

November/December 2020

# Rumney Planning Board Survey

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## Introduction

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The Rumney Planning Board is beginning to explore the level of community support for a zoning ordinance in town. Rumney has subdivision regulations but not a zoning ordinance. The Rumney Master Plan recommended "a community-wide conversation involving divergent perspectives to determine the appropriate balance of land use regulations vs. other approaches" to implement the land use policies contained in the plan (p. 20). These policies, developed through a multi-faceted community engagement process, include:

- Protect the strength of the NH Route 25 corridor as an economic driver for the town.
- Encourage denser development in the existing village areas while maintaining property values.
- Protect the quality of water in Stinson Lake.
- Encourage certain types of business throughout the town's rural areas while protecting neighboring property values.
- Encourage industry in West Rumney.
- Discourage development in areas where a safety hazard or degraded community resources would result such as floodplains, rapidly eroding riverbanks and very steep slopes.

The Planning Board made the decision to conduct a survey of residents and landowners in Rumney to gauge community support for a zoning ordinance, identify some of the priorities for a zoning ordinance if one were to be proposed, and identify concerns residents may have about zoning.

The Planning Board contracted with Community Planning Consultant Tara Bamford to assist the Board in developing the survey, conduct the survey utilizing the

SurveyMonkey on-line platform, and provide this report on the survey results for the Planning Board to share and discuss with the public.

## **Methodology**

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The goal of the Planning Board was to collect as much input from the community with the survey as possible. As a means for catching any problems with the on-line survey structure early in the process, a "soft launch" in mid-September announced the survey on the town website and provided the SurveyMonkey link. In an effort not to be lost in either the increased mail leading up to the November 3, 2020 election or in holiday mail, postcards with the SurveyMonkey link were mailed the week of November 9th. The post cards were mailed out by bulk mail to the 1,133 addresses in the voting and property owner databases with the 03266 Rumney zip code. The 477 property owner addresses with a nonRumney zip code (477) were mailed a postcard by first class mail. Information on obtaining a paper copy of the survey was also provided.

Every member in a household was encouraged to complete a survey. SurveyMonkey was set up to enable multiple responses from each digital device accordingly. Paper survey responses were manually entered into SurveyMonkey,

The postcard encouraged recipients to conduct the survey within two weeks. Responses resulting from the receipt of the post cards began on November 13, 2020. The data for this report was compiled on December 15, 2020, providing a bit over a month following the receipt of the post cards. The survey link was left open for an additional period of time to ensure that community members who did not have an opportunity to respond in the first month could still provide input for the Planning Board's consideration if desired.

## **Responses vs Respondents**

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Since no limit was placed on the number of responses that could be entered on-line from each individual computer, phone, or other digital device, it is important to differentiate between the number of *responses* to the survey that were received vs.

the number of survey *respondents*. A total of 426 responses were captured through December 15th. Fourteen of these were via paper surveys and 412 through the SurveyMonkey on-line interface.

Each digital device utilized to complete the survey has its own unique IP address. SurveyMonkey captures the IP address associated with each individual survey response. To ensure user anonymity was maintained, IP addresses were not provided to the Planning Board by the consultant. IP addresses were examined by the consultant only to identify any potential for individuals who may have provided more than one response to bias the survey results.

Three hundred and forty unique IP addresses had provided responses to the survey via the SurveyMonkey on-line interface through December 15, 2020.

Fifty-seven of these IP addresses were associated with multiple survey responses as follows:

- 48 IP addresses were associated with 2 survey responses each.
- 5 IP addresses were associated with 3 survey responses each.
- 2 IP addresses were associated with 4 survey responses each.
- 2 IP addresses were associated with 5 responses each.

In most cases, when there were two responses from one IP address, the answers were not identical. These can be judged with a high level of confidence to represent primarily two different respondents using the same device and only an insignificant number of individual respondents submitting two sets of responses.

Of the five IP addresses associated with three responses each, two only used the additional surveys to provide additional comments and one appeared to be submitted in error. Of the two IP addresses associated with four responses each, one only completed comment fields and one used only the comment fields after the first

response. The two IP addresses that were associated with five responses each only completed comment fields.

Since the responses to the open-ended questions are reported here qualitatively rather than quantitatively, it can be concluded that the opportunity to provide multiple responses from each IP address achieved with Planning Board's goal of inclusivity without biasing the results of the survey. For the questions that were designed to be reported quantitatively, it can be stated with a high level of confidence that the percentages of responses to each question closely represent the percentage of respondents. Results are reported accordingly.

