Starksboro Unified Zoning Bylaw Amendment Report

Prepared for draft Unified Zoning Bylaw dated November 19, 2026

The Starksboro Planning Commission is proposing a list of amendments to Starksboro's Land Use and Development Regulations (Zoning Bylaws), which were most recently adopted in 2020. The following summary is intended to provide an overview of the proposed revisions. Property owners and residents of Starksboro can find a digital copy of the proposed Bylaws on the Town website (starksborovt.org/bylaws) or can request a physical copy from the Town Office during regular business hours.

In accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4444 (b) the Starksboro Planning Commission presents this report on the amendments proposed to the Starksboro Zoning Bylaws. Starksboro first adopted zoning regulations in 1993, with subsequent amendments in 1998, 2006, 2016 and 2019. Starksboro also adopted a comprehensive Town Plan in 2011 that outlined many proposed amendments to the Town's Zoning Bylaws. The Town Plan was revised again in 2018 and was approved by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission.

Bylaws impact all property rights in one way or another. The Planning Commission recommends that all Starksboro residents review this document and the proposed revisions. The Planning Commission works diligently to balance individual property rights, the natural environment, and evolving needs of our community as a whole. These amendments reflect the outcome of discussions that have been ongoing since the last Bylaws were adopted in 2020. The foundation for the board's work on continual improvements to the Bylaws is rooted in the Town Plan, which is the guiding document and vision. The proposed amendments reflect language in support of energy goals and incentives to support affordable or elderly housing in perpetuity among other changes.

The town's goals from the Town Plan are:

- Maintain the land base needed to support environmentally sustainable and economically viable farming and forestry in town, thus preserving our rural way of life.
- Preserve the interrelated values of community, neighborliness, independence and privacy essential to Starksboro's small-town character.
- Guide the land use and development of the town to protect the health of the natural environment and the scenic landscape around us.
- Guide the land use and development of the town to help protect the long-term interests of the community, while minimizing infringements on individual rights.
- Restrain rapid, large-scale or otherwise inappropriate growth that would negatively affect Starksboro's fiscal condition, environmental quality, and/or rural character.
- Protect and enhance the natural resources of the town for the health, safety, and enjoyment of all residents, current and future.

- Protect the health of residents through the maintenance of a clean environment, and safe and adequate water supply.
- Mitigate the impacts of development on clean water, clean air, soils, forests and wildlife to the extent possible.
- Support our working landscapes — farms, forests and sugar bushes — and the livelihoods of residents who make their living off the land.
- Support the stewardship of natural resources in ways that do not degrade the resource.

The unified land use and development regulations are the town's implementation tool for the goals, policies, and objectives laid out in the Town Plan. All land development applications that cannot be handled administratively by the Town of Starksboro Zoning Administrator are referred to the Development Review Board (DRB). The DRB is an independently appointed board of residents that reviews applications in a quasi-judicial capacity based on the criteria outlined in the Bylaws.

The draft amendments to these Bylaws strengthen standards required for land development and the impact to natural resources features of the area. The Bylaw standards aim to guide the DRB in the development review process by providing clear direction as to the type of appropriate development Starksboro desires.

The changes proposed in the November 2026 Draft Land Use and Development Regulations can be found in the following chapters and sections:

1. Part 1. General Provisions — Updated to reflect proposed amendments in the document
2. Chapter 100 Enactment
    a. 100.A — Clarifying language added
    b. 101.B — Clarifying language added
    c. 103.A — Clarifying language added
    d. 103.B — Clarifying language added; "land development" amended to "development"
    e. 103.C through 103.E — Language moved from other section
    f. 103.E — Expansion of included community facilities
    g. 104.A — Change of Effective Date based on State guidance
3. Chapter 110 Exemptions
    a. 110.D — Combined with 103.D; Revised language
    b. 112.A(13) — Additional exemption added (Temporary or Portable Pools)
    c. 112.A(13) — Additional exemption added (Demolition)
    d. 113.G(6) — Addition of Short-Term Rentals
    e. 113.G(7) — Aligned with State guidance
    f. 117 — Moved to Section 103; Removal of language
    g. 118 — Moved to Section 103; Language clarified
4. Chapter 120 Vested Rights
    a. 122.D — Clarifying language added

