



TOWN OF WOODSTOCK

415 ROUTE 169
WOODSTOCK, CONNECTICUT 06281-3039
www.woodstockct.gov

MEMO

To: David Fortin, Chairman, PZC Subcommittee

From: Delia P. Fey, AICP Town Planner /ZEO *Delia*

Date: October 28, 2013

Re: Summary of public input gathered for POCD Update

ASSESSOR

860-928-6929 x327

BUILDING

860-928-1388 x328

HIGHWAY

860-974-0330

INLAND/WETLANDS

860-928-1388 x328

**PLANNING &
ZONING**

860-963-2128 x332

RECREATION

860-315-5175

REGISTRAR

860-928-6595 x339

SELECTMEN

860-928-0208 x310

TAX COLLECTOR

860-928-9469 x316

TOWN CLERK

860-928-6595 x322

TREASURER

860-928-5935 x337

WPCA

860-928-6929 x394

FAX

860-963-7557

The following summary in bulleted form represents the public input from the online public information survey referred to as the SurveyMonkey survey and several information meetings held on the following dates: 3/29/09, 7/9/09, 8/24/09, 9/22/09, 10/7/09, 10/29/09, 1/13/10, 4/22/10, 5/25/10 and 12/9/10. The information will be incorporated into the text of the POCD Update as applicable.

Preservation / Conservation

Character

- A strong interest in all sources of public input for retaining historic character in town and in villages. Reuse of historic barns and other structures are one of the recommendations on how to do this along with considering zoning changes to limit the types of land use changes that can occur in the villages. There is both some interest in and concern about design guidelines.
- ‘Village’ means different things to different people. Some people want the development to go in the villages so the new development is near other existing developed areas in the villages therefore leaving the land outside the villages less developed – ‘a European model’. If this approach is used, the new development will occur in more of a village setting as opposed to being distant from other development.
- Other people are concerned that if too much development or if the ‘wrong kind’ or scale of development is ‘loaded’ on the villages they will change too much and not have the small town/village character anymore.
- Some people’s preservation themed comments focus on keeping the historic small town character while others want to keep the agricultural nature of town – the challenge is in doing both. As the industry of agriculture evolves it is changing in divergent ways which will no doubt have an effect on the town. Some farms are buying up more land and taking over other farms and thus benefitting from an economy of scale whereas there are many new small farms that are specializing in what they grow and therefore are carving their own niche in the local economy.
- There is concern that the current approach to development does not protect the important parts of Woodstock that make up the rural character such as the historic villages and agricultural land.

Conservation of Land

- There are concerns mentioned in all forms of public input regarding a significant amount of land has been or is planned to be preserved yet there is not enough manpower to keep up with the easements, and for monitoring the open space to make sure it is being used as planned. There is concern for what is to happen to the open space in the future.
- Also, a common concern is that as more and more of the town is restricted from development, diminishing tax revenues will come from these lands, i.e.: the tax burden is shifted to a smaller area of the town and may not impact everyone equally.
- Recommendation -- PZC has not identified the most desirable land to keep open and instead they rely on the randomness of subdivision applications to protect set-a-sides from each one wherever they are located around town – a patchwork approach.
 - If fee-in-lieu option was chosen more often it could provide money to help purchase outright or the development rights of the choicest land in town. There is a debate on what percentage (21 – 25%) of the town should be preserved/protected and the deadline by when that should happen.
 - A priority list could be created that recommends either by location or other criteria how or when to require physical land as open space and when to require the fee in-lieu. This list could be based on the locations in town where there is a need for one of the types of open space (‘passive’ for wildlife habitat, bird watching or more ‘active’ recreation such as a playground, walking and cross-country running or skiing trails, horseback riding, mountain biking, etc.) or a map could be created to provide this guidance.

Growth / Change

- There is also a common theme in the comments indicating a concern that regulations to preserve the town or control growth may be too strict which could result in increasing the cost of land/homes or opening a business in town.
- There is significant support in all forms of public input for more small businesses throughout town.
- In all forms of public input, there is strong support for having mixed use zoning in town, primarily in South Woodstock and/or for putting the new businesses ‘of the right kind or scale’ near other businesses.
- A few comments suggested businesses be allowed in northwestern Woodstock so they would be closer to I 84 and in South Woodstock so they are near Putnam and closer to all the main roads there.
- A recommendation was made to have new development be located where support services are available such as 3-phase electricity, sewer and water.

