

Minutes for Tuesday, February 16, 2021 Planning Board Meeting

Note: this meeting was held by video-conference as allowed by State of Maine emergency measures put in place in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM.

2. Introduction of Attendees - present were:

- a. **Planning Board (PB) Members:** Bill Graham (Chair), Laura Chadbourne (Secretary), Morris Gibley, Melanie Eldracher, David Johnson, and alternate member Lynn Hopkins
- b. **Additional attendees:** Arthur Dunlap, CEO, Julia McQueen, PB Assistant, and Jack Kenworthy from Walden Renewables.

3. Review Minutes from the January 19, 2021 meeting. Motion to accept the minutes as written made by David Johnson, seconded by Melanie Eldracher. The motion passed unanimously.

4. CEO's Report from January 2021:

- a. Discussion:
 - a. Arthur has given the BOS his resignation effective at the next town meeting (end March, exact date TBD).
 - b. CEO noted that he'd received one or two inquiries about building yurts on properties in town. Our current ZO doesn't allow for buildings under 600 sq. ft. If people are interested in putting in yurts or tiny houses, they should bring those requests to the comprehensive plan update committee once it starts working (expected March/April, see notes below)
 - c. PB asked if CEO had contacted Scott Dillon to remind him of replanting requirements for timber harvest violation at Map R-05, Lot 52-00. CEO had tried calling a couple of times but had not yet connected with him.
- b. Motion to accept the CEO's **January 2021** report made by David Johnson, seconded by Morris Gibley. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Communication & Bills – see detail at end of these minutes.

6. New Business:

- A. Walden Renewables – discussion with Jack Kenworthy: in Jan 2020, Walden proposed a solar overlay district. Thought at the time and now that it could be a good fit if the town is interested in doing this. Provides regulation for those projects and can be narrowly limited. If PB wanted to, could proceed on its own; not necessarily tied to other processes that might be ongoing. Town could vote on this separately and gauge interest from the townspeople who could vote to approve or deny. Walden could furnish costs of attorney review. Walden has been awarded a competitive contract by CMP. Long term contracts were all signed in late January. Power will stay in Maine and go to state rate payers. Plus community benefits as outlined by Walden in a letter to the BOS last October.

PB input: went through this via a separate conditional use application from a different company over past few months. Board did a thorough job as did the applicant. When all was said and done, the PB determined solar development did not comply with the comprehensive plan. That fact won't change through a zoning overlay approach.

PB suggested Walden come to a comprehensive plan committee workshop meeting and present their case to them. Walden has a limited shelf life for this project so the 1-2 year comprehensive plan timeline won't necessarily work for Walden.

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PB is not comfortable with advancing a Zoning Ordinance overlay change on its own. Members of the public were very clear when the Nexamp solar applications came to the PB that they did not want solar added to town without local regulation being developed. For the PB to suddenly come out of the blue and introduce a new ZO overlay would not be favorably viewed by the town.

If members of the public came to the PB and requested that this overlay option be considered, then the PB would consider it. Absolutely no townspeople to date have come to the board asking for support of solar development. Walden might want to consider how to inform a larger group of townspeople about the benefits of their solar development proposal versus the previous solar development application.

- B. Correspondence to board re: expansion construction in shoreland zone – Chair opened discussion. There was none.

7. Old Business:

- A. Next steps to update Sweden's Zoning and Land Use Ordinance

- Mike Morse's (former DEP) rates have not changed. He has some specific questions for the PB re: shoreland zoning. **VOTE: David Johnson made motion to give Julie McQueen authority on behalf of the PB to engage Mike Morse to advise the board on shoreland zoning. Melanie Eldracher seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion:

