



TOWN OF  
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON PLANNING BOARD  
ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADU)  
SUBCOMMITTEE

Tuesday, Nov 22, 2016

7:30 am.

Town Office 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

**MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT:** Jeremy Bonin, Subcommittee Chair; Paul Gorman, Planning Board Chair and Lucy St. John, Planning and Zoning Administrator.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Marianne McEnrue

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steve Root (Job Seamans Road), John Wilson (Lamson Lane), Kittie Wilson (Lamson Lane), Terri Bingham (Little Cove Road), Jack Sheehan (Checkerberry Lane), Tom Stark (Lakeshore Drive), Sandy Stark (Lakeshore Drive), Rob Prohl (Wilmot Center Road), and Tim Eliassen (Poor Road).

**Call to Order:** Subcommittee Chair Bonin called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

**Review of the minutes of Nov 9, 2016**

Jeremy Bonin noted that the minutes are not available at this time.

**Discussion:** Jeremy Bonin noted that staff would be preparing questions to ask Town Counsel. He noted that for this meeting, the Subcommittee would not be discussing issues related to detached ADUs, as the Board has several questions on this issue to present to Town Counsel.

**Public Comment:** Chair Bonin permitted input from the public and thanked them for attending. Verbal input was received at the meeting from: Steve Root, Rob Prohl, Terri Pinkham, Kittie Wilson, Jack Sheehan and John Wilson. Comments included concerns about the following issues.

- ✓ **Budget Process-** How much money in the Town Budget to update the Master Plan, and if not enough is there a line items for this subject.
- ✓ **Build-out analysis,** need to look at what the Master Plan says, and were existing ADU considered and discussed in the Built-out analysis (as referenced in the Master Plan).
- ✓ **Conservation approach recommended** – people value open space and the lakes, don't know all the consequences, what impact has ADUs had on other communities, there are too many unknowns, and ideally we should be looking at allowing apartments in the downtown (village areas).
- ✓ **Density** is an issue, need to look at what the Master Plan says about Build-Out

- ✓ Detached ADU discussion is just complicating the real issues, suggest addressing this in the future. Suggest not allowing them in sensitive environmental areas, detached is not consistent with the Master Plan, and 1,000 square foot print is too larger. Impact on individual property sites. New law doesn't require it, so why does the Subcommittee continue to discuss it and promote it. Detached units will be bad for the lakes.
- ✓ Detached ADU- Question asked, would the Planning Board put it forth as an amendment, even if they don't recommend it.
- ✓ Existing nonconforming detached building- was told by the previous Zoning Administrator they couldn't make any improvements to that building. Is that correct?
- ✓ Height limits
- ✓ Other Towns- need to look at what other Towns are going, for example in Newbury- apartment over a garage, and has to be subordinate. Has the Planning Board looked at other examples? Chair Bonin commented and listed other NH towns and national areas that have been researched.
- ✓ Septic systems. If a current septic system is overbuilt, for example designed for 5 bedrooms, and the house has three bedroom, can an ADU be added, if less than the total of five bedrooms. Chair commented on the need for New London to revise current Septic regulation and have just begun to receive feedback from the town health officer.
- ✓ Size, square footage and floor area of ADUs- why not only allow 750 square feet. Allowing 1,000 square feet is radical. Losing the relationship between primary and secondary use on the lot. Need to have ADUs be subordinate to the principal house on the lot. Changing the character of the area. What is inhabitable floor area? How big can an ADU be? What about space over a garage or improving part of one floor and part of another floor of the building. Chair commented that a 2 bedroom in less than 1000 square feet is difficult and the typical 2 car garage is around 1,000 square feet. Chair also acknowledged that the current draft uses footprint and this presents concerns as illustrated by those in attendance, footprint or some other way to measure needs to be addressed.
- ✓ Town Counsel- suggestion to invite Town Counsel to come to the ADU Subcommittee meetings or Planning Board meetings to share opinions directly with the Board.
- ✓ Voters- typically just vote yes, so why even put forth an amendment for detached ADUs. This is terrifying.

**Subcommittee and Staff commented and responded to various issues including:**

- ✓ Amendment for just addressing detached ADUs- Explained that there will be a separate amendment, if the Planning Board agrees to even include it as an amendment. Planning Board don't typically propose an amendment and then not recommend approval, this is contrary to how the amendment process works. Chair Gorman stated that would be highly irregular.
- ✓ Architectural standards- current language is vague at best.
- ✓ Code Enforcement- recognize need and importance but is not the purview of the Planning Board.
- ✓ Detached ADUs- reasons for discussing it include were discussed at previous meeting including it provides independent living arrangements, Chief Lyon spoke at recent Planning Board meeting about need for housing for people such as firefighters, research

shows in other communities higher success rate with detached units- such as “granny units”, flexibility in design, broader planning issues to address, need to address affordable and workforce housing issues, can’t address all the changes in the Zoning Ordinance right now, need to take a broader look and develop a Vision for the Town, need to look at the recommendations of the current Master Plan and that the Master Plan needs to be updated and trying to address what the new State law requires. Agreed that detached allowed in village areas made the most sense but were awaiting advice from town council.

Reiterated detached ADU portion was dependent on if it would not be in conflict with state law however wording for the possibility is an “in progress” draft. Detached units and can have different requirements, if detached are allowed and if Counsel agrees.

- ✓ Housing Stock- need to diversify, and why restrict and require something be smaller (current Zoning allows 1,000 sf).
- ✓ Nonconforming structures- current provisions in Zoning Ordinance to address them, and improvements to such structures.
- ✓ Other Towns- the Planning Board has looked at what other Towns have done, examples include Hollis, Warner, and will be seeking input from Town Counsel.
- ✓ Parking- will require parking, so parking isn’t just in the front yard (proposed draft will not permit parking in the front setback).
- ✓ Proactive- vs. reactive approach to planning.
- ✓ Reviewed proposed ADU provisions and how they are more restrictive than what is required.
- ✓ Septic- currently no septic maintenance or inspection program required by the Town, and there is not a Town Health Ordinance.
- ✓ Size issue- can currently build a barn bigger than a house.
- ✓ Town Counsel attendance at an open meeting is not common as Counsel is giving the “Town” advice on legal concerns.

**Next meeting:** The next Subcommittee meeting will be posted.

**Motion to Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 8:48 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Bonin, Chair ADU Subcommittee