- There is an interest in shopping locally to support local businesses, however, it is very difficult to shop locally because there are so few businesses in town. Many people indicated this was because of the difficult Zoning and the difficult process in obtaining a permit. Concern about how residents must leave town to do basically everything. Shopping locally keeps money in town.
- There is a continuing debate on whether the 50% open space requirement is beneficial for Woodstock farms.
 - Many feel that since the set-aside lands are restricted from development but can allow for an agricultural use this is ensuring the future of farming in Woodstock.
 - Others feel that the requirement seriously impacts their ability to use their land as collateral in obtaining financing for any number of things which can include but not be limited to expanding farming operations.
 - The same 50% set aside subdivision regulation is also purported to lessen the value of the land intended for donation to land trusts, development rights, etc. and therefore may actually prevent interested people from voluntarily preserving their land due to a diminished tax deduction.
- Open space subdivisions approved over the past 8- 10 years... Most aren't fully developed because they are too cost prohibitive to allow for affordable housing needed in today's market. Who wants and is maintaining all these fields, trails, dry hydrants, etc.?
- The topic of changing zoning districts in town has come up many times in the public input gathering phase. Other potential zones discussed included: Lake Districts, Village and Village Green Districts, Commercial or business districts, mixed use zones and overlay zones.
 - If other zones are created, the types of uses requiring a Special Permit could be modified to fit the particular zone/district.
- Many people feel there are too many regulations on how development occurs in town. Some people felt that complicated and numerous zoning regulations are for towns with larger populations, in more urban and suburban locations.
- Cul-de-sac style of residential development was indicated to be too suburban and is related to the change in character as moving more towards suburban land use patterns and away from the historically rural, small-town community it used to be.
- There is confusion about how decisions are made in regards to both special permits and subdivision applications. Some people don't think the process as it has been done in the past is fair.
- Not having guidance for where development should go has been described as "too close to spot zoning" in terms of special permits and really is the same thing as having no plan at all.

More information is needed

- There is considerable interest in having more information on the alternatives to current approach to zoning and the potential implications of those alternatives.
- People don't understand how the village green district would work.
- The term 'open space' is confusing to most people.
- There is significant interest in learning more about protecting farmland and how to support active agriculture in town for the long term.

Local Economy / Development

- Many times in the public input it was stated that the process for new businesses to obtain a zoning permit is felt to be too intimidating and has caused many businesses to seek a location in another town.
- A common theme throughout the various opportunities for public input was to make the process easier to understand for new businesses and less overwhelming.
- Recommendation: It was mentioned more than once that there should be a list of businesses that are allowed to open without a special permit; any business not on the list would need a special permit.
- In every opportunity for public input, there was significant support for more small businesses; to make the process more manageable, welcoming and faster. There was also significant interest in keeping local businesses in town once they have grown enough that they need to move out of their initial location.
- Home occupations and other small businesses are the preferred scale of business, however once they grow they should be required to be reviewed in terms of whether they need to move from the home and into a new location more suitable for a larger business.
- Businesses that were identified as having a preferable setting include Linemaster Switch and Orange Art. Businesses can be built with traditional architecture so they appear to fit in even if there is a business inside.

Agriculture

- The farming industry in Woodstock has changed dramatically over time. There used to be 15 dairy bottlers with anywhere from 40 – 60 dairy farms. Each of these farms had on average 10 cows producing 6-7,000 lbs. of milk each year compared to now, we have 12 – 15 farms with 250 – 300 cows each averaging 30,000 lbs. of milk, per year [#s came from 1/13/10 POCD update meeting – needs to be updated]. Dairy farming is just one example of the modern farming trend where today's farms produce more per acre with fewer people involved than in the past. Many farms are also diversifying and some are increasing in size as choice lands become available.
- There is significant interest in retaining active farms with a range of different levels of interest in and ideas of what should be done to keep them. Some propose the land preservation approach while others want to focus on 'eat local' and branding promotions. The other opportunities for locally grown farm products include allowing farm stands to sell more than just the products grown on that farm/property and encouraging the sale of local products at local stores to benefit both store and farmer.
- There is some interest in not putting the development on the best land which would then be available for agriculture.

