

Town of Searsmont
Draft Planning Board Work Session Notes
January 17, 2024
6:30 PM

1. Call to order: The meeting of the Planning Board convened at 6:36 pm. These minutes are a summary of the Board's discussions. A recording of this meeting is available at the Town office.
2. Roll Call - Members Present:

Christian Halsted, Chair	Others:
Jon Thurston	
Sarah Crosby	Adie Philson, MCOG
Jon Robbins	Max Johnstone, MCOG
John Lightner	
Evie deFrees, Vice Chair	Patricia Chapman, Clerk (on Teams)
Jack DeGraff	
3. Applications: None.
4. Approval of Minutes: None.
5. Treasurer's report: None.
6. Communications: None.
7. Committee Reports: None.
8. Old Business:
 - a. Revised LUO edits from MCOG:
 - i. Accessory Dwelling Units – section 607
 1. Added Item B – defining accessory dwelling unit
 2. Added item D – language from the state about accessory dwelling units on non-conforming lots
 3. Added item F – requiring that accessory dwelling units must be in common ownership with the principal dwelling unit. It can't be built to be sold off as a separate building and lot.
 - a. The purpose of an accessory dwelling unit is to allow a second home on a lot that isn't big enough to have more than one principal dwelling.
 4. Language was added in this section clarify that Accessory Dwelling Units can only be added to lots with an existing single-family dwelling (referred to as principal dwelling unit)
 - a. The minimum state requirement is to allow accessory dwelling units on lots with single-family dwellings but the board can decide to be more lenient.

- 49 b. They can allow properties with duplexes or multi-family dwellings
50 to add accessory dwelling units.
51 c. The board agreed to stick with the state’s minimum requirements.
52 5. The board decided to cap the size of an Accessory Dwelling Unit at 800
53 square feet as that would be big enough for a mobile home or other
54 small home. They do not want a regular, full-size dwelling built as an
55 accessory. That should be a separate principal dwelling.
56 6. Some municipalities have added a requirement that either the principal
57 or accessory dwelling unity must be occupied by the property owner but
58 that is not a state requirement.
- 59 ii. Section 612 – changed the title from “Additional Dwelling Units” to “Dwelling
60 Unit Allowances”
- 61 1. This section is not specific to Accessory Dwelling Units. These
62 requirements apply to any instance of multiple dwelling units on a lot.
63 2. The current ordinance does not conflict with the new state requirements
64 but this section helps clarify to applicants what is allowed in regards to
65 multiple units.
66 3. What is the difference between this section and references to “cluster
67 housing” in a previous section?
68 4. State law says that if you have an existing dwelling unit and your land is
69 within the identified growth area, you are allowed to build up to 4
70 additional units on the lot if it meets the required lot size.
71 5. The current item B is saying that the minimum single-family lot size (1.5
72 acres in Searsmont) would apply to a multi-family dwelling if it’s a single
73 structure (i.e., duplex)
74 6. The current ordinance requires 1.5 acres per unit regardless of whether
75 they are a single structure. A duplex would require 3 acres.
76 7. The board can also choose to restrict the number of units in a structure.
77 8. Item C should be changed from “three or more units” to “three or more
78 detached units” within a 5-year period are subject to a subdivision
79 review.
- 80 iii. Section 815.1 in the shoreland zone – removed edits that were made so that
81 shoreland zone requirements are different for multiple units than outside the
82 shoreland zone.
- 83 1. Outside the shoreland zone, multiple units in a single structure do not
84 need to meet minimum lot requirements – a duplex can be built on a 1.5
85 acre lot.
86 2. Within the shoreland zone, a duplex would need to be built on a
87 minimum 3 acre lot.
- 88 iv. Section 815.11 – edited this section to combine water and wastewater versus a
89 separate section for septic waste disposal.
- 90 v. Section 815.25, 815.26, and 815.27 – A. Philson will update these sections in
91 the Shoreland zone to match the changes made to the similar sections outside
92 the shoreland zone.
- 93 vi. The statement about overflow parking under Affordable Housing Development
94 is meant to address the potential issue of overflow parking as the state only

95 requires 2 off street spaces. Some towns have been concerned about what
96 might happen if people start parking on the street due to lack of space in the
97 development.

98 vii. The board may want to consider a similar statement about parking in the site
99 plan review process. This is a topic to discuss in the future after the LD2003
100 changes are finalized.

101 viii. Are there concerns about the town voting down these changes because there
102 are too many and it's overwhelming? MCOG could do a mailing to help inform
103 citizens in advance of the meeting.

104 1. It's unlikely many people will attend the public hearing or read a mailing.

105 2. C. Halsted suggested we have a good presentation:

106 a. outline talking points highlighting the fact that these changes are
107 based on new state laws so they need to be made.

108 b. If it's voted, down, it will just have to be brought back up as an
109 issue again.

110 c. Introduction that includes an explanation of what LD2003 is about,
111 affordable housing, etc.

112 d. Highlight that it's still giving a lot of freedom for what people want
113 to do with their property.

114 3. C. Halsted will work with MCOG to come up with the outline and talking
115 points for the meeting.

116 4. We can put the draft on the website for anyone who wants to review it in
117 advance.

118 5. We will consider projecting the bullet points on the wall for the meeting.

119 b. There are some questions about sections that are addressed outside of the Shoreland
120 Zone but are not mentioned with in the Shoreland Zone. Another review should be
121 done to see if any of those items need to have similar sections in the Shoreland Zone.

122 c. Comp Plan Engagement Survey

123 i. The board thought it was good and not too long or overwhelming.

124 ii. They like number 14 asking where people think it's appropriate to have different
125 things like affordable housing, big box stores, etc. It would be good if
126 respondents could check more than one answer.

127 iii. Possible options to add to the list: Campgrounds, Gun range, Add tiny homes to
128 mobile home park line, Race track

129 iv. Should there be a question(s) about potential downtown/village core
130 improvements?

131 v. Planning Board should review the goals from previous comp plan and identify
132 what has been completed and some new goals.
133

134 9. New Business: None.

135
136 10. Adjournment: J. DeGraff made a motion to adjourn, seconded by J. Thurston. Motion passed
137 by a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm.
138

139 Respectfully submitted,

140 Patricia Chapman, Planning Board Clerk