

Planning Commission
Martin Memorial Hall
5459 Rte 5 Ascutney, VT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 23, 2021 6:30 PM

Planning Commission Members Present:

Paul Tillman
Michael Todd
Howard Beach
Tyler Harwell
Joseph Bublat

Attendees: Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager, deForest Bearse, Nikita Lenahan

- 1.) Call to Order by Chair Howard Beach at 6:32 pm
- 2.) Comments from Citizens, Planning Commission Members and Town Manager

Paul Tillman would like to find out how to get the Planning Commission website up to date. The minutes have been up there, however, the hearing for subdivisions are not.

Chauncie has been given access to post minutes directly to the website. deForest has access for the Select Board.

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager did note that the Town posted both subdivision hearings in the news section of the website and both have been properly warned on the website and posted at both post offices. He is still working on the format of the website.

- 3.) Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 9, 2021 & August 12, 2021

Paul Tillman made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from August 9, 2021.

Michael Todd – 2nd

No discussion

Vote - unanimous

Tyler Harwell made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from August 23, 2021.

Michael Todd – 2nd

Discussion: remove lines 69 and 70 “Appointing NEMRC as an assessor would cause the Town to overspend in the General Fund however, it would the assessor line item in the budget would be under spend, balancing the budget.”

Vote - unanimous

- 4.) Discussion: Update on process of hiring new Land Use Administrator

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager said between the last Planning Commission meeting there was a Selectboard meeting. The Planning Commission voted to support the position that he presented to the

Selectboard August 16, 2021. The Selectboard supported the idea, however, they wanted additional research, which will be provided. During the interim, the Town has reposted the Land Use Administrator position, but Brandon removed the wage parameters and he did not state whether it was part time or full time to allow for the Selectboard to decide what they would like to do, but also to have the position posted so people are applying. To date the Town has received one application. He is hoping to have resumes for review at the next meeting so the Planning Commission can determine who they would like to interview with an interview team as a first round and the 2nd round would go to the Planning Commission and the Selectboard.

Michael Todd is a bit concerned not having an accurate ad would leave to some people not to apply.

Brandon Gulnick left the advertisement broad with leaving it "Salary to commensurate with experience."

Michael Todd wants to make sure we are getting the most out of the advertisement.

Paul Tillman did note that Brandon's hands are tied at the moment until the Selectboard makes a decision regarding the position. He did ask Brandon if it was on the next Selectboard agenda. At this time, it is.

The Land Use Administrator position is unique in the fact that Brandon can't change it without Selectboard approval. He can reorganize the administration and rename positions, but when it comes to the Land Use Administrator and the Listers office would be changed to an Assessors office it involves the Selectboard and the need to vote and act on whether to change those things. If they do vote to change those things, it would only be temporary until the Town Meeting because we would have to be changed to an Assessor form of Government.

deForest Bearse said the State statute says "Only the Selectboard can appoint a Zoning Administrator for an interim upon recommendation of the Planning Commission." She is not sure if this has happened in this case, contracting with Regional Planning.

The Town Manager and the Planning Commission were not aware of this detail. It will be discussed further in "Other business that can be legally discussed."

5.) Discussion: Size and State limits on hotels and motels and length of stay

The limit on sizes of motels went to 40 rooms. Howard Beach and Paul Tillman are not sure when this happened. deForest Bearse noted that it was adopted by the Selectboard in November 2020. It was included in the packet of amendments. Currently it is unlimited for the number of rooms. deForest said that this could be an easy fix by putting the limit back in the definition of Inn and Small Motels.

Joseph Bublat asked if the way that it was currently worded, anybody in the Highway Commercial zone could build unlimited sized hotel/motels, but if you step outside of that they are limited to the 40."

deForest Bearse said that is how it used to be. It used to be that an Inn/Small Hotel is allowed use in the Village zoning district, but it was limited to 8 rooms. That limit was taken out in the previous set of Zoning changes, which makes it equivalent to the Highway Commercial Zone.

The Planning Commission is still researching if there is a limit of time someone can stay in a hotel or language that can be put in a Zoning bylaw that limits the amount of time someone can stay in a motel.

There was a lot of discussion on ideas for the zoning areas and how to bring more business and families to this area. These included:

- Adding more zoning districts
- Recreation (Trails, biking, camping)
- Restaurant options
- Wedding venue options
- Coffee Shop/Bakery

6.) Discussion: Airport Zoning

In Article 4 – Specific Use Standards, Section 4 there is a section for Airport uses, which has been adopted. All of the uses are Conditional Use only.

The Airport should be zoned as Commercial due to activity and noise.

There have been multiple attempts to bring Springfield into the Airport discussion to no avail. There is a monthly meeting that a representative from Planning Commission could go to.

What are the steps that the Planning Commission needs to do to put this back in front of the

Selectboard? The Planning Commission has to start at the beginning and have another hearing.

Michael Todd said the appropriate thing to do would be to have the Selectboard give them direction.

7.) Discussion: Items for Future Agenda

- Interim bylaw for Inn/Small Hotel size and stay limits
- Discussion about the Village/Highway Commercial Zone (New Zone?)
- Paul Tillman will bring a “clean” map to review.
- Noise ordinance

8.) Other Business that can be legally discussed

Michael Todd made a motion for the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to the Selectboard to appoint Alex Taft as Interim Zoning Administrator.

Paul Tillman – 2nd

No further discussion

Vote - Unanimous

9.) Adjourn

Paul Tillman made a motion to adjourn.

Michael Todd – 2nd

No discussion

Vote – unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm

Next Planning Commission Meeting is scheduled for Monday, September, 13 2021 at 6:30 pm at Martin Memorial Hall.

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132 Chauncie Tillman
133 Recording Secretary
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179 **Planning Commission**

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184 Howard Beach, Chair

Joseph Bublat, Chairperson

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190 Tyler Harwell, Chairperson

Paul Tillman, Vice Chair

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196 Michael Todd, Chairperson

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