Challenges in staying an Agricultural Town

- People feel one of the biggest challenges or threats facing Woodstock is keeping working farms in town.
- There is a lot of concern about how to continue to be a farming town if the current farmers age out and are not replaced. How to keep active farms active? How to attract new farms?
- Farms need the flexibility to develop creative and diverse means to generate income in different ways that are compatible with keeping their farm in business.

Population Change

- There is some concern that newer families are not as involved in the community as in the past.
- The combination of demographic changes and the economy have changed the housing needs in town. Senior housing is in more demand as is housing that is affordable for all ages.
- Some come comments have indicated the population growth has changed the character of the town in negative ways, that it is not as rural in character anymore.

Public Safety / Infrastructure

- The biggest issues regarding public safety in Woodstock include maintaining water sources for fire protection; inconsistent cell phone reception for emergency calls; general staffing shortage of trained responders, especially during the day; inconsistent visible street numbering of homes. There are safety concerns with large trucks traveling on narrow and/or gravel roads that may not have been designed for heavy truck traffic. As anticipated changes occur with an aging population, a shortage of trained responders is one of the expected challenges in the future.
- There is significant concern regarding the subject of gravel roads, whether they should be maintained as is or paved. While it is expensive to do the frequent, repetitive and time-consuming maintenance work on gravel roads, they factor in to the rural character of the town perhaps as much as the farms do. Paved roads, while expensive to construct, last longer, require less frequent maintenance and are arguably safer year-round.
- It is felt by many people to be dangerous to have kids walking along the busy Route 169. Many times in the various sources of public input, people have requested sidewalks from the Academy down to Sweet Evalinas and on Route 169 down to South Woodstock.

Natural Resources

- The majority of Woodstock land area is in either the Putnam or Willimantic watersheds. Some concerns relating to water and soil quality along with quality of life include that the Witches Woods and Bungee Lake areas were originally for

- weekend cabins, however over the past several decades, many large, year-round homes have been built. The concern is that this higher level of density will overwhelm the capacity of the soil regarding septic system function.

The survey monkey questions and answers:

Q. 1: Check all that apply.

I live in Woodstock.	232
I own land in Woodstock.	176
I work in Woodstock.	122
I am retired.	53
I am a student (grade 12 and below).	1
I am a college student.	2
I like to visit Woodstock.	18
answered question	289
skipped question	3

Q 2: How long have you lived in Woodstock?

less than 5 years	27
more than 5 years but less than 10 years	43
more than 10 years but less than 20 years	51
more than 20 years but less than 30 years	40
more than 30 years	71
I don't live here anymore.	17
I have never lived here.	37
answered question	286
skipped question	6

Q 3: If you live in Woodstock now, but have lived somewhere else previously, why did you move here?

Answer Options	
answered question	196
skipped question	96

Of the answers, the summarized responses:

rural community	78
work	37
school system	47
raise a family	7
marriage / family ties	38
Land value	11
built / bought house	8
other	19
retirement	4
location	18

avoid dev't elsewhere	1
farm / farmland	13

Q 4: If you used to live in Woodstock and have moved away, why did you move away?

Answer Options	
answered question	65
skipped question	227

Of the answers, the summarized responses:

marriage / family ties	2
not affordable	7
built / bought house out of town	5
job relocation	8
too long a commute	2
moving soon	1
too political	1
n/a	41

Q 5: If you live in Woodstock and commute to work outside of Woodstock, how far is your commute?

Answer Options	Response Count
less than 15 minutes	28
between 15 - 30 minutes	43
between 30 - 60 minutes	24
more than 60 minutes	13
not applicable	145
answered question	253
skipped question	39

Q 6: If you live in Woodstock, do you live in:

Answer Options	Response Count
Single family home	218
Apartment (on same property with a single family home)	5
Apartment (in rental housing complex)	0
Condominium	5
Senior housing	1
Seasonal Residence (within a Lake District)	1
Seasonal Residence (Solair)	1
Seasonal Residence (Campground)	0
I don't live here.	39