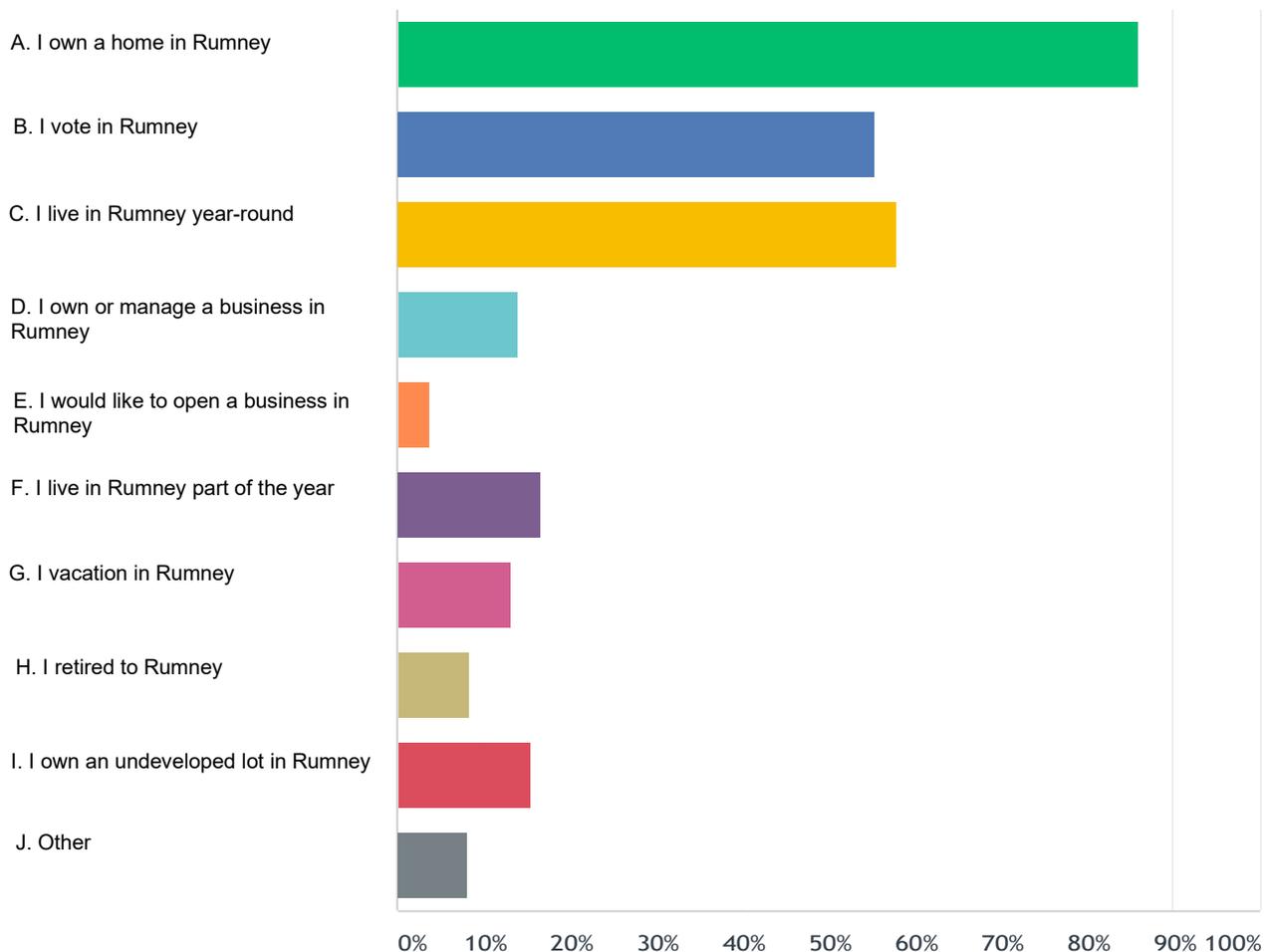
Results collected through December 15 are summarized in the following section and provided in full in the Appendix.

