

**Brandon Select Board Hearing – Proposed Brandon Land Use Revision (BLUO)
December 16, 2024**

NOTE: These are unapproved minutes, subject to amendment and/or approval at the subsequent board meeting.

Board Members in Attendance: Doug Bailey, Heather Nelson, Brian Coolidge, Ralph Ethier, Tim Guiles

Others In Attendance: Seth Hopkins, Bill Moore, Vicki Disorda, Jack Schneider, Steven Jupiter, Tricia Welch, Karen Rhodes

Others by Zoom: Tom Kilpeck

1. Open Hearing

Doug Bailey, Board Chair, opened the public hearing at 6:09PM.

Motion by Heather Nelson/Tim Guiles to adopt the agenda for the BLUO hearing. **The motion passed unanimously.**

The purpose of this public hearing is to amend the Brandon Land Use Ordinance (BLUO) to increase housing opportunities, reduce nonconformities, align bylaws with changes in state law, and minimize impacts to local resources in a manner that is consistent with the Brandon Town Plan.

Mr. Bailey stated the public was welcome to provide comments or questions on the proposed BLUO revisions.

2. Public Comment

Heather Nelson requested Jack Schneider review the steps that were taken regarding the BLUO update. Mr. Schneider advised the Town Plan was completed at the end of last year and was approved in early 2024, which is the basis for the zoning ordinance revision. The Town received a grant for this project and engaged the Rutland Regional Planning Commission to assist with the BLUO revision. There were 11 meetings held and a walking tour that were open to the public. The Planning Commission reached out to the Chamber, worked with two different Zoning Administrators, and voted to forward the draft BLUO to the Select Board following their public hearing that was held on November 20th. There were no significant changes to the BLUO following the hearing. The goal is for the Select Board to review the draft, hold a public hearing and vote on whether to approve the draft.

Vicki Disorda stated she attended the Planning Commission's public hearing and her main concern is parking as there are only two public parking lots in Brandon. Seth Hopkins clarified there are two parking lots that are owned by the Town. Ms. Disorda stated the Town has an expectation that a certain number will be used for downtown commerce and there is not a solid number for how much growth the Town can tolerate. If parking has not been addressed and it has not been determined how much is allocated for residential or commercial use, it cannot be known whether to allow for potential growth. As far as new development it would be limited and there could not be more new development unless the parking is addressed. It should be concerning as the lack of parking is impacting local businesses.

Ms. Disorda stated the lot sizes have been decreased to .2 acre for residential and in the designated village it is .25 acre. There is a new requirement for driveways that all shall be constructed so that autos can turn around in the driveway to enter the road forward-facing. In her area, there is not enough space to do that and noted this will be a cost increase for new builds and will make it more difficult for people to build on certain lots.

Ms. Disorda noted in Section 617, there is a requirement when any non-residential use abuts a residential use, it shall be screened and landscaped which will be a deterrent to economic growth in mixed use areas. She noted there was also a mention in the hearing of underground powerlines for new builds that will also be an added expense when building. This revision is supposed to be done to make housing more affordable and not more expensive.

Brandon Select Board Hearing – Proposed Brandon Land Use Ordinance (BLUO) Revision
December 16, 2024

Ms. Disorda stated it was also mentioned that mobile homes are no longer going to be allowed. Jack Schneider advised that pertains to the new village section that is the residential downtown areas.

Chris Conlin stated housing is not affordable and asked why the Town is not trying to get jobs here, rather than increasing density.

Seth Hopkins stated Logan Solomon of the Rutland Regional Planning Commission emailed the Town indicating that the Select Board hearing needed to be held in December and the Select Board would need to approve the revisions as a stipulation of the grant was that the approval had to be done before December-end. Ms. Disorda did not think the grant should be the basis for approving the BLUO update as the cost for purchasing the dog park was more than what is being received from the grant.

Bill Moore advised that the Town is receiving \$12,500 for the purchase of the dog park that was designated from a sale and the purchase of the dog park was contingent upon receiving a grant.

Mr. Moore also noted that his focus has been to bring employers to Town, however, the Town does not have the housing for a large influx of workers. He noted that Naylor Breen has a project underway for workforce housing. The Town needs young people to fill the positions and places for them to live. The State has a push to get affordable housing as there are jobs available. The Town has employers but does not have enough employees and housing is desperately needed for young people to fill the jobs. Tim Guiles noted Naylor/Breen and Woodcraft provide good wages.

Doug Bailey noted that in the plan for the dog park, it is hoped to have some additional parking in that area with the use of the land obtained.

Jack Schneider stated the Planning Commission did not totally rewrite the BLUO and in the current BLUO parking for downtown residents has to be available within ¼ mile. The density in the current BLUO is one dwelling unit per ¼ acre and the State has mandated that five dwelling units be available per one acre. Mr. Schneider noted they do not have to be tiny houses but could be a quadruplex or duplex. Mr. Schneider also noted there is not a lot of space in the village where one can actually build and the comment regarding the underground utilities is a recommendation but is not a requirement in the BLUO.

Ms. Disorda stated H652 mentions identified capacity constraints, which means that parking is a huge issue and it talks about the municipal panel can take into consideration public parking spaces and public transit, which is why she was asking how many spaces the Town has.

3. Close Hearing

The hearing was closed at 6:28PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary