Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2024 5:30pm

Roll call was taken by Chairman Anthony Saponaro. Those in attendance are Dr. Ken Hornowski (via Zoom), Ms. Angela Newnam, Mr. Tony Williams, Town Planner, Mr. Jonathan Kanipe, Town Manager, and Mr. Billy Clarke, Town Attorney, are present.

Chairman Saponaro started the meeting at 5:30pm. A motion was made by Dr. Hornowski and seconded by Ms. Newnam. The minutes from October 2023 were unanimously approved.

Chairman Saponaro said they would like to add one more board member and if anyone knows of someone interested in volunteering.

Chairman Saponaro proposed changing the Planning Commission meeting time to 4:00pm instead of 5:30pm. It will still be the fourth Tuesday of the month.

Chairman Saponaro said this Board is focused on Land Use and Zoning.

Chairman Saponaro said action item one is they board would like to have a joint meeting with the Board of Commissioners to get their feedback. Mr. Kanipe said they can have a joint meeting and see what the Commissioners would like to have the Planning Commission look at and they make the final decision in terms of policy for the Town.

Chairman Saponaro said in terms of Special Use requests, the Town has a high percentage of requests, and they would like to make the process much easier for citizens. Examples would be fences and fire pits. The Planning Commission could suggest a review process to make this much easier. Mr. Kanipe said the number of cases received from the Board of Adjustment were approvable with limited changes that came to them because they met the requirement of the Ordinance. We would like to allow from an administrative level the review and issuance of a permit for ex: fire pit in the rear yard where accessory structures have to be in compliance with the setbacks which is something that should be fairly allowable. As opposed to having someone wait over one month to get this on the schedule for the Board of Adjustment approval. It would also increase efficiency for Town staff.

Chairman Saponaro said there is currently a fifty-acre lot that is currently not developed, and it is zoned R-1. We may want to have some thoughts on this. Ms. Newnam said there is a certain percentage of this land that is in a flood plain. Mr. Kanipe said yes, approximately ten acres. This will be a good project for us to talk about at a further date.

Chairman Saponaro also said there is a big chunk of land on Hilltop where there was a house that got torn down. Mr. Kanipe said there are three lots at this location.

Chairman Saponaro also discussed the parks and what kind of services do we want in the Town’s parks.

Mr. Kanipe said there were two additional Ordinances put in the Board packet that came about. The first one is the Town’s existing noise ordinance which is an ordinance where “sounds impacting residential life.” It is in the Town Code, so it is not regulated under the Planning Commission. We have a lot of feedback from neighbors during Board of Adjustment meetings regarding potential noise. The existing ordinance regarding residential noise only is very subjective. Mr. Kanipe spoke with Chief Beddingfield and Chief Beddingfield would like to consider having some more metrics in this.

Maintenance of yards was also discussed. Mr. Williams said in previous areas he has worked; they would state a numerical number of how high one’s grass could be. This was fully enforceable. Mr. Williams said it would be great to make this more specific.

Ms. Newnam discussed light ordinances and said this should be added to items to consider. She also discussed the public safety concern in the Town with Lyme disease and ticks. We want the community to be safe. She would like to see this tagged along with public areas, parks, etc. Ms. Newnam stated an example in the New England area where ticks are prominent, residents in that area are required to pick up leaves which would help reduce the tick population.

Mr. Kanipe said the Board of Commissioners just authorized a Town ad-hoc tick committee to basically study and make recommendations for tick reduction control.

Mr. Clarke said it may be helpful to look at some ordinances from other municipalities and compare the concentration to New England Towns.

Ms. Newnam asked Chairman Saponaro if each board member gets assigned a topic to research. Chairman Saponaro would have someone take the lead on a topic. Ms. Newnam said she would like to work on the noise ordinance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Joyce Young said there was work done a new pamphlet a long time ago and the Board may want to look at this again and update it.

Chairman Saponaro adjourned the meeting at 6:34 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 23rd.

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Ms. Laura Jacobs, Town Clerk Mr. Anthony Saponaro,

Town Clerk Chair