Other (please specify)	5
answered question	270
skipped question	22

Other, written in responses:

single family home w/ in-law accommodations
I live in a single family house in a lake district
We own a single family home in a lake district that we mostly use seasonally
farm
Live above commercial space in one of two apts

Q 7: What characteristics most define Woodstock? (please rate each one)

What characteristics most define Woodstock? (please rate each one)

Answer Options	Most	A little	Neutral	Not Much	Not at all	Response Count
Agricultural Town	214	66	2	1	0	283
Bedroom Community	78	82	61	32	12	265
High Real Estate Values	52	91	92	25	4	264
Historic Villages	112	102	43	11	2	270
Quaint	134	98	26	10	4	272
Rural	238	37	2	1	0	278
Scenic	236	39	3	2	0	280
Small-town	200	57	10	4	2	273
Vacation Homes / Second Homes	6	53	76	65	38	238
Other (please specify)						22
answered question						285
skipped question						7

Other, written in responses, summarized:

- 2- High taxes for level of services
- 2 - Lots of open land
- Great school system
- Unfriendly town
- Working farms
- Historic and open space preservation
- Dirt roads
- No town center
- Located in National Heritage Corridor
- Friendly people
- Very divided town politically

Agricultural town that is becoming developed
 Rural town that through development becoming a distant suburb
 The Fair
 A lot of concern about keeping taxes low

Q 8: Does Woodstock need more of any of the following? (check all that apply)

Answer Options	Response Count
Agriculture / Farms	106
Community Center	84
Fire Departments	5
Libraries	23
Protected Open Space	149
Athletic / sports fields	54
Play grounds	44
Walking trails	147
Sidewalks	40
Jobs	90
Stores	68
Restaurants	86
Office-type Businesses	81
Manufacturing Businesses	64
Service-type Businesses	76
Other (please specify)	30
answered question	274
skipped question	18

Other, written in responses:

Protected open space	149
Walking trails	147
Agriculture /farms	106
Jobs	90
Restaurants	86
Community Center	84
Office-type businesses	81
Service-type businesses	76
Stores	68
Manufacturing businesses	64
Athletics /sports fields	54
Playgrounds	44
Sidewalks	40
Other*	30
Libraries	23
fire departments	5

*The Other included: usable open space, family oriented stuff, senior services center, regional YMCA, bike lanes and trails, businesses – they pay taxes and town should be more business friendly, radio / cell phone reception, combine libraries, new or repaired sidewalks.

Q 9: Does Woodstock need more variety in housing types?

Answer Options	Response Count
Starter Homes (first home for young adults / families)	68
Empty nester / Retirement Home	61
Elderly / Assisted Living Community	62
Condominium	14
Apartment	16
Single Family Home	16
No more variety is necessary.	139
Other (please specify)	17
answered question	266
skipped question	26

Other, written in responses:

3 –don't want more development

Not sure what's needed

Eco-friendly homes

Livestock housing

Mixed uses – includes homes

Affordable housing / apartments

Leave it to the market

More conventional residential developments like Kady / Ebbitts on Rte 171 that is well liked

Q 10: Communities often have places where people meet to visit and catch up on community news with family, friends and neighbors. What is your favorite community gathering place in Woodstock?

Answer Options	Response Count
answered question	216
skipped question	76

Written in responses:

Restaurants (Sweets -52, general restaurants-11, Java Jive -8, W. Valley Country Store -6, Mrs. Bridges -3, Inn-1, Mansion -1)	82
Public spaces such as libraries, post office, town hall, schools, sports fields/athletic events, fire dept.s,	68

transfer station	
Out of town / don't have one	50
Religious	22
Public Parks such as Camp Nahaco, Roseland Park and playgrounds	18
At work	8
Large scale - the Fair	9
Small scale - in-home	7
Non-profit / history (Roseland Cottage / Historic Society)	4
Individual (while out walking or playing golf)	4
Total	272

Q 11a: If you don't have a favorite gathering place in town, what kind of place would you like to have in Woodstock? Q 11b: Where should that place be?

