

Planning Commission Minutes

November 18th, 2024

Meeting Summary: Public Hearing on Repealing the Town of Brighton Zoning Bylaw

Attendees:

Tom D., Mike S., Noah B., Mark V., Jeanne G., Anne B. (chair), and members of the general public

Call to Order:

Anne B. called the meeting to order at 5:31 P.M., outlining the purpose of the public hearing: to discuss the proposed repeal of the Town of Brighton Zoning Bylaw.

Discussion Highlights:

- **Tom D.:**
Tom opened the discussion by stating the main question for consideration: *“Shall the town repeal the Brighton Zoning Bylaw?”*
- **Kathy N.:**
Kathy spoke in favor of repealing the zoning bylaw, emphasizing that the petition seeks to abolish zoning, building permits, the Development Review Board (DRB), and the zoning administrator position. She noted this was originally intended for the November 5, 2024, ballot. Kathy shared personal experiences, including past interactions with the zoning administrator and concerns about easement issues. She argued that zoning cannot be applied fairly and equitably, and therefore, the town should eliminate it.
- **Peg M.:**
Peg expressed opposition to repealing zoning, stating that Kathy’s comments focused on personal grievances rather than the broader implications. Peg argued that zoning bylaws and permits have been applied fairly and equitably. She warned that removing zoning could lead to unrestricted property use, potentially harming neighbors and the community.
- **Greg M.:**
Greg stressed that zoning bylaws protect property values, preventing individuals from degrading community aesthetics and property worth through improper use of their land.
- **Dave L.:**
Dave voiced strong opposition to removing zoning. He highlighted the importance of maintaining the town’s beauty to support tourism, housing, and future development.
- **Heather McElroy:**
Heather urged the board to retain zoning, emphasizing its role in supporting businesses and preserving Brighton’s charm, including the lake views and fall foliage. She noted that zoning ensures regulations, such as sign illumination, align with the town’s character. Heather

recommended regularly reviewing bylaws to maintain their relevance and equitable application.

- **Mercy M.:**

Mercy stated her opposition to repealing zoning.

- **Jamie B.:**

Jamie inquired about the process for removing zoning.

- **Mark V.:**

Mark explained that removing zoning involves several steps, all of which must comply with Vermont state requirements. He also noted that some grants, such as downtown infrastructure funding, depend on the presence of zoning. Without zoning, the town could lose eligibility for such funding.

- **Additional Comments:**

Dave L. reminded attendees that zoning has been a longstanding practice in Brighton, requiring careful enforcement by qualified individuals.

Adjournment:

As there were no further public comments, the meeting was adjourned at 5:56 P.M.