- Mike used to work for DEP and has provided consulting like this for other towns.
 - Next step would be to have a public meeting on a regular basis (properly noticed) specifically for revising the ZO.
 - PB could send our current ZO to Mike. Mike has a few questions for the board; we should answer those in a meeting advertised to be about the ZO. Then Mike would create a draft of recommendations for the ZO.
 - **ACTION: Julie will send the questions from Mike Morse as well as the last set of edits to the ZO for the board to consider.**
 - Process is typically PB initiates the process. Could be a "subcommittee" but with only 6 PB members/alt members, board determined this is not necessary.
 - **VOTE: Bill Graham moved and Laura Chadbourne seconded to nominate Julie McQueen to be a voting member of the ZO update committee. The motion passed unanimously.**
 - Board determined to hold meetings every other Monday at 6:30 PM by Zoom starting February 22nd. **ACTION: Laura will create Zoom meeting and get notice posted on website.**
- B. Next steps to update the town's Comprehensive Plan. Bill attended BOS meeting last week and provided names of interested parties to BOS for committee members. Information packet from state should arrive April 1st which will trigger start of work by CP committee. Target March for an organizational meeting of this committee to set expectations.
- C. Update re: payment due from Nexamp re: proposed solar projects at Map R-09, Lot 9, owner Charlotte Riley and Map R-09, Lot 17, owners Sharon and Francis Larosa. Bill called Nexamp. Although the representative from Nexamp had originally said the check is in the mail, that was not the case. Bill called Nexamp's AP department, sent them the board's letter to Nexamp and heard back in a matter of hours. The check has now been received!
- D. Planning Board Assistant job posting update. **VOTE: Laura Chadbourne made motion to post the position on Indeed.com which will cost the board a bit more but worth it to get more applicants. David Johnson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

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- E. Maine Town & City Magazine – Secretary has updated recipients and addresses with MMA.
ACTION: Laura will also add Julie McQueen to distribution.

8. Announcements:

- A. The Planning Board has a vacancy for one alternate member with term ending in March 2021. A member may be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. It was noted that three vacancies (one member and 2 PB alternates) will be coming up at the next town meeting in March.
- B. The next regular Planning Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 7:00 PM via video conference.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Chadbourne,
Secretary, Sweden Planning Board

Correspondence Detail:

Correspondence Received and Sent (by date):

1. Ltr to PB (email) dated 1-18-2021 from Sweden Budget Committee (BC) confirming that the BC had recommended a budget of \$16,000 for support of the PB, based on the prior year's request.
2. Ltr to PB (email) dated 1-19-2021 from Warren deWildt expressing willingness to serve on any committee for ordinance updates.
3. Ltr from PB (email) dated 1-23-2021 to CEO noting two follow up action items for CEO from January 19th PB meeting. Long term RV on Arthur Tsonis' property (Map R-09, Lot 02-A-08), and follow up on the lack of replanting which was required for a timber harvest violation (Map R-05, Lot 52-00).
4. Ltr to PB (email) dated 1-23-2021 from town counsel Leah Rachin with her notes related to the PB Assistant draft job description. PB Chair forwarded to PB Secretary who made minor updates to the job description and suggested running one question by the Sweden BOS. PB Chair replied on 1-24 confirming he had asked to be on the BOS agenda for 1-26.
5. Ltr to PB (email) dated 1-26-2021 from CEO, noting he had contacted Arthur Tsonis about the RV on his property (Map R-09, Lot 02-A-08), and that he would try to get to the Scott Dillon replanting requirements for timber harvest violation (Map R-05, Lot 52-00) the following week.
6. Ltr to and from PB (email) dated 2-1-2021 between PB Secretary and advertising contact from the Bridgton News newspaper, confirming proof approval of a block ad to be placed in the News advertising help wanted for a PB Assistant position.
7. Ltr to and from PB (email) dated 2-2-2021 between PB Secretary and advertising contact from the Conway Daily Sun newspaper, confirming proof approval of a block ad to be placed in the News advertising help wanted for a PB Assistant position.
8. Ltr to and from PB (emails) dated 2-5-2021 to 2-9-2021. PB had placed formal request with the State of Maine for the Comprehensive Plan Resource Package. A response was received confirming that Sweden has been added to the Spring round to receive the package (likely in April)
9. Ltr from PB (email) dated 2-8-2021 to BOS, attaching forms newly created by the PB Secretary, based on Maine Municipal Association templates. Forms were for: job application, reference check sample questions, and an employment reference check form.

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10. Ltr from PB (email) dated 2-8-2021 to First Selectman, confirming the names of people who have volunteered to be on the comprehensive plan update committee.
11. Ltr to PB (email) dated 2-9-2021 from CEO, confirming he had responded to an inquiry about building code regulations from Maychille Godinez (no Map/Lot or ID provided from Ms. Godinez)
12. Ltr to PB (email) dated 2-10-2021 from Jack Kenworthy of Walden Renewables, requesting to be placed on the agenda for the next PB meeting.
13. Ltr to PB (2 emails) dated 2-11-2021 from Melanie Eldracher, attaching before and after photos and expressing concerns about expansion of residence on Stearns Pond (Map U-8, Lot 06)