## **SUMMARY OF RESPONSES**

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# Q1 What is your relationship with the town of Rumney? (Please check ALL that apply)

Answered: 426 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A. I own a home in Rumney	86%	366
B. I vote in Rumney	55%	236
C. I live in Rumney year-round	58%	247
D. I own or manage a business in Rumney	14%	60
E. I would like to open a business in Rumney	4%	16
F. I live in Rumney part of the year	17%	71
G. I vacation in Rumney	13%	56
H. I retired to Rumney	8%	36
I. I own an undeveloped lot in Rumney	15%	66
J. Other	8%	35

Total Responses: 426

Q2 During the process of writing the Rumney Master Plan, the two issues the community identified as the most important for the town to address were #1 the tax burden and #2 protection of water resources. Are there other goals that should also guide Rumney's consideration of a zoning ordinance? If so, please list them in the space provided below.

Answered: 251 Skipped: 175

### Summary of Responses

Over 20 responses:

- Protect private property rights
- Preserve rural/recreational/village character, sense of community
- Protect natural resources including Stinson Lake, open space, scenic, forest, water, environmental quality
- Town appearance including buildings and trash/junk
- Type and size, residential vs. commercial, compatible uses together
- Protect property values, reduce tax burden

Between 5 and 20 responses:

- Noise, impacts of neighboring uses on quality of life
- Manage density, large developments, prevent overdevelopment
- Control development in floodplain, enable flood insurance
- Encourage small/home business, no big box stores
- Traffic
- Historic character/resources
- Maintaining infrastructure/services, balance to make sure development can pay for needs

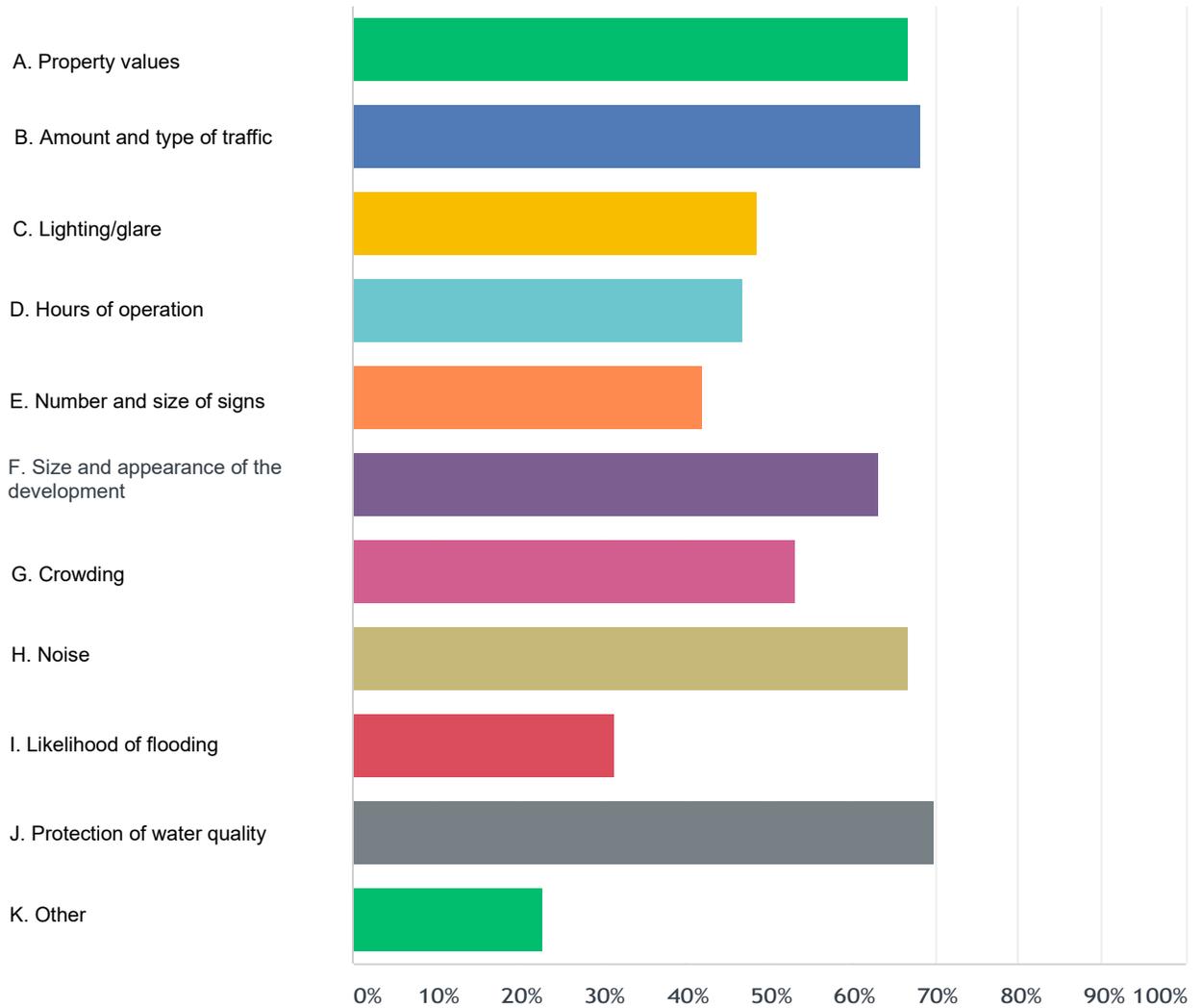
5 or fewer responses:

