

Present: Sharon Francis - Vice Chair; Douglas Neill; Dick Lincourt; Gabe Bailey; Alan Putnam; ; Patty Chaffee

Absent: Terry Spilsbury

Alternates: Duane Wetherby

Staff: Liz Emerson;

Sharon Francis called the meeting to order at 7pm, welcomed the new members to the board and invited Gabe Bailey to speak about why he decided to run for the position on the Planning Board.

Gabe Bailey spoke about his background in town over the last 15 years, working with the Select Board and different committees in town such as being on the Recreation Committee, the Finance Committee and the Conservation Commission; the meetings for which clashed with the Finance Committee so his attendance was not what it would otherwise have been. Gabe feels that the Planning Board is something that he is interested in with things being talked about in town over the last few years.

Sharon Francis then asked Alan Putnam to speak about himself and his joining the Planning Board. Alan confirmed that he is originally from Charlestown and his family is well established in town. He spoke about his educational background in St Louis, his law degree and practicing law for 12 years focusing on Estate Planning, Probate tech matters and real estate issues. Returning to Charlestown 12 years ago, his interest in town matters has increased over the last few years similar to Gabe and being a significant landowner and business owner in town and wanting to be involved in town affairs.

Sharon Francis welcomed the two new members to the board and stated that this is a big year for Charlestown; the town is scraping the bottom of the barrel in terms of the assessed property valuations, "ain't nobody in New Hampshire that's got it worse than us". The town can't depend on other communities to get us out of the hole, it is up to Charlestown. This is the year that the town Masterplan will be revised and many think that this is a way of thinking through the financial valuation issues that need to be addressed and the Planning Board has the opportunity to sort through the facts, the opportunities and get a blueprint for going forward that could make a difference.

Liz Emerson asked to vote in a Planning Board Chair. Sharon Francis stated that her preference would be to wait until everyone is present so that everyone has a choice in the vote and can opt out if they have to, Sharon Francis asked the Board for their thoughts. Dick Lincourt asked a point of order if anyone is sitting as an alternate for Terry and our Ex Officio. Liz Emerson confirmed that Patty Chaffee is sitting for Terry Spilsbury and that the Board has a quorum and does not see the need to wait. Sharon Francis stated that if the board waits then Terry can be a part of the conversation. Liz Emerson stated that if Terry Spilsbury was to be elected as Chair then he would be interim chair until he has time to respond, Liz Emerson further stated that this is not an opinion this is just an option, other than that the Board can move forward with a vote as per the RSA. Sharon Francis clarified that the RSA does state that the Chair should be elected at the first meeting and does not say anything about it being deferred, Liz Emerson agreed with this statement.

Sharon Francis asked the board how to proceed: Dick Lincourt asked if the Board does defer the vote if Sharon Francis as Vice Chair can take care of business until the vote takes place. Liz Emerson confirmed that this is the case.

Motion by Dick Lincourt: to move that the Planning Board defer the election of a chair until our next meeting whenever that maybe. Liz Emerson confirmed that this is currently scheduled for April 7th subject to change dependent on changes due to the COVID 19 outbreak. Second by Gabe Bailey. All in favor, motioned passed.

Sharon Francis asked for a motion to accept the minutes of February 18th.

Motion by Patty Chaffee: to accept the minutes, second by Dick Lincourt.

Sharon Francis asked for any changes: Patty Chaffee: p.1 Line after the Sign Permit Paragraph: "Bob Frizzell clarified with Jeremy Wood" add "that he" to read "Bob Frizzell clarified with Jeremy Wood that he is not connected..."; p.1 - 3 lines below that paragraph "Gabe Bailey asked about a "pedlar's" correct spelling to "peddler's".

Sharon Francis called for an agreement to accept the minutes with the amendments proposed, all in favor, motion passed.

Sharon Francis asked Liz Emerson to take the Board through the agenda.

Liz Emerson spoke about the Site Plan that was scheduled for Jeremy Wood for this meeting, as he is not currently present this will be pushed to the end of the meeting to give him the chance to speak on it, if he does not attend the meeting then this will be tabled until the meeting of April 7th.

Doug Neill asked if the applicant has to be present, Liz Emerson confirmed that the applicant does not have to be present; the Board does have an unrelated sign permit so the Site Plan can be reviewed later.

Liz Emerson handed out copies of the sign permit application for the Campbell House on the Old Springfield Road.

Sharon Francis welcomed the applicant Ann Campbell. Doug Neill asked if Alan Putnam is aware of where this property is located, Alan confirmed that he is not, it was clarified that the property is the old Pathways House on the hill. Patty Chaffee confirmed that the sign is nice looking.

Sharon Francis asked for the evaluation of the application for the sign and a motion.