Answer Options	
answered question	116
skipped question	176

Written in responses:

Coffee shop	7
We don't need more/ enough already exist	12
Town center w/ sidewalks	1
Restaurant / pub	11
Community center	36
Enhanced library (w/ community/meeting space, programming, evening hours)	6
Senior Citizen Center	6
Sports Complex / fields	4
Town Hall	2
Nature and public park/ trails/ recreational open space	5
Private public golf course, 18 holes	2
If it is to be done, it should be without any gov't involvement	3

11b: For those that would like a gathering place, they preferred the following locations as indicated:

Centrally located (geographically)	7
Near Town Hall	5

South Woodstock	4
Along Route 169 / 171 corridors	3
Camp Nahaco	3
West Woodstock	2
Roseland Park	2
Woodstock Fairgrounds	2
North Woodstock	1
Near Woodstock Academy	1
Use Granges	1
Use Churches	1

Q 12: How concerned are you about the following issues in Woodstock? (please rate each one)

Answer Options	Highly Concerned	Moderately Concerned	Neutral	Somewhat Concerned	Not Concerned	Response Count
Attracting businesses	59	92	62	12	38	263
Maintaining quality schools	178	61	25	2	7	273
Maintaining a stable tax rate without cutting services	137	76	36	5	18	272
Preserving open space / undeveloped land	142	75	32	7	16	272
Preserving Town's rural character	174	64	23	4	7	272
Retaining active farms	177	70	14	7	7	275
Too rapid rate of development	77	61	72	14	42	266
Too slow rate of development	18	42	76	9	117	262
Other (please specify)						25
answered question						276
skipped question						16

'Other' Answers summarized:

Count	Answers
3	Impossible to maintain services without increasing taxes
3	eroding community character through increased use of need for work on scenic roads, preserving historic buildings/commons, maintaining quality of environment
2	Need a plan for the future of the town
2	long-term affordability of the town for the general population
2	broadening the town's tax base
2	more development can cause more noise, pollution and truck traffic
1	Open Space subdivisions are not working, they are cost prohibitive to creating

	affordable housing.
1	Prop 46 limits town's ability to maintain infrastructure including roads and school buildings
1	concern about Prop 46 being bad for the town
1	Getting more people involved
1	We shouldn't be trying to support a big city functioning Gov. in a small town.
1	Should create a new village center with mixed uses
1	Young people are moving away because it is too expensive to live here and there are not many opportunities for them.
1	Retain what services? The schools are better than ever and the student population isn't growing, the rural character will take a lot to lose, they could put a Riverfront Commons on Rte 169 and it wouldn't hurt it. Go look at Rte 83 in Ellington, stores and cows next to each other. Rural w/ services!
1	Schools should be priority
1	non-land use concerns such as small town politics
1	larger housing developments (with higher numbers of homes)
1	challenges of attracting more businesses, where should they go? What kind?

Q 13: Please rate how you feel about the following features of Woodstock. (please rate each one)

Answer Options	Love it	Like it	Neutral	Don't like it much	Dislike it	Response Count
Agriculture / Farms	185	67	13	1	2	268
Dirt / Gravel Roads	89	59	68	30	25	271
Historic Buildings	142	91	37	2	0	272
Historic Villages	133	84	46	3	0	266
Location of current businesses in Town	34	117	95	19	2	267
Rural	198	61	9	2	0	270
Population Size	88	105	65	10	2	270
Scenic Roads	176	61	25	3	6	271
Scenic Views	199	61	11	0	0	271
Other Comments (please specify)						19
answered question						275
skipped question						17

'Other' Answers summarized:

Other comments

	BUSINESS RELATED COMMENTS
	need more businesses
	Like Putnam to serve as industrial/commercial center unless business is hidden
	Like to see businesses grouped in a "business district" like the area near the fairgrounds.
	Insufficient business zones
	It would be nice to increase businesses (restaurants, market, gas station etc.) on the western side of town (near Bigelow Hollow/Bungay)
	Businesses should be monitored closely due to some being in very remote locations.
	We need a town center--a place where enough businesses are located that folks congregate.
	SCENIC ROADS/ DIRT/GRAVEL ROADS
	high cost of maintaining dirt / gravel roads is a concern
	Repeal the "Scenic Road ordinance! It's a chicken bone in a dogs throat! The dirt roads in town cost too much to maintain and take too much of the road crew's time in the spring just putting in more gravel. Besides...the gravel only washes into the wetlands and streams causing more problems. Why cater to a small segment of whiners while the rest of the town pays and has to put up with pot holes and crappy patch jobs that last a week. Do it right the first time!
	I don't like that school buses are unable to drive down them.
	Scenic Rd - it's a joke

