

PC LUR and Plan update RE: Act 143 Accessory Farm Businesses

MI Notes for PC meeting 8-22-19/9-19-19

1.

Now, PC to prepare a statement of purpose for accessory farm businesses for both town plan and regs. Accessory farm businesses are a means to help VT farms survive financially. Charlotte has a long history of supporting Agriculture and attracting residents who highly value a working landscape. Act 143 is the State of Vermont's attempt to facilitate new revenue possibilities to sustain its farm economy. It calls for a partnership of the Town Planning Departments & the State to administer the Act with a shared, clear vision to sustain the healthy farming communities we desire.

2.

Now, PC further clarifies this purpose while selecting and defining new (Act 143) terminology for LURs.

A "Farm" defined by the "RAPS", (required agricultural practices) -- a farm is > 4 acres, or land that generates >\$2000 from the sale of agricultural products it produces.

An "On Farm" or "Accessory On Farm Business" is subordinate to the Farm Operation. It is located on the Farm and it utilizes or sells "On Farm" products. This could include a market, a café or restaurant. It might also include tastings, Ag. related education, public or private events to facilitate the sale of farm products. Agri-tourism, as seen in Italy, may be a model for on farm sales. The business could be quite diverse but based on the sale of locally produced products. The town would be charged with determining how the character of the Farm business can impact the town positively.

"Qualifying Products". These are products either grown on the farm, which has the Accessory Business, or are grown on other local Vermont farms, as a means of supporting local agriculture. Products might also be manufactured from products grown on the farm or other local farms.

Qualifying products are not clearly defined in Act#143. We could begin with the broader definition above that may do the most to support local agriculture.

"Principally Produced". Defined as either weight or volume of raw agricultural products produced, stored, grown or prepared on the farm. Again if "Principally Produced" is accepted to mean products grown or raised on one or more farms, sales from other small farms would be facilitated.

3.

Versus calling for Site Plan Review and performance measures right away, maybe better begin with a ZA managed **registry** to collect data for a period of time to inform the development of potential and feasible site plan review and performance measure criteria and standards.

RE "Performance Standards": There has been discussion of auditing sales figures from Accessory On-Farm Businesses as a way of encouraging sales of products "Principally Produced" on the farm, or of "Qualifying Products". If performance standards are to be used, the terminology would have to be clarified and piloted, and the record detail required will have to be specified, the frequency will need to be set, and the duty will have to be assigned to someone capable of understanding the figures.