Motion by Doug Neill: to accept the application as complete, second by Gabe Bailey, all in favor motion passed.

Doug Neill asked if the sign is single or double sided. Ann Campbell confirmed that the sign is single sided and the objective is to put the sign on the hill to be seen from the south only as no directions will be given to approach over the dry bridge.

Dick Lincourt asked if this is where the Pathways sign used to be, consensus is that this is the case. Dick Lincourt asked if the sign is 14 feet from the road, Ann Campbell confirmed that the sign is 14 feet from the edge of the driveway and 35 feet from the middle of the road.

Sharon Francis asked the applicant to confirm how the sign is mounted. Ann Campbell confirmed that it is a wooden sign and the plan is for posts behind it, there will be no visible posts at the side. The sign will be illuminated by solar with a shut off at 11pm. The application asks for 8 square feet, 5 square feet is the standard for that area of town but this is a blind driveway and therefore people will not see the sign until the last second.

Sharon Francis confirmed that this is an exception and the applicant agreed. Ann Campbell clarified that the sign for the Claremont Senior Center across the street is 9 square feet for visual reference.

Sharon Francis asked about the statement "wood wrapped vinyl", Ann Campbell confirmed that the sign will not be a banner; it will be solid to cope with the weather. Liz Emerson confirmed that the base is wood and the rest is vinyl. Sharon Francis confirmed that this is not painted on wood; Ann Campbell confirmed that this is machine pressed.

Dick Lincourt confirmed that he believed a variance is not required and read out the relevant details. Patty Chaffee confirmed that the property is in zone A1 on the zoning map. Dick Lincourt confirmed that the size limit is 5 square feet in this case and therefore a Zoning Board approval is required.

Liz Emerson confirmed that this can be made a condition.

Ann Campbell confirmed that this is the last step for their Medicaid billing as the sign is required.

Motion by Doug Neill: to approve the sign application as presented with the condition of Zoning Board variance approval, second by Patty Chaffee. All in favor, motion approved.

Sharon Francis asked Liz Emerson if she would like to present the other item on the agenda as the applicant is not present.

Liz Emerson presented the site plan review for 157 Main Street, the old Keady Family Practice building for a florist shop change of used. Liz Emerson confirmed that she has gone through the application and everything appears to be present and correct. The applicant has stated that there is a rear light that shines out into the abutting yard: that will be changed to a down light; this is the only exterior light change that Liz Emerson is aware of.

Patty Chaffee asked if Liz Emerson pulled the old files and if there is anything that the Planning Board should be aware of moving forward.

Liz Emerson confirmed that she did work through old files although she did not find the most recent file for the Keady Family Practice so she is not aware of any restrictions on this. She will continue to look for the file.

Sharon Francis asked about the part of the application to do with parking and the proposed hours of operation which are 24/7.

Doug Neill spoke about this possible being for weddings or funerals although 24/7 does seem a little weird.

Patty Chaffee asked if the Olive Oil part is not included. Liz Emerson confirmed that her understanding that the Florist Shop will take over the whole building but she is not the applicant. Liz Emerson is aware of remodeling and the applicant has indicated that this application is for the entire building.

Alan Putnam questioned the number of customers stated as 8 to 16 and asked where this number would have come from. Liz Emerson replied that she does not know where the numbers originated.

Motion by Dick Lincourt: to table the Site Plan application for 157 Main Street until the next scheduled meeting which is April 7th, second by Gabe Bailey. Patty Chaffee commented that with the floral chemicals the board should speak to Dave Duquette. Doug Neill commented that there needs to be clarification on the Olive Oil business.

All in favor, motion approved.

Doug Neill asked about the 20 days and the business opening, Liz Emerson will look into this.

Sharon Francis asked Liz Emerson for any other items.

Liz Emerson distributed a handout that Vice Chair Sharon Francis prepared. It is a short synopsis of the Planning Board's decisions from the meetings for the Cobb building. Sharon prepared the document in hopes to close the door on the Cobb Brothers property line question. Liz Emerson did deep research, read through the minutes and also has survey maps that are at the office if anyone would like to check them. The town does own a little west of the sidewalk, the sidewalk and East of the sidewalk to the road. For other properties both north and south; the property lines go to the inside of the sidewalk and have the same verbiage as the Cobb deed. The property survey that the NH licensed land surveyors had done confirm that the line is to the Westerly side of the sidewalk.

Sharon Francis commented on the meetings involved and the discussion and that the documentation does not include the Tattoo Parlor which was a different meeting.

Liz Emerson spoke about the question of the roof discussed at the last meeting which will be over the pad where the exterior walk in freezer/refrigerator will be, this is to protect the refrigerator. To Liz's knowledge there has been a permit pulled for it.