	COMMUNITY CHARACTER
2	High interest in retaining existing rural, small town, historic character
	Historic Villages should be left to the concern of the people living in them and not forced on them.
	Our rural aesthetic is our most valuable asset.
2	part of a National Heritage Corridor - love it!
	Population Growth
2	concerned that the population size is too high and/or that more would cause Woodstock to lose its small town character
	OTHER
	These are the reasons we moved here. Know change will happen, hope P&Z plans for it. In the towns where we have lived((8). Those with good zoning regs. and enforcement were and remain quality towns. Others sink.

Q 14: Should Woodstock consider creating additional land use zones for other land use types?

Answer Options	Response Count
Yes.	125
No.	76
I don't know.	67
answered question	268
skipped question	24

Q 15: If you would like there to be other land use zones, what kind of zones should be created? (check all that apply)

Answer Options	Response Count
Agricultural	47
Commercial	53
Lake Neighborhood	35
Mixed Use (residential and businesses in the same zone)	67
Professional Office	53
Small-scale business	76
Village	51
Other (please specify)	14
answered question	125
skipped question	167

Other responses:

Historic Districts should be zoned appropriately, not just the buildings, but the surrounding viewscapes
Cottage enterprises in mixed use zones, commercial like we had in the past
Small distribution facilities. (10,000-15,000 sq ft.)
Single family residential
Historic zone for Woodstock Academy area, Bowen House, etc.
Mixed use in villages
Industrial park
Open space/nature reserve
Two Family
Mixed use: residential/business/community center-gathering place
Conservation/Preservation
We need to attract businesses to help the tax base. Commercial zones don't have to be eyesores if zoning sets some rules that help the look without making it impossible or expensive to set up a new business.

Q 16: If you would like additional land use zones; where should they go? (Please specify each zone by type, including your recommended part of Town.)

North Woodstock - small scale commercial businesses in village style setting

East Woodstock - small scale businesses

West Woodstock – small scale business, village zone and agricultural

South Woodstock - commercial zone in southeast corner, by Rte 171 / 169 intersection to proposed land uses: include mixed use, small scale, commercial, village zone

Comments about business zone(s) in South Woodstock:

- seem to have a seedling business zone there already
- most businesses are in S Woodstock now so that's where more should go
- keep businesses in current areas
- commercial zone in So. Woodstock would not be out of place as most businesses are there already

Woodstock Hill Historic District – proposed as a village style zone

Lake Zones near established lake neighborhoods

- Can lake zones be near village districts?

Historic Village Zone: mixed uses, professional offices along busy main roads **Comments about village zones:** should encompass every historic common

Should not zone specific areas -- allow land uses throughout town, small scale and mixed use businesses

Comments about allowing businesses throughout town

- Allow development with special permit and include road frontage buffer so not to hurt rural view of community.

General comments about zoning regulations pertaining to businesses:

- ideas / criteria based instead of location based
- zones or businesses should be located where support services are available (3-phase electricity, sewer & water) -- & DON'T establish zones / uses where these services are not available
- put businesses in less populated areas
- professional office should be accessible to main roads
- many people are unsure and want more information
- land in PA 490 now should be primarily zoned agricultural
- Route 169 scenic byway should be protected w/ separate zoning
- Agricultural including all existing farms operating or not, residential all else
- recreation park zone - limit kinds of businesses, activities & dev't that would dilute the value of our rec park facilities
- commercial businesses should be located near current areas of the same. Either in I Park or near Rogers
- camouflage businesses so they look like a farm
- commercial or manufacturing should be as far off road as possible
- should create business zones near various villages and population centers
- leave scenic routes and currently high traveled roads should be left as rural as possible and put new dev't "off the beaten path"
- small scale business can go anywhere that fits zoning but South W. better suited for commercial and professional while Hill, East, North, West better for village style
- zoning should be based on soil suitability - based on resources needed to support business - keep truck traffic off gravel roads, soils suitability for septic systems
- put new development where these zones (uses) already are, helps to maintain yet not allow spread to go where it's not wanted

Q 17: Are you in favor of continuing the Special Permit process as is throughout town?

