

**Ashland Planning Board Meeting
Minutes
March 4, 2015**

Members Present: Susan MacLeod, Cheryl Cox, Fran Newton (BOS representative)

Members Absent: Phil Preston (BOS alternate)

Others Present: Norm DeWolfe, Kathleen DeWolfe, Jae Demers, Stacey Lucas

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

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES

- February 25, 2015 – **A motion was made (Newton) and seconded (Cox) to approve the minutes of February 25, 2015, as written. The motion passed unanimously (3-0) in the affirmative.**

CORRESPONDENCE

- The Grafton County Registry of Deeds has informed towns of the establishment of a new fee structure, which now requires 3 separate checks (for recording fees, for LCHIP surcharge, and for DRA Real Estate Transfer Tax), all of which are payable to Grafton County Registry of Deeds. The notice is currently available on the Registry website homepage (<http://www.nhdeeds.com/grafton/GrHome.html>) and the fees are listed under the “Rates & Fees” tab.
 - The Ashland Subdivision Application will be reviewed to make appropriate changes to any language referring to those fees.

NEW BUSINESS

Application for Waiver of Site Plan Review (84 Main Street)

Stacey Lucas was present for a pre-application discussion, prior to the Planning Board accepting an application for waiver of site plan review at a subsequent meeting. She has purchased 84 Main Street to use as her personal residence and as her business location. Her previous shop (*Veggie Art Girl*, in Holderness) will be renamed *Fig Tree* and be located on the second floor of the unheated barn, separate from the living quarters. The new entrance to the shop will be from the side parking lot -- a new door on the side of the barn opening directly into the second floor (shop area) of the barn, a ramp from the parking lot, and outdoor lighting will be added. She hopes to open in the spring; her typical business season is from Memorial Day to Columbus Day, with possibly some weekends until Christmas. The merchandise is from local artists, with some antiques and collectibles.

Chair MacLeod made several points –

- A site plan review is conducted for all commercial enterprises, which covers various elements such as parking, traffic, outdoor lighting, etc.

- The business area also must be inspected for fire and safety codes. It is recommended to contact Fire Chief Heath for preliminary inspections and recommendations before any work is done. As part of the site plan review, a conditional approval may be given pending final approvals from Chief Heath.
- A building permit will be needed for any construction.
- If any portion of the building is rented (such as an “in-law apartment” or small office adjacent to the original driveway), life safety inspection and approval will also be needed from Chief Heath.
- Stacey Lucas will need to submit a diagram, with relevant notes and/or descriptions, of the site and the exterior changes (entrance, parking, lighting, etc.) she will be making. If that information is available before March 25, it can be reviewed at the March 25 work session.
- After the notice of decision is issued by the Planning Board, Stacey Lucas can file for a sign permit.
- During the 2007 site plan process for the gallery, the NH DOT approved the new, second driveway and parking area, with a condition that other access from the property (i.e., via the old driveway) be prevented by a barrier. Conditions in the Planning Board’s notice of decision also included requiring the applicant to return to the Planning Board to address the parking area if there were an expansion of the business and that the applicant would limit parking in the lot to no more than 2 vehicles at any time.
 - The parking lot is lined for 9 spaces and the previous business often had vehicles filling the parking area. Stacey Lucas will further explore the DOT approval and other conditions, as she was not made aware of this when she purchased the property. Copies of the documents can be obtained at the Town Office.
 - Chair MacLeod stated that there can be further discussion or modification of the parking lot aspect during the site plan review discussion.

Sign Regulations

Jae Demers asked for some clarifications of Ashland’s sign regulations, especially concerning temporary signs, advertising (contractors, painters, etc.) signs and political signs. This was prompted by a couple of citizen complaints regarding her business advertising sign placed in the planting area at the front of the Town Hall property; although this issue is not the business of the Planning Board, the complaints were forwarded to the Board. The Planning Board noted that the primary issue was the placement of a business advertising sign on town property.

Jae Demers also expressed an interest in understanding the Ashland sign regulations, because a part of her business is producing signs for clients.

Chair MacLeod noted that the sign regulations (including temporary signs) are included in the *Ashland Zoning Ordinance* (Section 3.3, pages 7-8) which is available on the town website:

http://www.ashlandnh.org/images/TAimgs/files/zoning/zoning_ordinance_2014.pdf

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Request for Waiver of Site Plan Review (9 Hill Avenue)

Chair MacLeod reviewed the communications with the owner of Dupuis Funeral Home at 9 Hill Avenue regarding construction and changes in the commercial premises. The commercial enterprise had previously moved (2005) from one premise to another, since zoning has been in effect. Norm DeWolfe noted that Planning Board minutes indicated that a special exception had been granted in 2005 and the PB then waived the site plan review for expansion in 2010. Additional recent reconfiguration of the commercial space prompted a conversation with and letter to (December 4) the owner regarding change of use and site plan review regulations, requesting documentation of the changes for the file through a site plan waiver application. A draft of a follow-up letter was reviewed by the Planning Board; it will inform the business owner that “. . . you have been conscientious throughout the building process in obtaining all building permits, and having both fire & safety and building code inspections done Since all your renovations have been to the betterment of the building, not impactful to any abutters and are in complete compliance with all codes, the Planning Board will consider this adequate at this time.” The Planning Board approved the letter to be sent to the business owner.

The next meeting (work session) of the Planning Board is March 25, 2015, at 6:30 pm at the Ashland Town Office.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 pm.

Minutes submitted by Mardean Badger