

**Town of Amherst Planning Commission
Minutes
December 6, 2023**

A meeting of the Town of Amherst Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson June Driskill on December 6, 2023, at 7:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall at 174 S. Main Street.

It was noted that a quorum was present as indicated below:

P	June Driskill	P	Michael Driskill
P	William Jones	P	John Vandervelde
P	Anne Webster Day	P	Veda Butcher
A	Clifford Hart		

Town Manager Sara McGuffin, and Clerk of Council Vicki K. Hunt in her capacity as Secretary, were also present.

The Chair opened the floor for citizen comments.

Fred Loving, Town of Amherst resident, came forward in opposition to allowing more than one dwelling unit on a rental property.

Jerry Martin, Town of Amherst business owner, came forward in support of an ordinance amendment on surface treatment of commercial driveways and parking areas, sharing her displeasure at receiving a zoning violation that stated commercial lots developed after 2003 must be concrete, asphalt or paving stones.

Steve Martin, Town of Amherst business owner, came forward in opposition of the existing code section on commercial surface treatment of driveways and parking areas expressing concern that enforcement of the existing code could be financially detrimental to small business owners. Mr. Martin requested that a code amendment include permeable surface treatment options to reduce the financial impact and runoff issues associated with asphalt surface treatment.

Geraldine Hensley, Town of Amherst resident, came forward in support of the Martins' request for an ordinance amendment on surface treatment of commercial driveways and parking areas.

Derin Foor, Town of Amherst business owner, came forward in support of an ordinance amendment that would include permeable as well as impervious surface treatment options for commercial driveways and parking areas that would reduce possible flooding issues, and reduce what could be a detrimental financial impact to small business owners should the current ordinance be enforced.

Tim Ware, Town of Amherst business owner, came forward in support of the Martins' request for a code amendment on surface treatment of commercial driveways and parking areas, and in

support of acceptance of the gift of easement for a park and, if accepted, that the Town follow through with its intent to construct the park to include bike trails, splash pad and skateboard areas.

Sunny Monk, Town of Amherst resident and President of Second Stage, came forward to offer to take a request to the Board of Second Stage to become host of a Futures Advisory Council which would allow Town citizens and business owners to come together to discuss problems and frustrations and make unified recommendations to the Planning Commission or Town Council.

James Beck, Town of Amherst resident and business owner, came forward in support of the Martins' and their request that a code amendment go back to Town Council on surface treatment of commercial driveways and parking areas.

Sandra Kirk Rodgers, Town of Amherst resident, came forward in support of acceptance of the gift of easement to be used as park.

Sonny Sundaramurthy, Town of Amherst resident, came forward in support of code amendments that would bring legally non-conforming properties to conforming properties.

Bill Tucker, Town of Amherst resident, came forward to share his family's history of the Town of Amherst and to ask that the Planning Commission remember that they are advisor to the Council, and that they should consider within the comprehensive plan what is best for the growth of the town while begin mindful of its current citizenry and existing businesses.

There being no one else present in person or otherwise to speak, no comments were made.

Mr. Jones made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Day to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2023, meeting.

There being no discussion, the motion carried 6-0 according to the following:

June Driskill	Aye		Anne Webster Day	Aye
Michael Driskill	Aye		John Vandervelde	Aye
William Jones	Aye		Veda Butcher	Aye
Clifford Hart	Absent			

Town Manager McGuffin reported that public hearings were held by the Commission on August 2, 2023, and by Town Council on November 8, 2023, on consideration of a proposed amendment to the Town's zoning ordinance that, if approved, would allow more than one accessory unit on a residential lot, and on consideration of a proposed amendment to the Town's zoning ordinance that would, if approved, allow more than one dwelling unit on a lot based on the underlying zoning district and/or size of parcel. At its meeting on October 4, 2023, the Planning Commission unanimously voted to recommend approval of the amendment allowing up to two accessory units based on the underlying zoning district and/or size of parcel for a total of three dwellings on a lot. On November 8, 2023, Town Council directed that the matter be returned to

the Planning Commission for clarification on their recommendation pertaining to number of accessory dwellings allowed.

After discussion, Town Manger was directed to report a split recommendation by the Commission to Town Council as follows:

- A two member recommendation that a lot may contain a single family residence and two additional buildings, each containing one dwelling unit for a total of three dwelling units.
- A four member recommendation that a lot may contain a single family residence containing two dwelling units, and one additional building containing one dwelling unit, for a total of three dwelling units.

Town Manager McGuffin gave a report on a proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to include language for short term rental applications and standards for use. Town Manager McGuffin also reported that staff will propose several other Code changes in the upcoming month. A work session will be held by the Commission on January 17, 2023, to discuss the proposed code changes.

There being no further business, on motion of Ms. Day which was seconded by Mr. Driskill and carried 6-0, the meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM, according to the following:

June Driskill	Aye		Anne Webster Day	Aye
Michael Driskill	Aye		John Vandervelde	Aye
William Jones	Aye		Veda Butcher	Aye
Clifford Hart	Absent			

June Driskill, Chairperson

Attest: _____