

Town of Enfield Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) Meeting Minutes – April 14, 2020

Board Members & Staff Present: Mike Diehn (Chair), Tim Lenihan, Ed McLaughlin, Susan Brown, Madeleine Johnson, Rob Taylor (Land Use and Community Development Administrator)

Board Members Absent: None

Public Present: None

Meeting was called to order at 7:09 pm by Mike Diehn, board chair. Chairman Diehn stated that the purpose of the meeting was to A) practice using the ZOOM online platform for future meetings, B) to elect officers and C) to discuss the “rotation of chairs” to pass around/ spread the responsibilities of the chair’s role.

Ed M. felt that the model that the Selectboard uses to elect a new chairman each year and rotate the role annually was the way to go.

Susan Brown felt that Mike D. has been a great Chair and she doesn’t feel ready to be the Chair yet. Mike D. felt strongly that others on the board should be trained in the role as chair. He indicated that the chair does not need to be an expert in the regulations. Moreover the chair simply needs to run an effective meeting. Ed M. did not feel comfortable with an “ad hoc” chair.

Susan B. agreed with Ed M. that the chair should be changed each year, but not at each meeting.

Tim L. indicated that life can change quick as evidenced by his recent Achilles injury. He felt that it would be good to have others with experience in running a meeting. He also indicated that the Selectboard does not have a specific policy on the chairmanship, rather it is a tradition/ custom to rotate the role each year.

Mike D. welcomed Madeleine Johnson (MJ), the most newly elected ZBA member to the group and invited her to say a few words. Madeleine J. introduced herself and described her background in Enfield. She has owned a home in town for a while and has recently made it her fulltime residence. She indicated that she is looking forward to serving the Town. Mike D. inquired as to her zoning knowledge; she described the documents and items provided to her so far by the Land Use Administrator. She is perusing these as time allows and is looking to being a good listener and impartial panelist.

Mike D. called for nominations for the role of chairman. Tim L. advised caution about the process of naming a chair and advised that maintaining flexibility is a key to not “boxing in” the board. Mike D. suggested that the previous chair should become the vice chair.

Ed M. nominated Tim L to be the chair. Susan Brown offered a second on the motion A role-call vote was taken and was unanimous 5-0. Tim L. was declared the newly elected chair. Ed M.

offered a motion that Mike D. be elected as the vice chair. Madeleine J. offered a second on the motion and chairman Lenihan called for a role-call vote and was unanimous 5-0. Mike D. was declared the elected vice chair.

Administrator Taylor brought up an idea the Ed M. has suggested to get the Planning Board and the Zoning Board together for a joint meeting. Ed M. explained what he felt the value would be of such a meeting. The board was in general agreement of the joint meeting concept. Tim L. liked the idea and specified some of the important legal issues at play in the relationship between the boards. Susan B. felt that a joint meeting was an excellent idea. She offered to bake cookies. Mike D. was in favor of a joint meeting.

Administrator Taylor also updated the board on the Planning Board's master planning work. Due to COVID19, the PB has voted to suspend master planning work temporarily. He explained that this is a "new world" and everything has changed due the pandemic. Tim L. felt that the times may be presenting the Town with an opportunity to advance some healthy dialog between the two land use boards.

Tim L. brought up the need for alternate members of the board. A discussion took place about asking Tom Blodgett to serve as an alternate as he has been a member in the past and was experienced in the role of board service. The use of the ZOOM meeting platform may also offer more flexibility in this area.

Mike D. inquired about any upcoming NHMA land use board member training opportunities. He asked Rob T. to look into the offerings and availability for the members. Obviously, COVID19 is having a large impact on these offerings. Taylor will gather info.

Chairman Lenihan called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 pm. A motion was offered, seconded and supported unanimously, 5-0.

Submitted by,
Rob Taylor, Land Use and Community Development Administrator