

Enfield Planning Board – Meeting Minutes**DEPT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW)/MICROSOFT TEAMS****November 29, 2023***Note – minutes recorded later from the video feed.*

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: David Fracht (Chair), Dan Kiley (Vice-Chair), Linda Jones, Erik Russell (Selectboard Representative), Tim Jennings (Secretary), Phil Vermeer, Brad Rich, Kurt Gotthardt (Alternate), Jim Bonner (Alternate and Videographer)

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Whitney Banker (Alternate)

STAFF PRESENT: Rob Taylor- Land Use and Community Development Administrator,

GUESTS: Rene Demers (48 NH Route 4A)

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

Chair Fracht called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and took attendance of members.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None at the start of the meeting.

Mr. Demers arrived during the board and administrator reports. The board completed the reports and moved back to public comment.

Mr. Demers provided a copy with photos of his residence at 48 NH Route 4A. He has been working on renovating this duplex building, which included moving the building 100' back from the road (an expense he had not anticipated).

Mr. Demers is interested in putting a garage with a dwelling up behind the existing home and asked the board to consider allowing two principal buildings per lot during the zoning rewrite. Board members said the garage/apartment would be permitted as an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). Mr. Demers said the ADU only allows 800 square feet, which did not appeal to him (he would like a larger structure). Mr. Taylor said that the ADU would not be allowed because the existing home is a duplex.

The lot is $\frac{3}{4}$ acre, with municipal sewer and a private well in the R1 district. Board members discussed the possibility of subdividing the lot; however, there would not be enough road frontage under current regulations. Chair Fracht suggested a variance, which Mr. Demers said he preferred not to go through, given the difficulty he experienced with his previous variance and the unexpected costs of moving the entire structure.

Board members discussed looking at how they could craft a new zoning ordinance that would allow for the type of plan Mr. Demers has. Chair Fracht suggested that Mr. Demers keep an eye out for the public meetings as part of the zoning ordinance re-write and to come to one or more of those to express his ideas. Changes to the rewrite would be adopted in March 2025 at the Town Meeting, which is within the timeline that Mr. Demers mentioned he is looking at.

III. HEARINGS

PB23-10-01, Ruben Ramirez, Voluntary Lot Merger (VLM)

The applicant was absent at this meeting. The hearing will continue to the next meeting.

IV. CONCEPTUALS

None.

V. SELECTBOARD REPORT: Erik Russell

The public hearing for purchasing a new tanker/pumper truck to replace engine five and the tanker (replacing the two current trucks with a single truck). The board voted to move forward with this purchase. CIP funds over a three-year plan will be used for the purchase.

The Whitney Hall groundbreaking is planned to begin in two weeks, around mid-December. Current offices are in the process of moving to the former La Salette building.

The demolition of the Shedd Street property has begun.

The Community Nursing Committee has raised the money to cover the first year.

VI. LAND USE ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: Rob Taylor

The New Hampshire Planners Association (NHPA) has an upcoming annual meeting.

There have been several real estate inquiries, including land purchases and multi-family housing ideas.

Mr. Jennings arrived at the meeting at this time, approximately 6:37 p.m.

There is a TIF committee meeting scheduled for next week. The committee appointed a fifth member and now has full membership.

The DPW building envelope was recently insulated with blown insulation. At the time the building was built the bond was for less than the estimated amount to build, and insulation was one of several things that were cut from the budget.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment appointed a new alternate member, Dan Regan.

VII. LEGISLATIVE REPORT: David Fracht

The legislature is not in session at this time.

Over 800 bills have been submitted for the 2024 session.

December will be busy with training, caucuses, etc.

VIII. REVIEW MEETING MINUTES: November 15, 2023

Mr. Rich MOVED to approve the November 15, 2023 Minutes presented in the November 29, 2023 agenda packet as amended.

Seconded by Mr. Kiley

** The Vote on the MOTION was approved (7-0).*

Amendments:

Line 47 – “state of VT” to “VT state legislators”

Line 127 – “contract” to “discussions”

IX. NEW BUSINESS:

None.

X. CONTINUING BUSINESS:**A. Zoning Ordinance Re-Write Project Update**

The Select Board voted to authorize the Town Manager to work on updated contracts with Resilience for the Master Plan work and the NH HOP (Housing Opportunity Program) grant.

There is now a draft of the contract for the Master Plan work, and a draft of the contract for the NH HOP grant is underway. A contract is anticipated within the next few weeks.

Mr. Taylor provided the paperwork from the grant application, narrative, matrix, and paperwork with PlaceSense to the new contractor, Resilience. Mr. Taylor also provided the “early thoughts” document he shared with the board at the last meeting.

The new contractor has had regular and positive communication with town personnel.

Mr. Taylor will communicate with Resilience that the board is anticipating a thorough audit for the December 27, 2023 deadline.