    b. 122.E — Language revised for clarity
    c. 124 — Clarifying language added
5. Chapter 200 General
    a. 200.A — Abbreviations added for clarity
    b. 201.A — Flood Hazard overlay amended to Flood Hazard-River Corridor
    c. 202.D — Clarifying language added
6. Chapter 210. Use, Density & Dimensional Standards
    a. 210.A — Changes to use table; Clarification of symbols; Change from prohibited by default to Conditional Use
    b. 211.A — Lot size and setback adjustments amended
    c. 211.B — Subsection added for clarity
7. Chapter 220 High Density Residential & Commercial District (HDRC)
    a. 222.B — Subsection added for clarity
    b. 223.D — Removal of figure 5
    c. 224.A — Architectural Standards removed; Subsection reworded and sub-paragraphs removed
8. Chapter 230 Medium Density Residential & Commercial District (MDRC)
    a. 231.B — Subsection added for clarity
    b. 233.D — Architectural Standards removed; Subsection reworded and sub-paragraphs removed
9. Chapter 240 Low Density Residential & Commercial District (LDRC)
    a. 243.C — Architectural Standards removed; Subsection reworded and sub-paragraphs removed
10. Chapter 250 Agricultural, Scenic, and Rural Residential District (ASRR)
    a. 251.A — Subsection removed
    b. 252.B — Subsection removed
11. Chapter 280. Flood Hazard-River Corridor Overlay District
    a. Replacement of entire chapter with State-suggested language, adopted by selectboard in 2026
12. Chapter 300 General
    a. 301.A — “DRB” changed to “Selectboard”
    b. 301.C — Amended for clarity
    c. 304 — Relocated from Chapter 340
13. Chapter 310 Site Engineering & Design
    a. 310.E — Clarifying language added
    b. 310.F — Clarifying language added
    c. 310.G — Clarifying language added
    d. 311.D — Clarifying language added
    e. 312.C(10) — Reference to figure added
    f. 313.A — Revision of language to align with State statute
    g. 313.D — Adjustments to Parking Table
    h. 313.E(1) — Clarification of parking space dimensions
    i. 313.E(7) — Addition to meet state guidance
    j. 314.H — Removal of subsection

14. Chapter 320 Performance Standards
    a. 321 — Replacement of noise standards
    b. 322.B — Revision of language
    c. 325 — Removal of section
15. Chapter 330 Resource Protection
    a. 332.A — Clarifying language added
    b. 333.C — Language correction
    c. 334.D(5) — Corrected ratio
16. Chapter 340 Specific Use Standards
    a. 340.A — Abbreviation added
    b. 340.B —Language added for clarity
    c. 341 — “Temporary Dwellings” changed to “Temporary and Portable Dwellings”
    d. 342.B — Removal of language; Addition of language
    e. 343 — Added section
    f. 344.A — Removal of language in (2) & (3)
    g. 347 — Addition of section
    h. 348.A — Removal of language; Addition of language
17. Chapter 350 — Planned Unit Developments
    a. 351.F — Clarifying language added
    b. 358.B — Clarifying language added related to Forest Conservation district
    c. 358.G — Language clarified
    d. 358.H — Language revised for clarity
18. Chapter 400
    a. 400.A — Waiving of fees for town projects
    b. 401.A — Addition of language
    c. 401.I —Additional language
    d. 411.B — Addition of pre-application meeting
    e. 413 — Section title change
    f. 413.A — Language revised for clarity
    g. 413.D — Language corrected
    h. 4.13.E — Clarifying language added
19. Chapter 420 Development Review Board
    a. 420.D — Addition of subsection
    b. 421.D — Adjustment of deadline
    c. 422.B — Revised application procedure
    d. 422.C — Revised hearing window
    e. 422.G — Revised to reference new section
    f. 422.B — Addition of language; Removal of language
    g. 423.E(2) — Removal of language
    h. 424.A — “Cottage industry” changed to “home industry”
    i. 424.B — Addition of pre-application meeting
    j. 424.C — Hearing deadline changed
    k. 425.B — Addition of pre-application meeting

l. 425.C — Hearing deadline changed
m. 426.C — Revised application requirements
n. 426.F — Hearing deadline adjusted
o. 426.G — Filing deadline adjusted
p. 426.H — Removal of paper copy requirement; addition of mylar print requirement
q. 427.C — Revised application requirements
r. 427.E — Deadline adjusted
s. 427.F — Subsection removed
t. 427.G — Removal of paper copy requirement; addition of mylar print requirement

20. Chapter 500 Interpretation
    a. 501.A — Added definitions and clarification
    b. 510.A (2) — Addition of included structures
    c. 510.B(2)(a) — Combined with 510.B(2)
    d. 510.C(2-13) — Added definitions
    e. 510.D(1) — Added definition
    f. 510.D(3) — Added definition
    g. 510.D(10) — Added definition
    h. 510.E(5) — Definition clarified
    i. 510.F — Definitions related to farming revised to meet state guidance
    j. 510.G(2) — Definition revised to meet state guidance
    k. 510.P(5) — Added definition
    l. 510.P(8) — Added definition
    m. 510.S(4) — Added definition
    n. 510.2(8) — Definition clarified
    o. 510.S(13) — Definition clarified
21. Chapter 600 Appendices
    a. Removal of obsolete appendices
    b. Addition of Section 601. Appendix A, 602. Appendix B, 603. Appendix C, 604. Appendix D

The Planning Commission has drafted this summary report to help residents review the proposed amendments easily. Please note that the public hearing has been scheduled so the Planning Commission can receive public comments on the proposed changes to Bylaws. Copies of the proposed Bylaws are available at the Town Office or on the Town website. Additionally, questions and/or comments can be directed in person or submitted in writing to any Planning Commission member or the town Zoning Administrator.

Respectfully,

Starksboro Planning Commission,
Dennis Casey, *Chair*
David Schmidt, *Vice Chair*
Dan Kuzio

Dan Nugent
Luke McCarthy, *Secretary*