- Health and safety
- Manufactured home location
- Light pollution

- Manage short term rentals
- Public engagement, transparency
- Ensure housing is affordable to residents
- Training for land use boards/officials

### Q3 When you think about what types of development are appropriate for various locations in Rumney, or next door to you, what factors are important? (Please check ALL that apply.)

Answered: 373 Skipped: 53



## 2020 Rumney Planning Board Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A. Property values	67%	249
B. Amount and type of traffic	68%	254
C. Lighting/glare	49%	181
D. Hours of operation	47%	175
E. Number and size of signs	42%	157
F. Size and appearance of the development	63%	236
G. Crowding	53%	198
H. Noise	67%	249
I. Likelihood of flooding	31%	117
J. Protection of water quality	70%	261
K. Other	23%	85
Total Respondents: 373		

## Q3 K.

### Summary of Other Factors Provided

- Character of the area, Rte 25/Quincy Rd vs village vs Stinson Lake (10 responses)
- Communication/community engagement, education and authority of town boards (3 responses)
- Archeology/historical resources (2 responses)
- Wildlife (2 responses)
- Air quality (2 responses)
- Soils (2 responses)
- Fields/woods (2 responses)
- Groundwater supply (1 response)
- Dark sky (1 response)
- Odors (1 response)

Also numerous comments not pertinent to the question.

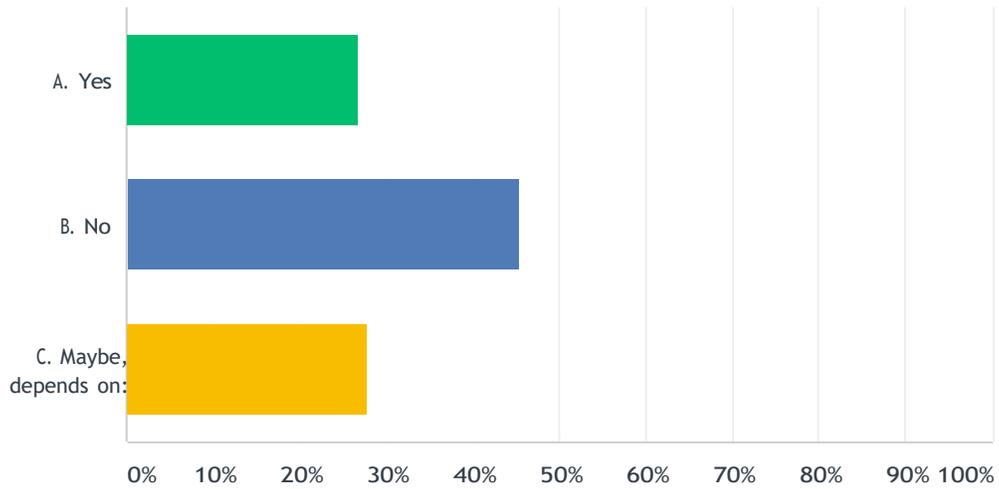
Q4 In the table below, for each type of development, please check off EVERY area of town where you feel it would be appropriate.

