

Planning Board Minutes 10/03/2016

Planning Board
Town of Greenfield
Approved Meeting Minutes
Recorded by Janice Pack
October 3, 2016

Members Attending: Paul Renaud, Ken Paulsen, Robert Marshall, Sherry Fox, Angelique Moon, Andre Wood

Meeting Opened: 7:03 PM

Minutes: Minutes were read by PRenaud. A few corrections were made, and AMoon motioned to accept the minutes as amended. SFox seconded and all were in favor.

Mail 2 Kokal plats, approved, to be filed

New Business

The ZBA meets Wednesday, October 05, 2016 on the Paradise case. PRenaud has prepared a comment to be submitted to the ZBA consisting of the letter to the Town of Bennington and their response, and the comment prepared previously for the Select Board. He plans to be at the meeting on Wednesday night. KPaulsen mentioned that it looks like John Paradise has already done some cutting in alongside the road. RMarshall said if he owns the property, he can do what he wants. AWood asked exactly where KPaulsen had noticed that. It was suggested to let Code Enforcement know.

Budget Items

PRenaud reviewed the Legal Expenses for the past 5 years. The Board discussed the different reasons why previous years were so high. This year we budgeted \$3000, but haven't spent any yet. We haven't received a bill yet for the question we asked about the Kokal subdivision. Should we keep it at \$2000? AWood feels that \$2,000 is not a bad number. RMarshall said if we want the Open Space reviewed, that could be an hour's worth of legal fees. KPaulsen still wanted to budget \$3000. PRenaud and RMarshall did feel that \$3,000 was more conservative, and the rest of the Board agreed.

Master Plan

PRenaud signed the contract with SWRPC stating that for \$2500 they will do the whole Energy chapter and help us with the implementation. Target date is February – could run into March. The Natural Resources inventory will at some point be part of the Master Plan. We will wait until that is done by ConComm. PRenaud spoke to Aaron Patt about the encumbering of funds since the Energy chapter won't be done by the end of the year. APatt said as long as the money was designated and the work begun, the contract signed, and we have a reasonable target end date, we can just write a letter to the Select Board at the end of the year and ask them to encumber the funds. RMarshall suggested that we add another \$1000 to the figure we had, just in case something else came up, making the budget figure \$2000. RMarshall said since the Planning Board has a Natural Resources chapter independent of ConComm's, and we will wait until ConComm's Natural Resource inventory is finished, it makes sense to have that reserve.

A discussion began on how to update the Master Plan differently next time. RMarshall said it is a good idea to try and spread it out, but you need to anticipate changes in leadership in the Planning Board, which happened this time. Things happen over the course of time, and he has not been happy with SWRPC's work. He does not feel that we should've paid \$2500 for the material we just finally received. Some towns are paying for professionally prepared Master Plans. We might want to go to the Select Board and suggest a capital reserve fund of \$5000/year over the next 5 years. We would then have the amount we need to privately contract if we choose to go that route. KPaulsen asked what the budget was last year. AMoon said that since we have no known expenses at this time for the Master Plan, it seems safe to leave \$1000 in the budget. PRenaud referred to a part of the contract that basically says that there could be additional costs incurred. It was decided to leave the budget amount at \$1000. PRenaud said that the main reason he spoke to APatt was with regard to the Event Tracking Form. We are going to have to tweak that process, but we will discuss this at our next meeting.

RMarshall said that we need an updated Table of Contents for the Master Plan. We also need a map of community facilities and properties, and they have not included the stratified drift aquifer (under natural features). He feels that items were missed and he is not happy with their work. AMoon said she does not understand why it is so expensive. AWood suspects it is so expensive because they feel they are the only game in town.

PRenaud said that we will be doing the Natural Resources Chapter ourselves. AMoon asked how much we had spent so far on this Master Plan, and it was determined to have been \$12,500. PRenaud said that sometime after the new year, we can look at this again and see how we may want to do this differently next time.

