

## Starksboro Conservation Commission

November 24, 2025

Chair, Margi Gregory (virtual attendee), in person Robert Turner, Jan McCleery and 5 guests: Susan W, Jean Tufts, Jess F, Phil Mosenthal + 1 other unnamed South Starksboro resident.

Robert, acting as chair, opened the meeting at 5:33. Minutes from October meeting were not reviewed as a quorum was not present.

Robert provided an overview of planning and zoning for the guests.

Zoning at the local level is the process for the orderly development of standards that reflect the vision and goals for the town set forth in a Town Plan

VT Act 250 was adopted in April of 1970. It was designed to protect natural resources, forest and farmland from environmentally sensitive large-scale development. It created a system for reviewing and controlling development based on ten criteria evaluated by an Act 250 Review Board.

VT Act 181 was adopted in 2024 to simplify the regulations of the Act 250 review process. Three highlights:

- Moved from project-based to location-based development
- Defined areas (called Tiers) each treated differently. Tier 1A and 1B permit planned growth in town and village centers with limited or no Act 250 jurisdiction. Tier 3 sets up an intensive review in areas of critical natural resources. Tier 2 covers areas not in Tier 1 or 3 where existing Act 250 jurisdiction will continue to apply.
- Establishes aspirational housing targets for the state, and at county and local levels

Regional Planning Commissions were tasked with creating maps for the tiers. The three tiers encourage sustainable, compact development that protects natural resources and considers effects of climate.

Using BioFinder to screen share the Tier 3 draft map of Starksboro Robert then ask set aside time for guests for Q&A. He explained that the impetus behind changes Starkboro's Planning Commission has proposed for the town's Zoning Bylaws are threefold:

- reduce stringent noise and architectural standards

- add a new land use district
- allow private landing areas with no conditions

Because adjoining towns were not notified appropriately, the PC needs to start the bylaws approval process over again.

The guests present were all in favor of updating the town plan first as it is the foundation for the town's zoning regulations.

Robert plans to draft a letter to members for review prior to next meeting. The month of next meeting needs to be determined (December or January).

Meeting adjourned at 8:00.

Submitted by Jan McCleery

We want YOUR input on how the new Tier 3 map for development will impact you and our Starksboro community?