Ms. Jones asked if the board still expects to use the separate facilitator. Mr. Taylor said the new contractor has their own team but that the board will also need to be proactive given the time and budget restrictions.

Members discussed lake issues, cyanobacteria, and the importance of a watershed plan. The two active Lake Associations will be critical partners in working on potential zoning changes that positively impact the lakes.

B. 10k ft view ideas for Zoning Ordinance Re-Write – Districts and Their Uses

Board members continued the previous discussions of “exclusionary” zoning (putting down what they don’t want versus trying to think of all scenarios they want and including them).

Chair Fracht reminded members to consider a light touch for these discussions. Mr. Rich asked for clarification on “light touch”. Mr. Taylor said he looked at “light touch” as being more permissive (800 sf versus 1200 sf ADU as an example – what is the difference, really).

Mr. Jennings pointed out that tonight’s community member, who gave public comment about the number of principal buildings per lot, raised the same topic the board had discussed at length several months ago. Being less restrictive would be a lighter touch.

Chair Fracht asked members how they might apply a “light touch” to commercial buildings. Ms. Jones said that she attended a White River Junction (VT) seminar on how they preserved rural character while modernizing businesses in their downtown area. She suggested simple, straightforward design guidelines as a possibility. Members felt this would not be a “light touch” and discussed moving away from “form-based zoning.”

Mr. Gotthardt suggested considering minimizing setbacks across the zoning regulations.

Members discussed allowing more than one principal building per lot. Mr. Gotthardt said the town gets more tax money from individual homes on individual lots. Mr. Russell said that in cases where subdividing a lot was not possible, such as in Mr. Demers's example tonight, which would need more frontage, the town would receive more tax revenue by having multiple principal buildings.

Mr. Gotthardt asked what issues could come up if there were no zoning. Members discussed incompatible use (such as a commercial racing or engine shop in the middle of a residential neighborhood). Members continued to discuss ideas for more minimal zoning, with simpler zones such as residential, commercial/industrial, conservation, and lakes.

Mr. Jennings asked members to consider if there is a need for minimum lot sizes. Mr. Gotthardt said he could see problems in the current R5 district with homeowners not wanting a large development near them and having bought in that district because, at the time, development of that size would not have been allowed. Mr. Russell suggested using road frontage to manage density versus lot size.

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167 Mr. Taylor shared that the city of Dover, NH, has a program called TDR (Transfer of
168 Development Rights) that gives their planning board more power and developers more options
169 for development. The program's purpose is to take money in exchange for greater density, less
170 frontage, and minimized setbacks. The money they take goes into their conservation fund, which
171 allows their Conservation Commission to identify critical areas to conserve. Members said they
172 felt a similar program in Enfield would be challenging to implement. Chair Fracht said that in a
173 town like Enfield, they may want to encourage development in town versus several miles out of
174 the center of town. This would require defined areas where maximum density is allowed, which
175 could include innovative land-use incentives, as Mr. Taylor shared. Mr. Jennings said that having
176 town/water sewer areas helps define density, even if minimum lot sizes were removed. Mr.
177 Jennings said he did not feel development access to services outside of town would be a big
178 issue, given how small Enfield is.

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180 Mr. Russell summarized the discussion of 4 defined existing zones: commercial industrial, lakes,
181 village with water/sewer, conservation, and everything else (which is primarily residential).

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183 Members discussed common issues with developments and proximity to residential areas, which
184 come up as a concern for community members often.

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186 Mr. Jennings asked how to preserve as much contiguous natural area as possible on a large lot
187 while also allowing development that is attractive to developers and would allow a high number
188 of housing units. Mr. Russell said that allowing larger buildings with many units versus single-
189 family homes helps keep a more contiguous natural area. Members discussed additional mixed
190 large and small unit development ideas.

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192 Chair Fracht asked members to consider how to handle home-based businesses. Should the
193 ordinance define a level at which a business is considered commercial versus home business?
194 Members discussed vehicle trips per day, parking availability, noise levels, and the nature of the
195 business. Mr. Russell said that he wanted to avoid having the zoning make the choice for people
196 as to what businesses they can have (such as allowing only accounting businesses). Members
197 agreed to add a town-wide section within the ordinance that addresses a loose definition of home
198 businesses.

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200 Members discussed defining how far out from Route 4 the commercial district should extend.
201 Members also discussed the length of Route 4 and whether to include the entire section within
202 the commercial district (Lebanon line to Canaan line).

203 204 205 **C. Rules of Procedure Discussion**

206 Members moved this discussion forward as the first item for the next meeting.

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207

208 **XI. NEXT MEETING:** December 13, 2023

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210 **XII. ADJOURNMENT:**

211 *Mr. Rich. MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m.*

212 *Seconded by Mr. Vermeer.*

213 ** The Vote on the MOTION was approved (7-0).*