

**Ashland Planning Board Meeting  
Minutes  
September 3, 2014  
Ashland Elementary School Library**

**Members Present:** Susan MacLeod, Cheryl Cox, Gordon McCormack Jr., Fran Newton, Miriam Brown (alternate, non-voting), Liz Cody (arrived late)

**Members Absent:** Phil Preston (BOS alternate)

**Others Present:** Eli Badger, Steve Felton, Norm DeWolfe, Kathy DeWolfe

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Susan MacLeod.

**DISPOSITION OF MINUTES**

August 6, 2014 -- **A motion was made (Cox) and seconded (MacLeod) to approve the minutes of August 6, 2014. The vote was 4 (MacLeod, Cox, Newton, McCormack) to 0 in the affirmative.**

August 27, 2014 – The approval of these minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Case 2013-02 Walsh Trust Condominiumization – No one appeared to discuss this case. The case is continued.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Pre-Application Consultation with Ashland Water and Sewer Department**

Eli Badger, Chairperson of the Water and Sewer Commissioners, provided a basic drawing of and described the change of use of one bay of the utility garage into an office space for the Commissioners, a large meeting room, and a handicapped bathroom. The purpose of the change is to bring the business space into compliance with ADA requirements, because the current space upstairs for office and meetings is not handicapped accessible. A building permit has been obtained from the Building Inspector and the work will be done over the next 6 months. As a town government agency, the Water and Sewer Commissioners are not required to go through a formal site plan review process. They are presenting this information as a courtesy to inform the Planning Board of the changes.

[Liz Cody arrived.]

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**TAP Sidewalk Grant**

Fran Newton informed the Planning Board of the grant application being prepared through the federal *Transportation Alternatives Program* (TAP), to fund the construction of ADA-compliant

sidewalks along Gordon Street and along Main Street from Gordon Street to West Street. Prior to the submission of the grant on September 26, the grant committee is soliciting letters of support from various town government boards and committees. **A motion was made (Cody) and seconded (McCormack) that the Planning Board write a letter of support for the grant. The vote was 5 (MacLeod, Newton, Cody, Cox, McCormack) to 0 in the affirmative.**

### **2014 and 2015 Budgets**

Chair MacLeod has written to the Board of Selectmen to request the use of encumbered funds to continue the Master Plan and that they establish a separate **accounting line for land use fees** (RSA 673:16, II). She has been informed that the new accounting line cannot be added during this current budget year, but can be added for the new (2015) budget.

Chair MacLeod noted that she will be meeting with Brenda Paquette, Finance Officer, the next day to clarify the correct amount still available from the **Master Plan funding**. As a follow-up to the last meeting's discussion of how the money can be spent, Chair MacLeod noted that the warrant articles (\$10,000 each in years 2010, 2011, 2012) specified 'to start' (year 1) and 'to continue' (years 2 and 3) updating the Master Plan. The initial interpretation is that the money could be available for anything that adds to the document, such as maps which would accompany what is verbalized in the Master Plan document, but they cannot be used for actual implementation of recommendations. Steve Felton suggested doing some GIS mapping of sidewalks or retail properties for the Master Plan, which would also assist the Economic Development Committee. It first will be necessary to obtain permission from the Board of Selectmen to expend the money, and then necessary to discuss with the BOS and LRPC if a new contract will need to be signed. Brenda Paquette is also requesting a legal opinion on the use of the remaining funds.

The Land Use **2015 Budget** has been submitted by Chair MacLeod of the Planning Board and Chair Eli Badger of the Zoning Board. It includes a part-time professional planning assistant.

### **Land Use Review Board**

The committee includes the Chairs of the Planning Board and Zoning Board, the Building Inspector/Code Enforcement officer, Fire Chief/Life Safety Officer, Health Officer and Assessor. Their next (organizational) meeting is September 4. The key issues recommended for discussion include communication process, ordinance review and file organization. It was noted that re-organization of the property files is in process and will result in all relevant property actions be filed together by tax map/lot number.

Members of the Planning Board again expressed concern about appropriate customer service in the Town Hall. Steve Felton recommended that any such issues be addressed to the Board of Selectmen. It was also mentioned again that the Planning and Zoning Board chairs do not want their personal phone numbers being given out to people who call with questions about land use; they would like the Town Office to take a message and give that message to the chairs. It was also noted that Planning Board chairs cannot offer opinions, suggestions or recommendations to potential applicants. This would be an appropriate role for the professional planning assistant being proposed for the 2015 budget.

### **Updating Applications, Checklists, Flowcharts**

It was recommended that the Board get input from the business community and from the Land Use Advisory Committee regarding forms such as the *Site Plan Review Process* (illustrated), *Who Needs a Site Plan?* and other such forms.

Other points made about Planning Board forms and process:

- Fee structure and changes in site plan/subdivision regulations can be made after a public hearing by the Planning Board.
- Only zoning ordinance changes need to go to the voters. Any proposed **warrant articles** will need to be done very soon.
- The updated **definition of wetlands** needs to be inserted in all relevant regulations and approved through warrant article.
- Planning Board members should always use the checklist when reviewing a case.
- Clarify the directive to list all professional consultants, as well as abutters, on the application.
- All revised forms will go on the town website and be available in print form at the town office.
- Add “*Office Use Only*” box at top of form and similar cover sheet for the file (application #, date received, check received, who accepted the application, etc.)
- The site plan checklist should be a regular part of the packet handed out to applicants.
- Make the font uniform on all documents (Times New Roman, 10 or 12).
- All forms should have a footer to include date last updated and page “x” of “y”.
- Any multiple page document should be set up as a continuous document, rather than separate single-page documents.
- Town seal should be on all forms; Town should develop a standard for use of the town seal.
- Templates are available for all notifications of decisions (abutter, applicant, surveyor).

Cheryl Cox offered to work on the Site Plan application and Subdivision application. After discussion of the form “*Who Needs a Site Plan Review,*” Fran Newton offered to refine the format. Chair MacLeod will locate the latest digital version of the Rules of Procedure so the Board can finalize those. The Rules of Procedure is an internal process document and does not need to go on the website.

All changes and revisions of documents and regulations should be completed soon, so that the November meeting can be a public hearing for those revisions.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm by Chair MacLeod.

*Minutes submitted by Mardean S. Badger*