yes	143
no, I would prefer another type of zoning	33
it should be modified	37
I don't know	51
comments	34
answered Q	264
Skipped Q	28

Other comments:

Positive answers relating to keeping the Special Permit process as is:

The process should be more stringent for proximity to wetlands and historic districts/roads
(2) Current process allows for case-by-case consideration of special permits, each on its own merits
Keep the special permit process for businesses that would go into an existing building that keeps with the character of Woodstock

Negative answers:

Some businesses may not be appropriate in all zoning districts (parts of town).
If business also complies with state regulation and local health dept guidelines then do we need special permit?
Too dependent on board interpretation, seems like anything can be approved and there is no protection that historic villages, ag lands and character will be preserved.
Some permits in the past seem to have been issued based on familial connections
Eliminate this zoning to make Woodstock more friendly to business.
We need to make the process easier so that it will attract small business and not make them feel the process is overwhelming.
It's corrupt
If allowed, why the need for hearing? Should be allowed to do what you want with your own land that you paid for and continue to pay taxes for!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
I think it is very difficult for someone to try to do something for the town w/all they have to go thru w/the special permits.
If a person owns his/her property, they should be allowed to do with it as they please. Too much regulation in Woodstock
It seems cumbersome to someone wanting to start a small business, especially in a spot where a business was previously.
It is NOT fair as it's been practiced. There are no Regulations strong enough to maintain impartial decisions.
It sure looks like spot zoning
Too close to spot zoning. It really says "no plan"

Other comments about the Special Permit process:

If you pay taxes on your land you should be able to do what you want within reason.

Any small scale home based business or Ag business should be allowed in any location.	
Home occupations can grow too large and should be evaluated to see if they would then need a special permit	
People want more information about alternatives	
Ease out special permits in certain areas as zoning parameters are adopted for those areas	
Sensitive environmental and historic areas need protection	
How should businesses be regulated? impact on land & traffic & population	
The permits should be renewable every so many years & checked on to be certain they are doing just that business.	
While this can work, it provides an opportunity for a well-connected party to exploit the process; this is not an immediate concern, however. Having regulations in place of special permitting would reduce this concern.	
Agricultural zoning?? Is there a way to protect agricultural lands and support active farmers?	
More clearly defined property use rights	
What are the implications?	
Like the question above, I'm afraid many of the questions you ask will give Woodstock more of a suburban look and feel. Part of our charm was the lack of strategic planning. I'm not saying there aren't good aspects of planning, but caution of going too far. With exception to industry, all the extra zoning districts will go too far.	
Areas need to be designated that would allow for limiting certain types of activity while also giving more latitude of activity in the remaining. Right now if an activity meets all of the criteria it can and will be done...especially if they come loaded w/ big lawyers and challenge the town.	
Too political, not strong enough; want tougher regs.	

Q. 18: How should business be regulated?

answered	30
skipped	262

More zoning / regulation

Specific districts in town including village districts and separate commercial districts
strict locational regulation for all but home based. Home based should limit employee numbers, parking, emissions, noise etc.
By allowing no impact to private homes
I feel businesses should be away from residential zones. Rocky Hill Road is an example of poor zoning. 2 construction type businesses, with all kinds of vehicles strewn on lawns along the road and in the woods. Recently large amounts of concrete slabs were piled up close to the road. Now sawdust & wood debris has been dumped on the roadside!!
Additional historic districts if the regulations for districts would act as zoning.

Zoning laws can (and should) be allow businesses of a certain size an easier path to development. Large businesses/factories (like Crabtree) should still require input from the town. Making special business development areas along 169 and 171 could allow particular types of businesses to open more quickly, without as much red tape. Encourage hi-tech industries/businesses to come to town.
Through permitted zones.
Keep business such as restaurants, shops, etc. in the town or village areas. Keep any more industry, such as Rogers, out of rural communities.
1. impact on environment a. pollution b. noise c. traffic 2. industry (as in no heavy industry - 18 wheelers would destroy the character of town)
Businesses should be allowed in zones by regulation and then one the regulations are in effect by right without a special permit
Extremely regulated: location, frontage, signage, parking lots, lighting, structure and conformity to a rural environment.
By size and locations (zoned)
By Planning and Zoning Commission
Stay away from possible enviromental issues or problems. Keep the exterior looking nice, but not expensive. Try to keep businesses like manufacturing set back a bit (linemaster like)

less zoning / regulation

Zoning permit, not special permit
State regulations
Sparingly
Businesses should be allowed and encouraged anywhere.
Laissez faire, "hands off", flexible regulations provided they aren't polluting or endangering the public.
with minimum oversight from the town
Simplify permitting process through as-of-right zoning for certain businesses in certain areas.

