

Present: Bob Frizzell - Chair; Sharon Francis – Vice Chair; Steve Neill - Ex Officio; Doug Neill; Rosie Smith-Hull; Terry Spilsbury; Dick Lincourt; Albert St Pierre; Jeff Lessels.

Alternates Present: Patty Chaffee

Absent: Duane Wetherby

Employees Present: Liz Emerson; Sarah Davis - Secretary

Bob Frizzell called the meeting to order at 7pm.

Approval of minutes of the meeting of 12/3/19: motion by Sharon Francis to approve the minutes of the meeting of 12/3/19 as presented, second by Rosie Smith-Hull, all in favor with the exception of Doug Neill who abstained as he was not present at the meeting, motion passed.

Introduction of Liz Emerson; Planning and Zoning Administrator: this role is to include code enforcement. Liz introduced herself and gave a summary of her background working in the town of Newport.

Jeff Lessels spoke through the Chairman to apologize for the appointment of the new Planning and Zoning Administrator without consultation with the Planning Board.

Sharon Francis stated that she will not be voting on any items for the immediate future following a concussion. Sharon Francis spoke about the current discussion on the School situation and she is looking to have the new Administrator begin to accurately record the School age population in the town of Charlestown.

Jeff Lessels spoke about research that has been done by the Select Board on the School age populations in Charlestown and the surrounding towns.

Patty Chaffee confirmed that household details are private information, the 2020 census would be the best opportunity to obtain this information. Patty spoke about contacting other Town Clerks regarding obtaining information on students and residency and a lot is dependent on relationships with School Districts.

SB306 Bill: Liz Emerson spoke about SB 306 which will create a 3 member board comprised of an attorney, a licensed surveyor or professional engineer and a 3rd undetermined person which would have the power to overturn any local planning board decisions. A letter was received at the town office with no origin details and no return address asking for a letter to be sent to Martha Hennessy opposing the bill. A document was handed out to each of the board members which Liz Emerson created detailing SB 306. Dick Lincourt stated that this appears to be an absurd amount of power for 3 people and he would like to see a letter sent to our senator from the Planning Board confirming that the board is against the bill and outlining the reasons why and also from each individual member. Terry Spilsbury added that copies should be sent to our local representatives Liz Emerson will create a letter and email it to the Planning Board members before it is sent out.

Land Conservation: Liz Emerson distributed a handout entitled “Sharon’s Handouts - Breakdown” this document compares Charlestown in 1999 versus 2020, this comparison shows that in 2020 the area of Charlestown has not been developed as much as was anticipated in 1999.

Bob Frizzell received an email from Dick Holmes of the Conservation Commission confirming that Megan Chapman of the Upper Valley Land Trust will be speaking at their meeting February 10th at 7pm on monies available for procuring easements. Dick Lincourt confirmed that this will be a good opportunity to hear from Megan Chapman and could be a good opportunity to partner with the Upper Valley Land Trust and conserve some of the farm land that could otherwise be developed in ways we don't want to see.

Liz Emerson confirmed that the Charlestown Flood Plain regulations are out of date and out of compliance, the regulations were tightened up in 2006, these have been updated and Liz Emerson handed out a draft of updated regulations to each member of the board to check through before the next meeting. Patty Chaffee confirmed that Dave Edkins presented issues with the FEMA maps at their meetings. Albert St Pierre commented that there is a property in his development which is shown as in the Flood Plain on the maps but actually is physically not.

Steve Neill asked Liz Emerson to give the board an update on the code enforcement issues that she inherited. Liz confirmed that she has seen a couple of key areas, living in campers, no heat, no water, these urgent cases have been contacted as a start. With regards to open violations, which number around 15, these are also being looked at with a view to helping the resident out of their situation by providing relevant contact details for organizations which can assist in resolving specific issues.

Sharon Francis asked about property owners who do not take action to resolve issues, what enforcement action is possible. Liz confirmed that with the Select Board's approval legal action can be taken and if necessary a lien can be placed on the property although legal action is expensive and is essentially a last resort.

