

Ashland Planning Board Meeting
Minutes
August 27, 2014
Town Office

Members Present: Sue MacLeod, Cheryl Cox, Liz Cody, Phil Preston (BOS alternate, voting), Miriam Brown (alternate, non-voting)

Members Absent: Gordon McCormack Jr, excused; Fran Newton, excused

Others Present: Eli Badger, Norm DeWolfe, Kathy DeWolfe, Joanne Walsh

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Chairperson Sue MacLeod.

CORRESPONDENCE

Sue MacLeod distributed the executive summary of LRPC's draft of "*The Lakes Region Plan, 2015 to 2020*", which provides statistics and planning goals for the region. Topics covered are economic development, housing, transportation, environment, natural hazards and climate change, energy efficiency and green building. Sue MacLeod has a CD with the complete document and it is also available at <http://www.lakesrpc.org/Extra1.asp>. The public hearing for adoption of the draft plan is September 29, 6:30 pm, at the Beane Conference Center in Laconia.

LRPC has inquired whether Gordon McCormack Jr. is still Ashland's representative to the organization. The Ashland representative may be a member of any of several committees (Conservation, Economic Development, etc.) or any other citizen, and is to represent Ashland at meetings and to report information back to the town. The representative is approved by the Board of Selectmen. Liz Cody expressed an interest in the LRPC.

Upcoming workshops – The Municipal Law Lecture Series (3 lectures) through NHMA are \$35 each, scheduled for September and October in Keene, Dover, Derry and Littleton. See Sue MacLeod for further information.

- #1: The ZBA in New Hampshire*
- #2: How to Run a Land Use Board*
- #3: Impact Fees in New Hampshire*

Emails from LRPC, NHMA and OEP all now come to the Planning Board's official email address. Members of the Planning Board have access to the email account.

An August 11 letter has been received from Walter Mitchell indicating the assent on behalf of the Planning Board to the Motion for Remand, to rehear the Dr. Lester's veterinary hospital site plan. The ZBA has accepted the Motion for Remand. Mr. Mitchell's letter also included the Planning Board's response to 51 points.

Jim VanValkenburgh was asked to investigate whether Dunkin Donuts had a permit for a large coffee cup sign on the lawn. The sign, presumably temporary, is now gone.

The abutter notification from Ashland Properties (for the American Industrial Services, LLC case) was returned as undeliverable.

Sue MacLeod has started a spreadsheet of Planning Board cases from the last couple years.

NEW BUSINESS

Amended Site Plan for Dollar General

Dollar General has requested an amendment to their landscaping plan, page C-4 of the site plan previously approved by the Planning Board. They wish to remove a small planted raised island at the front of the store and replace it with striped pavement. The plantings will be relocated elsewhere on the property. Their concern is that the planted area will become littered with extinguished cigarettes from customers entering the store and that the island will become damaged by the snowplow. The issue is an administrative one, rather than a discretionary issue requiring rehearing.

In the ensuing discussion, some members indicated that they felt Dollar General should replace the trees on the same side of the property line where they were removed (Dollar General property), noting Note #17 on the plan: *“Existing trees and shrubs shown on the plan are to remain undisturbed. All existing trees and shrubs shown to remain are to be protected with a 4-foot snow fence placed at the drip line of the branches or at 8 feet minimum from the tree trunk. Any existing tree or shrub shown to remain, which is removed during construction, shall be replaced by a tree of comparable size and species tree or shrub.”* It was noted that Dollar General is placing a fence on their side of the property and a landscape designer is working closely with the abutter, who has approved their intent to plant trees on her property instead. Additional comments were made regarding the types of plants that are indicated on the plan, such as using plants that will retain foliage in the winter and survive excessive salt.

A motion was made (Liz Cody) and seconded (Phil Preston) to direct Dollar General to implement the landscaping plan as originally approved and to be reminded that they are to replace the trees that they took out. The motion passed in the affirmative, 4-Y (Cody, Preston, Cox, MacLeod) and 0-N.

