

SALISBURY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

November 29, 2021, 5:30 PM

Remote Meeting by Live Internet Video Stream and Telephone

1 **Members Present**

- 2 Dr. Michael Klemens (Chairman)
3 Cathy Shyer (Vice Chair) arrived at 5:33
4 Allen Cockerline (Regular Member)
5 Bob Riva (Regular Member) arrived at 5:37
6 Martin Whalen (Secretary)
7 Debra Allee (Alternate)
8 Dr. Danella Schiffer (Alternate)
9

Staff Present:

Abby Conroy, Land Use Administrator (LUA)
Alison Forman, Land Use Assistant

Members Absent:

10 **Brief Items and Announcements**
11

12 1. Call to Order / Seating of Members 5:30pm
13 Chairman Klemens called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., with a quorum of Commissioners
14 Cockerline, Whalen and Klemens, and Alternates Schiffer and Allee present.
15

16 2. Seating of Alternates 5:32pm
17 The Chairman seated Alternate Schiffer and Alternate Allee.
18

19 3. Minutes of October 4, 2021
20 Line 116 "200" should be changed to "2000 square feet of accessory apartment"
21 Line 130 the typo "community's" to "communities"
22
23 Commissioner Shyer arrived at 5:33pm and Commissioner Riva arrived at 5:37pm.
24

25 *Motion:* to Approve Minutes of October 4, 2021 as amended
26 Made by Cockerline, seconded by Riva
27 Vote: 4-0-1
28 Commissioner Shyer abstained as she was not present at the October 4th meeting.
29

30 4. Minutes of October 26, 2021
31
32 Line 178 should read "as needed" not "is needed"
33 General note "Commission" should be capitalized when used as a proper noun
34

35 *Motion:* to Approve Minutes of October 26, 2021 as amended
36 Made by Cockerline, seconded by Shyer.
37 Vote: 5-0-0
38

39 Chairman Klemens explained "*pending*" on the agenda distinguishes the minutes as not yet available.
40

41 **Other Business**

42

43 5. POCD Review Session - 5:48pm

44 The Chairman began by asking the Commissioners if any problems have been missed or need to be
45 addressed within the PCOD. LUA Conroy clarified that the goal is to pinpoint problems to be used in a
46 public survey that will ask community members to prioritize the top issues for Salisbury.

47

48 Affordable Housing

49 The Commission discussed the rising costs of real estate and site development. The Commissioners
50 recognized the need to include diversified housing for seniors, veterans and the handicapped. The focus
51 is often on young people and the language needs to include other categories of residents. The
52 Commission acknowledged the importance of using unequivocal terms to describe the problem. The
53 Commission agreed on a problem statement related to housing *“escalating housing costs and a lack of
54 housing diversity for a broad segment of the community.”*

55

56 Land Use Administration

57 The Commission discussed problems with Zoning Regulations. Several examples were given including
58 conflicting definitions, front yard setbacks anomalies, and particular regulations that are not appropriate
59 for certain zones. It was recognized that the regulations need a comprehensive review and overhaul.
60 Additionally, it was decided that the language in regulations should be standardized to clarify
61 ambiguities and close loopholes and that definitions of terms be defined in the definitions, not the text
62 of the regulations. The Commission determined the problem to be *“Zoning Regulations are inconsistent,
63 impractical, and many definitions are conflicting or missing.”*

64

65 The Commission considered recent development pressure in the community. The Council of
66 Government (COG) reported a population increase of 300 people, a 10% overall growth rate in the Town
67 of Salisbury. Applications for residential development including accessory structures and re-subdivisions
68 of lots have increased. Both development and immigration were attributed to the increased volume of
69 building and zoning permits. The Commission agreed that *“development pressures”* are a problem.

70

71 The Commissioners reflected on the existing format of the POCD and recognized the need for an
72 alternative approach. The Commission agreed the document should be restructured to consolidate the
73 information in a manner that will be more engaging and user friendly. They referred to similar
74 documents from the COG and the Town of Litchfield mentioning the ease of understanding, flow of the
75 narrative, and lack of repetition. The Commission noted the inclusion of statistics and how the data
76 provides a clearer understating of the conclusions reached. They identified the essential components to
77 be *problems, strategies, tasks* and *responsible parties*. The Commissioners identified the problem as
78 *“develop a POCD that logically flows in narrative form from data to problems to strategies and to tasks.”*

79

80 The Commission acknowledged a problem with communication between commissions, Town
81 departments and Town staff. They noted these groups often work independently from each other
82 leading to duplicative efforts, conflicting policies, and at times, resulting in the perception of poor
83 customer service. They suggested this silo mentality can be detrimental to progress and productivity,
84 affecting opportunities for cooperative solutions. The Commissioners defined the problem as *“A need
85 for collaboration among commissions and town staff where responsibilities overlap.”*

86 Village Centers

87 The Commission discussed limitations in commercial viability and diversity in the village centers. It was
88 specified that diversity does not only refer to types of businesses such as, retail shops, offices, and
89 galleries but also to price points of items being sold. The Commission acknowledged that limited
90 viability/diversity can be exacerbated by factors such as zoning requirements and/or space availability.
91 They also noted that zoning regulations create nonconformities and use conflicts within these zones.
92 The Commission identified the problem as *“Zoning impedes commercial diversity and retail viability in
93 Lakeville and Salisbury village centers resulting in lost economic opportunities.”*
94

95 The Commission examined the lack of investment in Lime Rock village acknowledging that it is an area
96 with smaller more affordable lots. It was agreed that an investment into a sewer would be costly and
97 unnecessary. The Commission agreed to eliminate this from the list of problems and stated that Lime
98 Rock had commercial viability because of Lime Rock Park.
99

100 Open Space and Resource Conservation

101 The Commission examined topics related to open space and resource conservation. Problems include
102 poor oversight and deficient standards of “protected” land, limited access to and amenities at our
103 preserves, parks, and trails, and challenges associated with regulation and overuse of certain sites. The
104 Commission identified that some areas are overused and under regulated, while others are
105 underutilized possibly due to poor signage and access. The Commission identified the problem as
106 *“limited (poor) oversight and deficient standards of “protected” land, limited access to and amenities at
107 our preserves, parks, trails and trail heads.”*
108

109 The Commission proceeded to the topic of wetlands and watercourses agreeing the problem is
110 sufficiently outlined as *“Inadequate oversight and protection of critical wetland resources.”*
111

112 They continued to the topic of environmental stressors and considered the proposed problem *“Climate
113 change, invasive species, clear cutting/deforestation, pollution, habitat fragmentation.”* It was proposed
114 to have a two-part question. First, asking if one feels there is a problem with environmental stressors
115 and second, asking one to identify them. It was recommended to give the public an opportunity to rate
116 these pressures in order of importance.
117

118 **Adjournment**

119
120 It was noted that the next meeting would be a special meeting on December 13, 2021 at 5:30pm.
121

122 *Motion:* To adjourn the meeting at 9:58 p.m.

123 Made by Shyer, seconded by Cockerline.

124 Vote: 5-0-0 in favor.
125

126 Respectfully submitted,
127
128

129 Alison Forman
130 Land Use Assistant