

PRESS RELEASE

Town of Underhill

Contact: Kari Papelbon (802) 899-4434 | underhillzoning@comcast.net

Underhill, VT – Do you know what zoning district you're in? The Underhill Planning Commission will be holding two public hearings, on December 5 and 11, 7:00 pm at the Underhill Town Office, to present the results of its 2012 Zoning Redistricting Project. Three new zoning districts and several district boundary adjustments will be presented for community consideration. These include new "Underhill Flats Village Center" and "Village Residential" Districts, a new "Underhill Center Village District," the elimination of three small "outlier" Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and district boundary adjustments affecting parcels bordering the Ethan Allen Firing Range.

Underhill's current zoning map, dating from the 1970s and 1980s, was originally developed from soil survey maps, before more detailed parcel maps were available. As a result, district boundaries do not follow parcel lines or other natural features. Many divide properties and are hard to find on the ground. The 2010 Underhill Town Plan calls for a phased update of the town's zoning map, and associated zoning district standards, starting with the town's two historic village areas. Currently, more than ninety percent of lots in Underhill Flats and Underhill Center do not meet minimum district lot size requirements.

Proposed village zoning changes better reflect historic development patterns and reduce the number of nonconforming lots, making it easier for property owners to build additions, porches, decks, garages and other accessory structures. Proposed changes to the Underhill Flats Village District are also consistent with Jericho's village zoning, allowing for more coordinated and uniform village development across the town line.

Underhill Flats is currently zoned for one-acre lots. The proposal is to reduce this minimum to one-quarter acre, in a redefined village district along Route 15 and Park Street, in areas served by community water, and to maintain one acre lots in a new village residential district that includes existing residential lots bordering the village. Underhill Center is currently zoned for five acre lots. This would be reduced to a minimum lot size of one-half acre, within a new, tightly defined, Underhill Center village district. It's important to note that state water and wastewater regulations, and current restrictions on development in floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes, will still apply to new development in both districts.

The elimination of outlier districts and boundary adjustments along the firing range are intended to clean up the zoning map in these areas so that parcels now located in two or more districts will instead be included in a single zoning district. These proposed changes were also evaluated by the Underhill Conservation Commission, and no adverse impacts to natural resources were identified.

The Underhill Planning Commission will incorporate comments received at upcoming public forums in a revised draft to be submitted to the Underhill Selectboard for consideration. The Selectboard will also hold at least one public hearing before warning proposed zoning changes for a March town vote. For more information, contact Kari Papelbon, Underhill Zoning and Planning Administrator (802) 899-4434. This project has been supported by a municipal planning grant from the Vermont Department of Economic, Housing and Community Development.