OLD BUSINESS

Heritage Commission

Sue MacLeod briefly reviewed some of the elements of a Heritage Commission (*see also minutes of 5/28/14 and 7/30/14*) and noted that it follows from a recommendation in the Master Plan. **A motion was made (Liz Cody) and seconded (Sue MacLeod) to recommend the establishment of a Heritage Commission and write the relevant warrant article. The motion passed in the affirmative, 4-Y (Cody, MacLeod, Cox, Preston) and 0-N.**

OTHER BUSINESS

2015 Land Use Budget

The Planning Board began a discussion of the 2015 budget proposal, which will group both the Zoning Board and Planning Board under one category named "Land Use." One goal is to create the appropriate accounting line (non-lapsing, not co-mingled with the general fund) for all land use application fees. (*Reference NH RSA 673:16, II*) The finance officer has indicated that she cannot add the line until directed by the Board of Selectmen. **A motion was made (Liz Cody) and seconded (Cheryl Cox) to submit to the Board of Selectmen a request that they communicate with the treasurer and finance officer that an accounting line item be inserted into the budget that guarantees that all fees that are used for land use purposes remain in that line separate from the general fund. The motion passed in the affirmative, 3-Y (Cody, Cox, MacLeod), 0-N and 1 abstention (Preston, because he will be voting on this issue as a Selectman).**

There was discussion as to what those land use fees cover, such as abutters' notices, printing and postage of notices, newspaper notifications, professional consultants. There was also discussion as to what should be put on the postage line, i.e., whether an estimate of postage covered by fees or just postage needed for other Board business. It is unclear whether payment for staff time of processing cases is included in the fee revenue.

Board members discussed a proposed *part-time position of land use board administrative assistant* (title still to be clarified). Holderness currently has a part-time land use board assistant (12 hours per week minimum); Thornton has advertised for a part-time town planner and is having difficulty in finding one. The position would include such responsibilities as preparing applications/cases for the Boards, gathering background information, attending Planning Board and Zoning Board meetings, etc.

It was noted that attorneys advise that no voting member of the Board should be involved in the processing of the application paperwork.

Sue MacLeod reported that Brenda Paquette has informed her that there is \$14,000 encumbered for the Master Plan which has not been spent. Liz Cody asked if that could be used to hire someone to write grants for implementing recommendations in the Master Plan. Sue MacLeod will have to check on the wording of the warrant article, how the encumbered money was earmarked, when it has to be used by and wording of the contract with LRPC. Tasks that are associated directly with creating the *document* of the Master Plan include continuing to update road maps and creating asset maps.

A motion was made (Liz Cody) and seconded (Cheryl Cox) to put in the budget a land use board assistant to support the 2 land use boards, with a recommendation for approximately 12 hours per week at \$20/hour. The motion passed in the affirmative, 3-Y (Cox, Cody, MacLeod), 0-N and 1 abstention (Preston, because he will be voting on this issue as a Selectman).

The land use board administrative assistant would be a part-time person, employed by the town, and would not receive benefits.

Currently, the person who takes minutes at meetings is an independent contractor, under the \$700 general expense line in the current budget.

Other budget lines that need to be estimated are training/workshops, legal, general expenses, and secretarial expenses. A minimal amount (maybe \$50) will be put in the postage line for incidental postage expenses of the Board, exclusive of postage related to specific cases. Sue MacLeod and Eli Badger (Chair of the Zoning Board) will be meeting to discuss the Land Use budget.

Walsh Trust Condominiumization

Joanne Walsh presented the Board with a site plan revision from Tony Randall, which gives the owners a limited common stretching to the water including a dock. The site plan was conditionally approved, with a list of state requirements to meet (*see minutes of November 6, 2013*). This ongoing case will be put on the agenda of the September 3, 2014, meeting; either Tony Randall or Jack McCormack may come in.

Updating Applications, Flowcharts, Checklists

This will be continued at subsequent meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 pm.

Minutes submitted by Mardean Badger