

What's in the new Zoning Proposal?

And why you should vote to approve it

This proposed zoning revision combines and updates the town's current zoning and subdivision as well as adds the river corridor hazard regulations into one document. This draft is based on a previous draft that had a Planning Commission Hearing where changes around cannabis language were adopted. The Plainfield Town Plan describes how allowing higher housing density within and around the village is the best way to promote affordable housing and energy efficiency. This revision proposes a higher lot density in the Village District that will allow for more housing units to be created. The recent loss of housing in the village as a result of the summer flooding has created an even greater need for more housing that is outside of the flood prone areas. The loss of housing in the village has decreased the potential revenue for the water and wastewater department. The loss of housing in the town has also shrunk the grand list which reduces the tax base.

The proposed zoning draft addresses the issue of the Goddard Campus being sold to a private party and no longer an educational institution by including it in the Village District. The campus was in the Rural Residential District which does not permit commercial uses or multi-family dwellings. By including the property in the Village District zoning it allows for a greater range of possibilities for the property. This will ensure that it can be on the Grand List as taxable property not as the tax exempt status it has been. It will also allow the property to continue to utilize and pay for its water and wastewater allotment.

The other change to the zoning district map is to have the Rural Residential area surrounding the village be generally a continuous distance from the village center rather than the disconnected areas that it is currently.

A few of the items in this update that increase the potential for new housing in and around the village are:

Decrease the allowable lot size in areas with wastewater service

Decrease the minimum set back distances

Allow Multi-Family Dwellings as a permitted use in the village rather than a conditional use

Allow for an Accessory Dwelling Unit that does not exceed 40% of the total habitable floor space of the single-family dwelling or 1,100 square feet, whichever is greater.

There is language that will allow the town to apply for a Neighborhood Development Area (NDA). If approved an NDA simplifies the state approval process for housing, provides priority for awarding of state grants, and tax credits for flood mitigation upgrades.

This revision has been in the works for a few years and has gone through a preliminary hearing with the Planning Commission. It has updated cannabis cultivation language consistent with state regulations. The river corridor section has been reviewed by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission for compliance with state standards.

In Summary:

- **Higher Density for more and affordable Housing in the Village District**
- **Includes the Goddard College Campus into the Village District**
- **River Corridor Protection that meet State standards and enables the highest level of state reimbursements for flood damages**
- **Language allowing Cannabis cultivation in compliance with State standards**
- **Combines Zoning, Subdivision, Telecommunication and River Corridor bylaws into one document**
- **Includes language that allow for Plainfield to apply for Neighborhood Development Area (NDA)**