Overview of other possible zoning amendments

We already talked about the Accessory Dwelling Units but there is also an ordinance of detached dwelling units. Do we want to make any changes to this because of the new accessory dwelling unit ordinance? The detached accessory dwelling unit ordinance is on page 17 under section 4c. We may want to review that.

PRenaud said we may want to have a brief discussion in an upcoming meeting regarding the life safety code and the more stringent requirements once you get up to more occupants. This differentiates a B & B and a hotel.

Professional uses and customary home occupations – we need to have a discussion on exactly what “customary” means. Anything done on a commercial basis does not fall in that category. PRenaud feels that we should define this.

There are cell tower companies coming out with a new tactic of wireless by putting up some very tall towers. Mobilitie now has over 300 applications from New England. We need to have a discussion to either tweak the telecommunications ordinance, or the right of way. Wireless telecommunications have not yet been deemed a utility in NH, but we should have a discussion before it comes before us.

PRenaud asked if anyone else had any other ideas or changes they would like to see. RMarshall reminded everyone that we could do some of the changes without a Public Hearing. PRenaud said he would make the changes, and once they are okayed, we will schedule the Public Hearing.

Open space development ordinance Village Plan Alternative Subdivision 674:21, bottom of page 383 on to 384

This says the rest of the lot has to be granted as conservation easement to the town. 674:21a says that in any scenario no matter who owns the easement if there is any complaint, the Town has the authority without repercussions to enforce that. All of the developments or improvements have to be on less than 20% of the land. The rest of the land could be used for various purposes including recreational use. RMarshall asked “Who maintains the easement?” He feels we are creating more work for the Town if they need to monitor the easement. The Town would have to assume responsibility for the management of the property.

PRenaud said that all you need to pay attention to is if there is a complaint from someone who owns land. Minimum lot sizes, frontages and setbacks would not apply. RMarshall asked if he were the homeowner and he wanted to create an open space, why couldn't he? Because the land would have to be held by the homeowners' association. What happens to the common land and the open space if the homeowner's association goes bankrupt?

PRenaud spoke about some of the changes that we had already started when we last discussed this ordinance. To have a cluster development, you must have open space and you must have an association to manage it. RMarshall doesn't want to limit the ability to develop property. PRenaud said you cannot develop open space. If the Board feels that people need to change things for their own benefit, they could go for conventional subdivisions. But if it's going to be an open space development, there has got to be open space. AMoon said that in our ordinances some of the language has left things up for interpretation. Some of our definitions are part of the problem. There has to be a differentia between open space and common area. Under C Definitions open space should be redefined. RMarshall said we need to identify what goals our town has in developing our land. We need to decide where we're going with this so we can work on our definitions.

RMarshall feels that the current ordinance is tying our hands. He feels we should develop an alternative development ordinance, and that we need to have a conversation about what we feel is in the best interests of the Town of Greenfield. We should think about what we want to see here in terms of development, and we may need to repeal the old ordinance, throw it out, and craft a new one. We have people in town who are looking for alternatives to their big homes, who want to downsize. Smaller homes could save money. Maybe a professional planner could help us define our goals? RMarshall said “We've been working on this since 2003 and we've made changes 3 times, and what we have right now isn't working.”

AMoon asked if it would be fair to say that one of our goals would be to encourage the preservation of open space, and AWood included “larger contiguous blocks of open space”. AMoon said perhaps “undeveloped land” sounds better than “open space”. RMarshall referred to our mission statement and said our first goal is to preserve rural character.

AWood asked what PRenaud wanted to do about document control and management. He said that when we make changes and revisions, we should show how we went from one to the other. All of the revisions and changes that PRenaud has made so far have all been done in the same format. PRenaud still wants to work on a database for the Planning Board that would have options for scheduling, record storage, and administration. AWood says that for text revision control the software world has created some perfect options and he would be excited to explore those. He mentioned Mecerual and Open Hub. PRenaud suggested that we discuss this with Administration.

PRenaud moved to adjourn the meeting, and AWood seconded. All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:37 PM.

THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AT THE PLANNING BOARD'S REGULAR MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 24, 2016.

