

**Ashland Planning Board
Minutes
December 16, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER: Susan MacLeod, chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan MacLeod, Carol Fucarile, Fran Newton, Cheryl Cox, and Mardean Badger; **Norm DeWolfe, Alternate ex officio**

OTHERS PRESENT: Members of the Conservation Commission present were Kathleen DeWolfe, Harold Lamos, **Renee Liebert**, and Walter **Durack**

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES

The minutes for the December 2, 2015 meeting were tabled for this meeting. They will be reviewed at the Planning Board's January 6, 2016 meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Ashland Planning Board and the Ashland Conservation Commission met in a joint meeting to discuss their response to the Northern Pass proposals presented at a recent meeting. The concerns of the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and the Water and Sewer Department were expressed and discussed. The following concerns were expressed:

- The industrial zone of Ashland would disappear due to the creation of the right of way for the Northern Pass Project if the towers are allowed to be erected.
- The site of the town wells, the Pemi setback, and the location of the Pemi River are limitations to the Northern Pass Project. These limitations will need to be discussed and accommodation will need to be made in the Northern Pass plans.
- The ground selected for the erection of the towers is very sandy. As such the holes needed to anchor the towers will need to be dug deeper and may prove to be less stable.
- The Water and Sewer Department has concerns that the right of way of the project goes directly across the town's well field.
- There was concern raised about the foundation of the towers.
- The towers when installed will range from 85' to 100' and will be erected close to the Water and Sewer Department's lagoons; **their proposed Septage Receiving Station will be impacted.**
- The lagoons are made from clay which is a very fragile substance.
- There will be high tension lines erected near the lagoons.
- The high tension lines combined with the sandy soil in the area can create what is called a salt battery situation that can result in an electric transfer. This situation can result in the electrifying of the town's water system.
- There is an aesthetic concern of tourists and visitors to Ashland seeing numerous towers as they come off the highway into Ashland. This could detract from the popularity of the town and of the area for year around recreational opportunities. It can also affect the economic development of the town.
- Homeland Security has stated they have concerns about the Northern Pass Project and its proximity to the Water and Sewer Department lagoons.

- There was concern expressed about the Bridgewater wetlands
- There is concern expressed that the 100' tower and its placement will go across a corner of the town's lagoons.
- Concern was expressed about the osprey population and their closeness to the powerlines of the Northern Pass Project. The Commission and Board members were told that the osprey is not on the endangered species list so the osprey population is not a **consideration.**

At the conclusion of the discussion it was decided that the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board would each draft a statement to the Northern Pass representatives expressing their concerns and possible solutions to those concerns. The Northern Pass Project has a timeframe for intervenor comments. There is still time left to draft statements of concern from the Conservation and Planning Board to then present to Northern Pass. The Conservation Commission and the Planning Board will meet on Wednesday, January 6, 2016 to discuss the final draft of each of their statements.

The Planning Board took up the subject of the new tracking sheet created to track applications through the application process. The Board delineated which procedures fell under whose responsibility. At the end of the discussion Carol Fucarile was going to make some minor changes to the tracking sheet. When the tracking sheet was complete Susan was going to take it to the Town Office and explain the tracking sheet, its use, and the process to all those parties who will be dealing with the tracking system.

The Board discussed the issue of determining who is an abutter to a particular property. It was determined that an abutter was any party whose property was adjacent to or otherwise came into contact with the particular property in question. In determining abutters who might be across the street from the particular property, the property owner is considered an abutter if when the road or river is removed the property across can come in contact with the particular property.

The Board discussed the Compliance Hearing presently scheduled for May in the Donald Lester case. Parties to this case have requested that a Compliance Hearing be scheduled in January to address the placement of the berm and the trees on the property. Susan will confer with legal counsel about this issue but the Board decided that the Compliance Hearing for the Donald Lester case will be taken up on the original May date and time.

The Board discussed a Zoning Ordinance amendment the Board would like to submit to Town Meeting. They discussed at length the wording of the amendment, one version for the voting guide that explains the amendment and the amendment wording itself to be placed with the other warrant articles at Town Meeting. The wording will now be reviewed by the Town legal counsel.

The Board briefly reviewed the goals of the Board for the calendar year 2016. The goals revolved around updates to particular chapters of the latest Master Plan. They also included revisiting the Design Standards for the town as well as revisiting the Economic Development Committee plans and recommendations.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting of the Board will be Wednesday, January 6, 2016 at 7:00 pm at the Ashland Elementary School Library.

With nothing more to come before the Board adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 8: 10 PM.

Minutes submitted by Paula Hancock