

**Enfield Planning Board – Meeting Minutes****DEPT OF PUBLIC WORKS/MICROSOFT TEAMS****December 27, 2023**

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

**PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jim Bonner (Alternate and Videographer),

**STAFF PRESENT:** Rob Taylor- Land Use and Community Development Administrator, Whitney Banker-Recording Secretary

**GUESTS:** Steve Whitman (Resilience Planning & Design), Mark Fougere (Mark Fougere Planning & Development), Lindsay Smith (Master Plan Task Force Co-Chair)

**I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**

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

Chair Fracht moved the agenda to accommodate the discussions with Mr. Whitman and Mr. Fougere first (both had traveled to be at the meeting).

**II. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None.

**III. HEARINGS**

None.

**IV. CONCEPTUALS**

None.

**V. NEW BUSINESS:****A. NH Housing Opportunity Program (HOP) Grant Kick Off – Resilience Planning & Design and Mark Fougere Planning & Development.**

Mr. Whitman introduced his firm's role in the HOP grant and Master Plan chapters. Mr. Fougere also introduced himself and his firm's role and experience.

Mr. Whitman asked members for feedback on why the town needs to do this work. What issues are they trying to address or resolve? Mr. Fougere will also review workforce housing law and discuss problems or areas to address. Additional discussion items include the timeline and stakeholder meeting planned for February 2024.

Ms. Smith arrived at the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Overview – why does Enfield need to rewrite zoning regulations?

- Existing mistakes, such as lot sizes before zoning, leave many non-conforming lots. Area variances are frequently needed (encroaching on setbacks, waterfront buffer).

- Water quality issues, including many conversions of seasonal camps to year-round residences.

- High housing needs, high housing prices.

- The original intent of zoning was to encourage development in the village. However, Enfield has seen the opposite happen.

- Under-utilization of sewer treatment capacity (70k of 300k owned).

- Enfield's population has declined compared to neighboring Upper Valley towns over the past 25+ years.

- There has yet to be a cluster housing development.

- Large developments were taking place in the 70s and 80s, which appear to have influenced the implementation of zoning that hinders many types of development.

- The number of people per square foot is decreasing (similar to throughout the state).

Review of initial thoughts document (provided by Mr. Taylor)

- The NH Department of Environmental Services (DES), Department of Transportation (DOT), and Fish & Game have policies, timelines, and lack of communication that have recently hindered development interest in Enfield. Enfield's Route 4 corridor is a major commuter route but has had little attention from NH DOT, although improvements to this area have been on the DOT's 10-year plan for many years.

- 13k cars per day pass through the Route 4 corridor in Enfield.

- Issues with communicating needs and being evaluated by NH DOT.

- Lack of clarity throughout certain sections of zoning regulations.

- Inclusive versus exclusive zoning language – which is better?

- Unlike specific and narrow requirements, development flexibility and broad limits are desired, particularly in the Route 4 district.

- A definition for 'rural' is needed (or to remove the language entirely).

Mr. Jennings stated that he did not feel there was anything in the existing ordinance that would be a "sacred item." Overall, the board agrees that starting the ordinance fresh would be ideal (if time allows). Mr. Vermeer asked if Mr. Whitman and Mr. Fougere could reference examples from similar towns as a starting point versus a complete re-write from scratch.

The board agreed that they are not interested in complicated zoning. The goal is a user-friendly product that is clear and easy for developers and homeowners to understand. Housing is allowed in all districts, and the board wishes to keep it that way.

83 Mr. Gotthardt asked whether the board would have time to work on the Route 4 district and  
84 make improvements. Mr. Whitman felt there might be a way to simplify this district and planned  
85 to compare similar towns with mixed-use zoning areas.

86  
87 Mr. Russell said that an overall theme in Enfield is the desire for more vibrancy downtown;  
88 however, the existing zoning that does not encourage housing development has prevented this.  
89 The existing zoning regulations can be very restrictive for property owners (variances, use  
90 restrictions, lot sizes, etc.)

