ZBA amendments committee

Thank you for all the hard work you have put into this. I wanted to address a few of my concerns.

I tried to be brief and concise, it didn’t work!

I understand that the whole thing arose from the situation in the center of West Tisbury reaching critical mass. Stepping back, this all could have been avoided in a few ways. Enforce the current zoning by laws with regards to the village district; track how many permits were given out for events so there would not be this overlap with disastrous results; the selectmen stop taking it upon themselves to override the will of town meeting and 2/3 of the voters to ‘change’ zoning with event permits. The attitude that we are here because we have to be is incorrect.

The biggest issue seems to be the commercialization of the village district. One can argue all day long about the ‘historical uses’ at the Grange. But no one can argue that there has been more and more and things that got permitted that never should have been. (Event permit loophole). The town has grown in size and over the years zoning has been put in place to help address this and keep the rural community. Given that there is a church, general store, food store and library as well as the Howes House and Field Gallery, the center of town is very limited in how much more it can handle. Again, current zoning by laws would take care of this. Giving out of event permits with limited oversight or in outright violation of by laws make the situation untenable and dangerous.

Going forward, whatever happens at the Grange, all parking needs to be contained there. The Artisians has set a good example (albeit being a commercial enterprise that should not be allowed under current zoning) by having detail officers and taking care of the parking/traffic. No other entity would be allowed to put the burden of their events on the town. We know there is limited parking in the town center and the church has none. I do not count the church services as there is nothing commercial about it. When there is an ask for fundraisers/commercial activity/limited retail sales, there needs to be close attention paid to how many others things are happening. Nothing should happen at 10am on Sundays that would cause more congestion. If the Grange is doing something they all park there, etc.

The ZBA works hard in what they do. The attitude that they are saying ‘no’ is incorrect. They are enforcing the zoning by laws that the town has voted on.

I am also deeply concerned about this idea of weddings. All of a sudden, every single home in West Tisbury can hold one commercial wedding on their property every year by right? And ask for more? We are turning WT into one giant commercial district? Why? No one should have to be subjected to this. I strongly disagree with this and I am utterly confused as to why this would be proposed. If there is an issue with weddings, enforce current by laws. If everyone started speeding would we increase the speed limit? I would like to see that removed altogether.

I will try and attend the meeting on Tuesday. Thank you again for your time.

Tara Whiting-Wells