Answered: 341 Skipped: 85

	VILLAGE AREAS	ROUTE 25 CORRIDOR	RURAL AREAS	STINSON LAKE	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
A. Single family homes and home businesses	88%	75%	80%	74%	322
B. Apartments, condominiums, senior housing	55%	82%	44%	30%	286
C. Mobile home park	26%	82%	53%	24%	231
D. Community buildings such as schools, churches	86%	70%	45%	30%	305
E. Tourist businesses such as lodging, recreation	56%	85%	50%	52%	305
F. Small neighborhood-type businesses such as stores, services, cafes, offices	89%	81%	45%	46%	315
G. Larger businesses such as "big box" stores, drive-through restaurants, wholesale, automobile sales	16%	95%	20%	15%	244
H. Gas/convenience stores	31%	96%	23%	20%	309
I. Industrial uses such as manufacturing, gravel pits, lumber mills	16%	87%	44%	14%	292

# Q5 Should smaller lots and more concentrated development be allowed in and around village areas?

Answered: 373 Skipped: 53



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
A. Yes	26.81% 100
B. No	45.31% 169
C. Maybe, depends on:	27.88% 104
TOTAL	373

## Q5 C.

### Maybe, depends on:

- Type/use (23 responses)
- Consistent with character of existing village, walkable, density (16 responses)
- Size of development, number of lots (8 responses)
- Traffic and parking (8 responses)
- Septic and water (8 responses)
- Appearance (7 responses)
- Noise (3 responses)
- Height/size (2 responses)
- How arranged, how dense (2 responses)
- Target population, owners (2 responses)
- Lighting (2 responses)
- Not in floodplain (2 responses)
- Design (1 response)
- How much (1 response)
- Hours of operation (1 response)
- Ok if clustered with greenspace (1 response)
- Ok if not in competition with existing small business (1 response)
- Impacts (1 response)
- Tax impacts (1 response)

Also numerous comments not pertinent to the question.

Q6 A range of options is available for Rumney to manage the impacts of development on our natural resources, from education of landowners to regulating where development can occur. For each row below, please check off the "strongest" approach you support (ONE choice per row).

Answered: 342 Skipped: 84

	EDUCATION OF LANDOWNERS	ALLOW DEVELOPMENT BUT PUT CONDITIONS ON IT TO PROTECT RUMNEY'S NATURAL RESOURCES	REGULATE WHERE DEVELOPMENT CAN OCCUR	TOTAL
A. Potential public water supplies	26%	29%	44%	340
B. Wetlands	30%	17%	52%	339
C. Steep slopes	33%	25%	42%	335
D. Floodplains	33%	18%	50%	339
E. Shorelines	29%	22%	48%	335

## Q7 Do you have reservations about Rumney adopting a zoning ordinance?

If so, what are your biggest concerns?

Answered: 347 Skipped: 79

### Summary of Responses

Over 50 responses:

- Restrictions on private property owners
- No concerns

Between 5 and 20 responses:

- Some concern about tendency to become too restrictive
- Fairness, who will make the decisions, will they be knowledgeable
- Cost of enforcement
- Grandfathering
- Conflicts with rural atmosphere, can attract dense development and big box stores
- Impact on small/home businesses and farms
- Backlash from those opposed to zoning, importance of community engagement
- Won't be strong enough, keep small lots and short term rentals out

Fewer than 5 responses:

- Need more information
- Might restrict creative development
- Impact on affordable housing options
- Enforcement
- Enforceable
- Right balance, protect landowners without being overbearing
- Impact on existing property values
- Protect environment without impinging on landowner rights
- Overdevelopment, too much will be allowed
- Don't regulate length of driveways

- Effect on homeowners in commercial zone
- Clearly written
- Lack of need
- Where commercial stores will be allowed
- Zoning board might look at tax revenue vs best interests of residents

## Q8 Other comments:

Answered: 198 Skipped: 228

### Summary of Responses

Numerous expressed desire to not have zoning.

Numerous thanked the Planning Board for their work.

Others:

- Need a noise ordinance
- Keep commercial and industrial zoning on Rte 25
- Concern that zoning is socially regressive, may decrease property values, increase the cost of building, favors big business
- Need community engagement
- Concern about speed on Groton Hollow Rd., logging trucks, jake brakes
- Zoning would increase property values while holding taxes steady
- Questions about local enforcement of state regulations
- Noise and junk more of a concern
- Support smaller businesses
- Support for repurposing/redeveloping older buildings
- Concern about zoning board telling people what to do
- Concern about newcomers controlling locals
- Concern about development creating erosion and degrading water resources
- Need more information
- Support for clustering
- Concern about parking on Buffalo Rd.