



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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Special Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board Dec. 28th, 2022 @ 5:30 pm

Present-

Select Board: Frank Empsall, Dennis Smith, Tracy Zschau, Steve Isham, Brendan Hughes

Staff: Rachel Waterhouse, Chad Whitehead, Joe Kasprzak, Stacy Jewell, Paul Berlejung

Press: KATV, Todd Wellington (via zoom)

Public: Jim Brown, Mary Berlejung, Jesse Dimick,

Planning Commission Bylaw Proposals:

- Chad Whitehead, Town Manager provided an overview of the proposed bylaw changes with regards to housing in the health services zone and horticulture. Explained that the details of the proposed changes can be found on the Town's website and in the Town Clerk's Office.
- Jim Brown commented that the Planning Commission began working on the proposed changes back in June of 2022 when it was determined that horticulture was included in the agriculture definition and not permitted in certain zones when in reality it should be generally permitted use. Jim mentioned that the health services update came about as NVRH is beginning to develop the idea of housing within the health services zone. By changing the bylaw now it makes the project more feasible and ready to go for NVRH when the time comes. Ideally the housing will help recruit trained professionals to St. Johnsbury and help move St. Johnsbury forward.
- Frank mentioned that the proposed changes made sense to him.
- Tracy asked if currently no housing is allowed within the healthcare zone. Jesse Dimick explained currently only senior housing and hotels are allowed.
- Frank asked if this would give the project the go ahead. Jim said the bylaw changes would set the stage.
- Steve Isham asked if the housing would only be available to those in healthcare. Jesse explained not necessarily and they are still looking at those details.
- Jesse explained that a Physician was offered a position at NVRH had accepted the position then had to retract the offer due to the lack of housing in the area.
- Tracy asked if the boundaries were set on a map. Chad explained that the healthcare zone is mostly NVRH and NVR Corp. Joe Kasprzak expressed that this is an effort to be proactive with the housing crisis in the area.
- Steve Isham asked if this would make potential developers more interested. Joe said absolutely as this part of the ground work.
- Brendan asked if there was anything that was preventing the project from occurring in any other areas. Jesse said mainly looking at this lot as there is around 60 acres and this change to the bylaws helps get over the hurdle and lets NVRH utilize the land.

- Dennis asked if the infrastructure was satisfactory. Chad said this would be looked into with the developer but water is in good shape and sewer is doable. Jesse explained that feasibility is the next step for NVRH.
- Dennis expressed his concern that he does not want others to have to pay for this project.
- Jim mentioned that he feels the land is useable and doable property for this project.

On a motion by Dennis and second by Brendan the board adjourned by unanimous decision.