Other

Most important is keeping with the character of the rural/ag community
current Village Green District and Industrial Park
Thoughtfully! carefully! supportive of good business practice and good planning by zoning & statute

I don't know / need more info

What are the options??

Q. 19: For those who wanted the special permit process to be modified, they had these comments:

answered Q	26
skipped	266

Make it easier / simpler

don't make it so difficult for progress to occur!!
people get too crazy about everything. They need to chill out and relax
Present permits should be modified to encourage business and help them to fit in without having them jump thru so many hoops
It is too rigid - ease up. We will never attract any businesses of any kind with the strict permits that are in place right now.
The comission should work with the business especially when there is one all ready in existance that needs to move or expand. Instead of putting monetary road blocks in the way they should work with the business. I know of two situations where money became such a factor that good oportunites for a business was lost.
treat the prospective new business as the most important in the town.. make the process less intimidating b y the zoning official.
The public hearing part seems excessive, at least for some things.
Take into consideration the persons idea to help bring more into the community. With the policy now it is very difficult for someone to try to put more into this community
We should encourage certain types of businesses--those that create jobs but don't destroy the rural charm of the area. For example, Bakery, Restaurant, food market.
The zoning officer should be able to approve it within the guidelines, allowing more time at the meetings for those requesting variations of the guidelines.
It should be more flexible to create a more friendly enviroment for business.

Method issues

It should mimik other similar towns and showld also be a faster proces while maintaining some strict rules.
use of practical decision making not the heart
Home occupations should be modified with restrictions, once the business grows beyond the limits it should be moved into appropriate space.
Create a list of approved businesses so that a public hearing isn't necessary. Anything outside that list would require public input.
Allow special permits, but ensure there is no favoritism and have the surrounding community made aware and vote

It is too judgemental on the part of the commission members depending on the type of business
Special permits should be renewed within a specific time period to ensure no variations in use
Less arbitrary
Special permits can cause problems and issues with existing residential areas. This is a problem that can get worse over time, mixing larger and larger commercial with existing residential.

Clear Guidelines

Definition of which special permit businesses are appropriate for residential areas
all uses should be broken down to a specific code and taxes reasonably
clear guidelines
discourage large truck traffic on scenic dirt roads; consider noise and fume impacts in concentrated residential areas

Q. 20: Is there anything related to land use or zoning that you would like to change about the Town?

Answer Options	Response Count
	129
answered question	129
skipped question	163

Business related

create commercial zone
more support for cottage industry
keep commercial and industrial business in So. Woodstock area
more businesses could help reduce tax burden - small business and small commercial distribution would help
ag businesses should be favored over non-ag businesses
Make the process for opening and maintaining a high quality business more business-friendly
Allow more businesses to bring jobs and help tax revenues grow.
Too difficult to shop locally because not enough businesses in town because of the difficult zoning and difficult process in obtaining a permit. Concern about how residents must leave town to do basically everything. Shopping locally keeps money in town.
Home occupation, issue permits for one to three years, require review, determine if business has grown beyond limits. Refer to special permit if it has.
I feel that making rules is a good idea but we should not get caught up in not helping our neighbors start or keep a business.

More business. Keep our farms working.
No increase in traffic if business is allowed out of home
Re: special Permit: Simplify it by writing zoning that is based on common sense instead of turning zoning into a intellectual mind dump. Yes - changes: 1. relax regulations that have to do with complicating the start-up of small business. 2. Agriculture: P&Z needs to understand that farming is the lifeblood of our society and farmers are largely going extinct because they can't afford to stay in business unless they learn to develop creative means to generate income. Farmer need to constantly adapt, this means they need flexibility in Zoning.
stick to like locations for business &/or industry
more business, for tax base and employment
The special permit process can stop a business from coming here.