Bob Frizzell asked Dick Lincourt about the pavement at the Dollar Store, Liz Emerson confirmed that Steve Schneider did bring this to her attention, the fact that it does need to be cleaned out regularly. Dick Lincourt confirmed that they are supposed to have an operational plan for their underground water storage, storm water storage and mitigation system but as far as Dick Lincourt is aware no report has been seen.

Terry Spilsbury asked about having a status report on open items to give the Planning Board a sense of what is happening in town for information purposes.

Bob Frizzell asked about the sign which has been put up at the old Keady Doctor's Office, this has been addressed and Liz is waiting for a reply.

Liz Emerson confirmed that she has submitted the paperwork for the Poisson Lot to the Brownfield Team to look at nominations to see if this is one that they would like to take up, Liz will be meeting with them to go over the report. The piece for the town report has been completed, this will be resent to the Planning Board Members.

Dick Lincourt asked about the Cobb's property and vehicles turning left onto Railroad Street against the one way traffic direction and asked about having a sign erected. Steve Neill confirmed that there was to

be a rail put in place to prevent left turns. Liz Emerson confirmed that she will contact them regarding enforcement of the right turn only.

Sharon Francis spoke about the beautification committee having monies for the green strip outside the Cobb businesses and also the curbing around the corner of Deport Street which will be happening in the spring.

Terry Spilsbury spoke about the parking at the Cobb business property and asked for a follow up letter to the Cobb's confirming that time is being given for the business to establish but the situation is being monitored to ensure all agreed measures are being put in place.

Rosie Smith-Hull asked about JS Automotive in the former Mahaffy metal works building with regards to the change of use. Liz Emerson will follow up on this.

Patty Chaffee confirmed that the town office will be open for sign-ups for open offices as of tomorrow, 22nd January until the 31st January.

Gabe Bailey confirmed that he is interested in being an alternate for the Planning Board.

Bob Frizzell asked if the board needs to advertise for open alternate positions, it was confirmed that this should be done. Bob Frizzell confirmed that alternates are used as a training ground before members are elected to the board.

A discussion ensued on the school withdrawal situation.

Jeff Lessels asked if there is room for public comment, after consent from the Chairman Jeff Lessels handed out a document entitled "Shared Town Goals" demonstrating goals of Higher Property Values and Lower Tax Rates with more Cultural events and showing the Finance Committee and Planning Board with a view to the 2 committees working together to help the town achieve their goals working with an outcome based view. Jeff Lessels spoke about the different action steps for the planning board detailed in the document with one being the elimination of one mobile home park. Patty Chaffee spoke about outcome based budgeting for example to maintain what we have in our town and in future transforming the building needs committee into a Capital Improvements Committee. Jeff Lessels further spoke to the level of workforce housing in the town of Charlestown, to a greater extent than a lot of towns in the region and the real prospect of currently available land being developed into another mobile park. This should be declined using current legislation on the grounds of affordability to the town.

Sharon Francis thanked Jeff Lessels for his presentation and spoke about her concerns about updating the Masterplan and looking to have updates of the Masterplan with specific regards to Mobile Home, upgrading values and raising more money through foundations and no longer being in the position of having so many low quality mobile homes.

Bob Frizzell confirmed that the Planning Board needs to advertise open positions for Alternates. Patty Chaffee confirmed that Alternate positions are normally posted after the election when all the new committees are formed and the list of open slots is available.

Motion by Rosie Smith-Hull that Gabe Bailey come on to the Planning Board as an Alternate, second by Dick Lincourt, all in favor, motion approved.

Steve Neill confirmed that the Select Board will act on the recommendation at their next meeting. Patty Chaffee confirmed that Gabe then needs to go to the Tax Clerk Office to be sworn in.

Bob Frizzell asked for a motion to adjourn at 8.25 pm, motion by Rosie Smith-Hull, second by Doug Neill, all in favor, meeting adjourned.

Sarah Davis
Secretary