

Town of Starksboro  
Planning Commission  
Public Hearing Notes  
February 6, 2025

Public Hearing begins at 6:32pm

PC Chair Dennis Casey made opening remarks and invited individuals to comment on the proposed by-law changes. Below is a summary of those comments and suggestions:

- Question about the general process and what happens after this meeting
  - o Public feedback will be considered and by-laws edited. If major changes result the PC will have another hearing, otherwise they will be sent to the Selectboard for review. The Selectboard can have a separate hearing if they choose or approve / reject the changes at a warned meeting. Residents of Starksboro can force a public vote on the by-law edits with a petition.
- Will written comments that are submitted to the PC be posted on the Town website?
  - o At this time individual comments are not published but the resulting changes to bylaws are.
- What is the status of the Town Plan?
  - o It is due to be reviewed and potentially revised in 2026
- Question about the flood hazard overlay section and numerical references throughout the document
  - o Page numbers, chapter sections, and other minor edits will be made to the final draft
- Question about performance standards – specifically the noise standard. Why change it? Suggest more specificity. Recommend a “ceiling” limit for noise. Suggest rephrasing “at other times.”
- Request including a definition of “recreational trail.”
- Question about going from 50dB in current standard to 70dB in proposed standard. Why?
- Question about adding a landing strip to 3 different districts. Recommend eliminating it entirely or making it conditional use
- General concern about the commercial nature of the proposed overlay district
- Why were the traffic standards deleted?
  - o Not only are they difficult to enforce, the “base traffic load” on any given road is constantly changing and not currently possible to keep track of.
- Suggestion that anything within the Forestry Conservation District should be Conditional Use.
- Question about whether there are any limits on the size of aircraft that can land.
- Second recommendation for conditional use approval for landing strips
  - o State and Federal Agencies have primary oversight on the construction, permitting, use, and safety of landing areas.
- Suggestion to include those state regulations in the zoning document
- General comment about how the town is just coming out of major flooding events and the proposed changes will increase activities and potential development in the hills and Forestry Conservation District. Concern about impervious surfaces and increased runoff. Has PC considered impact of development in these areas?
- Suggestion that the 600-foot overlay should be in certain parts of town, not all over.
- Recommendation to leave noise regulations as written in current document
- Request to make a space for residents to discuss the process and changes on the Town website or other venue.
- Comment that the ROD will hopefully encourage additional recreational use in town and generate interest. Added benefit of allowing landowners flexibility to get creative.
- Was a river corridor overlay considered?

- Yes, however due to conversations and consulting with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties that needed to happen the PC was not able to implement the document in time. The PC intends to include this section in future updates.
- Recommendation to include conditional use in the watershed
- Suggest breaking down categories of “multi-family” homes
- Section 263d states disturbances should be kept to a minimum, but all disturbances impact the land and environment. Recommend language including requiring additional plantings of native species that are bare root and do not allow certain composts to be brought in. Do not allow development in the river corridor within 50 feet of streams. Do not allow pesticide use.
- Paragraph 210a should have a chart to better identify what the letters in the chart mean (P/C/S, etc.)
- Most architectural features have been removed from the new standards so the image on page 18 may need to be updated.
- Recommend sending out a survey to receive additional input and information.
- Suggestion to slow down the process and take more time.
- General comment that the proposed changes do not seem like they will drastically change the character of Starksboro.
- The Rural Overlay District includes some very steep areas.
  - Yes, but existing zoning rules about developing on steep slopes should address that
- Suggestion to look at the Vermont Conservation Design map and take that data into consideration
- Second recommendation to continue to use current noise standards in new by-laws.
- Recommendation to put times of day or hours of day back into the noise standard.

The PC will take all the comments into consideration and make changes to the proposed bylaws as necessary. All are welcome to submit suggestions and ideas to the PC for review.

Hearing ended at 8:10