

Board Present: Alan Putnam – Chair, Bill Rescsanski, Alissa Bascom, Keith Weed, Stacy Hassett, Richard Carter, Patty Chaffee

Alternate: Lenny Ostasiewski

Public Present: Carol Clark, Vincent & Virginia Jordan, Duane Wetherby, Philip Turner, Jessi & Griffin Dussault, Terry Spilsbury, Sharon Francis, Tamara Golden

Alan Putnam called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Approval of minutes of December 5, 2023

Motion by Ms. Bascom to approve the meeting minutes of December 5, 2023, seconded by Mr. Weed. 6-0-0, motion approved.

Applications:

None at this time.

New Business:

1. Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Sign Regulations

Mr. Putnam opened the public hearing for this item.

Ms. Emerson explained that the sign ordinance went through a minor overhaul, as per State law, the types of signs can be regulated but not what they say. The colors and information cannot be regulated. The requirements are otherwise mostly the same. Temporary signs are defined within the regulations.

Sharon Francis handed out a document with some suggested amendments to the ordinance. She asked how the Attorney General gets the information on signs in order to make determinations. She suggested that Staff inform a property owner when signs must be removed after an election before being referred to the Attorney General's Office. This would allow the Town to still be taking responsibility for the signs.

Ms. Bascom stated that RSA 664:17 does not refer to political signs on personal/private property, and is not in the purview of the Charlestown Sign Ordinance. It does not address political advertising by a private citizen. This can be left on private property as long as it is not a safety hazard. It does not seem that this is within the Board's purview to then place this within the ordinance.

Mr. Spilsbury noted that he is unsure if the Board cannot address the subject of political signs within the ordinance. He suggested the Board table this item until it can get clarification on this.

Ms. Francis stated that she would like for feather/snipe bandit signs to be defined in the ordinance. She asked about liability in these signs.

Motion by Ms. Bascom to amend the temporary sign requirement to remove the number in the second sentence of Section 8.6.8, seconded by Mr. Rescsanski. 7-0-0, motion approved.

There was agreement that definitions for feather and snipe bandit signs could be placed in the Definitions section. This will be referred to in the ordinance.

There was discussion regarding allowing signs without reading them and when signs become hate speech. Ms. Emerson stated that this would likely be a civil issue that the Town would not get involved in.

Motion by Ms. Chaffee to table this discussion until the January 2, 2024, meeting, seconded by Mr. Hassett.

7-0-0, motion approved.

2. Public Hearings: Historic District Ordinance

Mr. Putnam opened the public hearing for this item.

Philip Turner presented the proposed ordinance. He explained that there was a recommendation for this ordinance within the Master Plan to protect the historical character of the Town's two historical districts. The proponents reviewed past proposals to make this one more agreeable. This is in conformance with RSA 674 and will have a beneficial impact to raise a voice for historical resources and buildings in Town. This is not intended to infringe on property owners' rights.

Mr. Rescsanski noted that painting of a structure is not covered in the ordinance. Mr. Turner explained that painting would likely not be a permanent change. He does not believe the Town should make that determination.

Mr. Turner explained that one request from the Historic District Commission is for the Town to support the hiring of historical architect consultant to draft guidelines that are not currently in the ordinance. These would be subject to public hearings.

A member of the public noted that this is a comprehensive regulatory structure that is being imposed on 14-17 structures in this area of Town. He suggested that the Board consider the scale of this ordinance. The Town needs to allow for a broad range of interpretation within its Historic District.

Ms. Francis asked if certain signs will be allowed in the proposed Historic District. Mr. Turner explained that this information is not included within this ordinance.

There was discussion regarding placing utility lines underground.

Motion by Ms. Bascom to table this discussion until the January 2, 2024, meeting, seconded by Mr. Weed.

7-0-0, motion approved.

Administration:

None at this time.

Continued Business:

None at this time.

Communications: None at this time.

a) Board – Master Plan Discussion

b) Public Participation:

Motion by Mr. Rescsanski to adjourn at 9:00pm, seconded by Mr. Weed.
7-0-0, motion approved. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristan Patenaude
Recording Secretary