Sharon Francis spoke about a quote in "Our Town" indicating that Joe Cobb is looking to run little cars in the parking lot and asked if this would need additional site plan approval.

Liz Emerson stated that unless there is something to be built for it she does not see herself policing the RC cars. Sharon Francis spoke about curbs to separate people and cars. Liz Emerson responded that the beautification committee is to erect a green space this should take care of this.

Gabe Bailey spoke about racing RC cars in the past on Washington Street using fire hoses to keep the cards in bounds and to him it appears to be harmless, fun activity.

Charlie Baraly commented that the Cobb Brothers want to do RC races during off hours on Sundays; Charlie sees no issues with this happening

Sharon Francis asked for any new business to be conducted.

Dick Lincourt stated that there is still a problem with traffic turning the wrong way on a one way street off the Cobb property.

Gabe Bailey commented that this problem is not limited to the Cobb property; there are vehicles that leave the Bakery building daily.

Patty Chaffee asked about the barriers that had been out in place, it was confirmed that these have been removed.

Sharon Francis stated that some traffic management is required and this needs to get back to the Select Board and the Highway Department. Jeff Lessels agreed to this and that this is something that occurs daily on the property around the Town Office and Mascoma Bank.

Sharon Francis commented that a new budget has been approved and it might be possible to have new signs made.

Doug Neill commented that he believed that Depot Street should be returned to a 2 way street if only to help out with deliveries to the Depot Center which are made more difficult with parking issues. A discussion ensued on the history of the one way direction, the reason it was put in place and the fact that for people who are not local there is no clear indication of the one way traffic direction ruling. Patty Chaffee stated that there should be signage to say "One Way".

Sharon Francis asked Liz Emerson if she knows of any applications for the next meeting other than Jeremy Wood's. Liz Emerson confirmed that there is 1, which is an Annexation/ lot line adjustment up by the Charlestown/Claremont line for Lynn Fisher to get rid of the right of way and making it a part of the lot with set boundary lines. There is a movement of lot lines to comply with zoning rules.

Sharon Francis spoke about the Master Plan and dealing with it and asked if everyone has a copy of the current Master Plan. Liz Emerson will make copies for everyone and will try to distribute them before the next meeting. The Master Plan was done largely by the Regional Planning Commission with not a lot of input from the Planning Board. It is good for its professional opinion but may not be exactly what Charlestown sees and feels. This is an opportunity to make the Master Plan how Charlestown wants it to be and an excellent opportunity to have a forum to address many problems raised by the School Withdrawal study. Sharon Francis' preference is to look at how the Planning Board deals with housing valuation and if there is a way that the town can get closer to average rather than at the bottom.

Dick Lincourt wished Happy Birthday to Sharon Francis as today is her birthday.

Sharon Francis asked if there is anything else.

Patty Chaffee confirmed that the Building Needs Committee will regroup and the first meeting will be on the last Wednesday of April, 29th, at the Fire Station at 6.30pm. The hope is to come up with some type of new strategy hopefully with the involvement of the Planning Board as this would be helpful. Gabe Bailey commented that the building needs committee did a good job and he is surprised that this did not pass.

Sharon Francis asked Liz Emerson about the agenda and the public comments item. Liz Emerson clarified that this is the public's section to bring anything they have to the Planning Board.

Jeff Lessels commented on:

The Campbell House:

- They are a dedicated group
- They are an important part of town
- Try to make the Zoning Board meeting as soon as possible under the circumstances with COVID 19 and possibly having the Zoning Board approval being done over the phone. Liz Emerson confirmed that she is looking to do this. Patty Chaffee questioned the public notice for the Zoning Board meeting, Liz Emerson confirmed that the rules will be followed.

Jeremy Wood – The Select Board will keep an eye on the Floral Shop and if it is to open before the Site Plan is approved they will cross that bridge when it comes to it.

Master Plan:

- We don't need to reinvent the wheel, don't need to dive in deep in "redoing" the Master Plan
- We should focus on specific areas
- We have the template of a Master Plan, use it, and don't work start over.

Sharon Francis spoke about the master Plan and the Planning Board members looking through the document before the next meeting to see what can be updated to do better than previously. Patty Chaffee spoke about businesses needing to add new buildings to town to improve the valuation situation. The equalization rate is currently at 85%, houses are selling at 15% more than they are being valued at which is something to keep in mind.

Sharon Francis asked for thoughts from tonight's meeting from the new members. Gabe Bailey confirmed that he is just trying to soak it all in. Sharon Francis spoke about keeping in compliance with regulations. Alan Putnam spoke to agree with Gabe Bailey's comments.

Sharon Francis called for a motion to adjourn at 8.10pm, motion by Gabe Bailey, second by Doug Neill, all in favor meeting adjourned at 8.10pm

Sarah Davis
Secretary

UNAPPROVED