91  
92 Potential Districts:

93 -Conservation

94 -Commercial/Industrial

95 -Village (along water/sewer)

96 -Lakes District (around lakes)

97 -Residential district (housing)

98 -Shaker Village?

99 -Enfield Center?

100 -Eastman?

101  
102 Additional considerations:

103 -Establish districts ahead of community input sessions.

104 -How do you draw the zoning lines (pre-existing lots? Set distance from a physical boundary?)?

105 -Concern for the imbalance of growth and density versus historic preservation and compatibility  
106 with older, historic homes and buildings throughout town. However, historic preservation within  
107 the zoning ordinance will likely be unpopular in the community.

108 -Encouraging cluster development styles (particularly in more rural areas)

109 -High instances of land with ledge, hydric soil, and slope – natural factors that limit  
110 development.

111 -Removing density requirements in the village and allowing frontage or similar requirements to  
112 limit density instead.

113  
114 Workforce Housing:

115 -Enfield is not in compliance with the state law regarding workforce housing, which mandates  
116 zoning to allow for a reasonable opportunity in the largest zone to create workforce housing (at  
117 100% of median income for owner-occupied housing and 60% for rental housing) and to allow  
118 for a multi-family zone.

119 -Workforce housing needs to be addressed with language to make it a possibility as part of  
120 zoning.

121  
122 Mr. Whitman and Mr. Fougere will review tonight's notes and create a punch list for areas of  
123 focus in the next steps. A mapping exercise would be helpful.

Stakeholder meeting (planned for February 2024) – how to use it? Members agreed to utilize this as a listening session and present a handful of options for discussion. A preliminary visual of potential districts may or may not be helpful at this meeting. Ms. Smith suggested breaking the stakeholders into smaller groups (lakes, village, etc.). Mr. Kiley suggested utilizing the second Planning Board meeting each month to have these stakeholder groups attend for discussion. Mr. Taylor will pull together potential dates for the stakeholder meeting and work with Mr. Whitman and Mr. Fougere.

Mr. Whitman noted that Ms. Liz Kelly from his office will plan to work more with Mr. Taylor and Master Plan Co-Chairs Fracht and Smith for that work.

#### **VI. SELECTBOARD REPORT: Erik Russell**

There was a public hearing for water and sewer rates. The Select Board approved new rates, which are up 7%.

#### **VII. LEGISLATIVE REPORT: David Fracht**

There have been no significant changes to report on.

#### **VIII. LAND USE ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: Rob Taylor**

There have been 161 building permits this year (last year, there were 176). While there are fewer permits, those that have been issued include more significant developments. There is a net of 16 new housing units in town (23 new units added and seven removed). The net housing units are about average for Enfield.

#### **IX. REVIEW MEETING MINUTES: December 13, 2023**

*Mr. Rich MOVED to approve the December 13, 2023, Minutes presented in the December 27, 2023, agenda packet as presented.*

*Seconded by Mr. Kiley*

*\* The Vote on the MOTION was approved (6-0-1).*

#### **X. CONTINUING BUSINESS:**

#### **XI. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **A. Principal building per lot issue**

Members agreed this was an issue for zoning.

##### **B. Route 4 Lacroix Development Issues**

Mr. Gotthardt asked what issues had come up with this property (behind Pellerin Automotive) and whether there was anything the planning board could do to improve problems with that property. Mr. Taylor explained that the property issues mainly arose with access to Route 4 and

*Enfield Planning Board Minutes, December 27, 2023*

165 little information or willingness to work on this from NH DOT. The proposal was for about 200  
166 housing units (3/4 of which were single-family homes, and the remainder were townhomes).

167

168 **XII. NEXT MEETING:** January 10, 2023

169

170 **XIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

171 *Mr. Kiley MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m.*

172 *Seconded by Mr. Rich*

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