural low-density light zone or district thus we would not need to differentiate it as a light zone from the land use zones. The desired standards can be incorporated into the regulations. The Last Green Valley Institute has some downloadable publications on various topics such as lighting that can also be reviewed. There are several Public Acts which relate to street lights: 01-234, 03-210 and 06-86. Most of the light pollution in town comes from signs which can be addressed through revision to the sign regulations.

Staff questions:

Below table C, the following statement is unclear: "...the property line may be considered to be 5 feet beyond the actual property line for purpose of determining compliance..." – How can the property line not be the property line? It was stated that this may be an allowance for light to spillover from lighting on walkways that are nearby boundary lines only.

Residential Lighting, Open flame gas lamps: No one could define them. It was stated that if they are not used in Woodstock, it should not be included in the text. Not sure how standards on residential lighting would be enforced.

Mr. Brazeal will make corrections and resubmit it.

MOTION to table discussion on proposed lighting regulations until the April 7, 2011 Subcommittee meeting (G. Dickinson / J. Anastasi) all in favor, motion carries.

b. Landscaping

Consensus was to change the title of the section to "Site Design" because there were several topics related to the design of a specially permitted land use such as parking, landscaping, lighting, signage, and more. We had called it 'Town Wide' before. These regulations do not apply to the Subdivision Regulations as they have their own standards pertaining to the same issues.

Several changes were agreed to regarding clarity not conceptual changes. Discussion ensued on how to regulate or protect 'notable stones'. Fey asked if this is really more about historic landmarks such as the Pulpit Rock or significant geological features. It was stated these will be noted on the site plan like notably large trees but that doesn't mean the stone is significant enough warranting protection. Durst stated she had a definition which she will provide. A debate occurred about whether properties should be left in their natural state or if gardens were allowed. Previous draft had required trees along the road, Fey explained that planting trees along the road may obscure the views that contribute to the community character. Consensus was agreed that the text would be: Landscaped buffers may be required for special permitted uses. Also, regarding trash removal text should be relocated but the text would be: 'Refuse collection areas shall be separated from the public side of the building. Access should be separated and screened from the public and abutters.'

MOTION to table discussion on landscaping until the next meeting, ending on Section 3B Roadside (D. Durst / G. Dickinson) all in favor, motion carries.

- c. Parking tabled to future meeting
- d. Bonding, Public Notifications/Hearings, and Post-approval Procedures tabled to future meeting
- e. Aquifer protection tabled to future meeting

f. Scenic Road work list spreadsheet

S. Blodgett presented the list he prepared on the town work list re: maintenance vs. improvement for a future discussion with the Board of Selectman and the Highway Foreman. He based the list on the existing Massachusetts Dirt Road Manual. The intent was to start the discussion on the various work types so it can be clarified what is maintenance work and what is an improvement that needs review by PZC under the Scenic Road Ordinance.

6. Agenda for April 7, 2011 Subcommittee meeting will include a continuation of the lighting and landscaping draft regulations.
7. Adjournment was at 10:14 PM (G. Dickinson/ J. Adiletta)