TOWN OF CORINTH PLANNING COMMISSION
PO Box 461, Corinth, VT 05039
Unapproved Minutes of Meeting
Thursday, June 12, 2025

Attending for the Planning Commission: Anne Margolis, Karen Reed, Patrick Martin, Russ Pazdro, Kimberly Remillard (by Zoom), Lianne Allen (by Zoom), Jon Ruggles (alternate), Stephen Devoto (Administrative Officer). Members of the public: Mike Tagliavia, Jim Guyer, Miranda Miller, and Jennifer Locke. Absent: Commissioner Kenya Lazuli.
Jon Ruggles was seated for Kenya Lazuli.
Steph Magnan (consultant hired to help write the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan).

Members of the public: Tad Kingsbury, Susan Fortunati, Bob Fortunati, Rick Cawley, Mike Tagliavia, Dwayna Covey, Lee Porter, Michael Pittman, Tim Jarvis, Glynn Pellegrino, Carl Demrow, Brad Wheeler, Nancy Olivet, Robert Herrick, Carroll Porter, Ed Pospisil, Mary Kent, Lindle Sutton, Virginia Barlow, Ken Arkind

Acting Chair Margolis called the meeting to order at 7:01PM.

Agenda Review
Margolis asked if there were any suggested changes to the agenda, there were none.

Public Hearing

Ruggles made a motion to move into the Public Hearing on the proposed Subdivision Regulations amendment. The motion was seconded by Remillard and passed unanimously.

Copies of the draft Subdivision Regulation amendments, as well as the summary report of the changes were available to all who wanted them.

Margolis read the warrant for the public hearing and outlined the procedures for the public hearing. She outlined the proposed changes:

- Reorganization to make it easier for applicants: the regulations for minor and major subdivisions are each in separate sections.
- The proposed uses are now part of the subdivision regulations, instead of treated separately at a different time.
- The changes encourage the preservation of natural and cultural resources.
- The changes encourage the preservation of forest blocks.

Kingsbury asked why the Subdivision Regulation Amendment was not going to automatically be decided by a town-wide vote. Devoto said that the Planning Commission could make changes to their proposed amendment before sending it to the Selectboard. The Selectboard would hold its

own public hearing, and then would vote to either approve it, reject it, or send it to all the voters of the town. There was discussion of past votes on subdivision regulations. Cawley said that the original subdivision regulations (1995) were approved by voters.

Tagliavia asked how any of these changes promote economic growth. Margolis responded that the changes are not restrictive and that preservation of large tracts of land makes land more valuable. Allen added that the preservation of large lots makes it economically feasible for farming and logging, and that the hunting possible on large lots is economically advantageous.

Tagliavia asked why an approved subdivision would expire in 3 years (Section 7.5), instead of staying with the property. Allen used an example from her past to illustrate—an approved residential development that was not built for over 10 years, at which time it no longer made sense as the town zoning and pattern of development had changed. Covey agreed with Tagliavia, expressing her objection to mandating that "private" components shall be completed.

Bob Fortunati expressed his strong opposition to the language which restricts Right of Ways to 500'. There was extensive discussion of the Right of Way restriction. Kingsbury asked why it was in there. Margolis responded that it was recommended by the regional Planner and modeled on language from other towns in Vermont.

Ruggles and Pazdro expressed concern about the issue of access to residences by emergency vehicles. Pittman disagreed, "People have the right to live where they want to live." He said that he and other first responders would find a way to get to them. Kingsbury agreed, saying that the responsibility was with residents who made a choice to live far away from a road, not with the town.

Porter, Bob Fortunati, and Susan Fortunati expressed their strong support for a town vote.

Allen said that there was no zoning. And zoning is the only way Corinth can stop clusters of McMansions appearing.

Jarvis said that development should be made easier, that the state requirements are already sufficient. He said new regulations would create more work for the Planning Commission and others in town hall. He said there should be a town vote on the proposed amendment.

Allen said that the new regulations allow for waivers that can be specific to each lot, allowing for flexibility.

Moore said the permits should not expire. He expressed opposition to the creep of permits, fees, inspections, he said to keep the landowner's rights in mind.

Pellegrino said that the question was not whether Corinth would change, but whether there should be planning that manages how the change happens. He said that limits on the length of Right of Ways protects abutting landowners, and that forest blocks are of value to all of us. He expressed his support for a town vote.

Covey said the Planning Commission should make it easier for people who are here already.

Tagliavia said “little by little you lose your freedom”, individuals need to do their own due diligence, the town should not be baby-sitters. He asked how much influence was exerted by VT Conservation Design. Margolis said that the Planning Commission received help from the regional planning group, she was not sure how much input they got from VT Conservation Design. She said that the regulations attempted to balance private and public goods.

Kingsbury asked why the Planning Commission did this. Margolis said that the Town Plan called for it. Sue Fortunati said this was backdoor zoning.

Arkind described what a forest block was, and when people think of Vermont, that’s what they like.

Allen said that the absence of zoning in the Massachusetts town she grew up in led to the near complete loss of rural character, and that Corinth needed to preserve hunting and farming.

Demrow applauded all who attended the public hearing and said it was very helpful to hear the thoughtful and considerate opinions. There was a smattering of applause from attendees.

Pazdro motioned to close the public hearing. Reed seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Margolis called for a 5 minute recess.

May 1 minutes.
Pazdro made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 1 meeting, with one grammatical correction. The motion was seconded by Reed and passed unanimously.

Correspondence
No correspondence.

Applications
Devoto reported that he gave administrative approval for an application from Kevin Longto for a minor subdivision on Magoon Hill Road.

Subdivision Bylaws
The Commission discussed feedback it had received from the public. Martin suggested that terms needed to be more clearly defined, and there should be a discussion of historic settlement patterns, and the short term and long term implications, and that the bylaws would benefit from a preamble discussing the rationale for the regulations and the changes. He volunteered to draft a preamble.

Margolis suggested creating a draft that has accepted all the amendments present in the draft discussed in the public hearing, as well as non-substantive changes suggested by Kevin Geiger at the regional planning office.

Reed made a motion for Margolis to do this. Martin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Steph Magnan provided an overview of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.
Margolis asked whether the changes in the FEMA reimbursement formula would affect the priorities for the potential hazards. She asked whether Municipal Vulnerability Index Data would be incorporated into the LHMP. She said she had a number of other suggestions for the LHMP and would be happy to put them into an editable document.
Magnan said she would send an updated draft by the end of the week.

Martin reported on his analysis of the proposed conservation easement on the Lost Meadow property. He said he could find no conflict between the easement and any elements in the Town Plan, and 53 direct consistencies.

Adjournment

Ruggles made a motion to adjourn, Allen seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:55PM.