

Present: Terry Spilsbury – Chair; Douglas Neill – Vice Chair; Jeff Lessels - Ex Officio; Sharon Francis; Gabe Bailey; Dick Lincourt; Alan Putnam (via zoom)

Alternates: Patty Chaffee

Employees Present: Liz Emerson; Sarah Davis - Secretary

Sharon Francis called the meeting to order at 7pm.

Minutes of the Planning Board meeting of 3/17/20.

Motion by Doug Neill: to accept the minutes of the meeting of 3/17, second by Gabe Bailey. Amendments: Sharon Francis, p.1, para. 4 change “Committee” to “Board”; Dick Lincourt: p.1, para. 3, line 4 change “state” to “estate”; p.1, para.5, line 6 change “is” to “if”; p.2, para. 5, line 2: change “so” to “to”; p.2, para. 5, line 2 add “an unrelated” after “board”; p.3, para. 10, line 8 add “Duquette” after “Dave”; p.4, para. 4, line 2 change “sked” to “asked”; p.4, para. 14, line 1 change “Deport” to Depot”; p.4, para. 15, line 2 change “land” to “line”; p.5, para. 8 delete “work from” and add “start over”; p.5, para. 9 line 3 change “evaluation” to “valuation”; p.6, para. 2 change both times from “7.10 pm” to “8.10 pm”; Patty Chaffee asked for the attendees to reflect that she sat for Terry Spilsbury. Liz Emerson added to p.4, para. 1, line 1 inserting “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.” All in favor of accepting the minutes with changes, minutes approved. Terry Spilsbury abstained as he was not present at the meeting.

Sharon Francis asked for any agenda suggestions, there were none at this point.

Sharon Francis spoke about electing new officials since the town meeting has passed and asked for nominations for Planning Board Chair. Gabe Bailey nominated Doug Neill, second by Jeff Lessels; Dick Lincourt nominated Terry Spilsbury, second by Alan Putnam.

Sharon Francis asked for comments from the candidates. Terry Spilsbury stated that the position is not a position that he has sought but takes it very seriously and would want to know that the entire board is committed to reviewing the strategic plan this year as this is important to him. Doug Neill spoke to say that he will do the best he can.

Sharon Francis called for a vote for the position of Chair: votes in favor of Doug Neill as Chair, 3 votes; Terry Spilsbury: 4 votes in favor. Terry Spilsbury is confirmed as Chairman of the Planning Board.

Nominations for Vice Chair; Dick Lincourt nominated Doug Neill, seconded by Jeff Lessels. All in favor, Doug Neill is confirmed as Vice Chair of the Planning Board.

Sharon Francis turned the meeting over to Terry Spilsbury as the new Chair of the Planning Board.

2020-SDFP-002: Lynn & Warren Fisher (Owner) Travis Royce (Agent) and 2020-ANFP-001: Lynn & Warren Fisher (Owner) Travis Royce (Agent)

Travis Royce presented the plan for Claremont Animal Hospital Property on the town line on route 12 which has frontage on Happy Acres Road also. The property has a dwelling out in the woods behind the hospital in Claremont. The reason for the application is to separate the 2 so that they can be sold separately. In addition the house property is accessed via a right of way from Happy Acres which needs

to be cleaned up. The proposal is for 2 lots, 1 for the Animal Hospital and 1 for the dwelling: the 40 foot right of way would become a 50 foot owned part of the house lot, this is from an abutting property of Warren Fisher. To achieve the same size lot before and after, 1.08 acres of land is proposed to be transferred from the animal hospital property. This also helps with the well distance from the property line as these are closer than the recommended distance. Travis Royce confirmed that the City of Claremont Planning Board has already approved the proposal on condition that the plan is also approved by the Town of Charlestown.

Sharon Francis asked if the proposal affects the Boarding Kennel Animal Grooming property. Travis Royce confirmed that the proposal does not affect that property.

Terry Spilsbury asked for clarification on the proposed changes. Travis Royce confirmed that the part of the property currently in Claremont is being given to the Animal Hospital and an equivalent portion of land in Claremont is being given to the Warren Fisher property to retain the same size lot.

Terry Spilsbury asked for any questions from Board Members.

Dick Lincourt asked about the lot owned by Warren Fisher, a well is shown on the map but there is no leach field shown. Travis Royce confirmed that there is a leach field at the back of the house.

Terry Spilsbury confirmed that these proposals are before the board for the first time and are to be handled in one motion. Terry Spilsbury asked Liz Emerson to reference each lot on the related application to ensure that the links are clear.

Sharon Francis asked about the tax calculation, what proportion of the lot is in Charlestown. Travis Royce confirmed that as far as he is aware the tax is minimal value.

Liz Emerson confirmed that the assessor will need to create a new lot in the Charlestown mapping program and tax the new lot at the appropriate rate.

Terry Spilsbury confirmed that the proposal will result in 3 lots in Charlestown, Travis Royce confirmed that it will be 3 separate lots for tax purposes but for the purposes of transfers it will be 1 lot.

Motion by Dick Lincourt: to accept the subdivision application and the annexation application of Lynn Fisher as complete.

Second by Doug Neill. Terry Spilsbury asked for any further discussion, seeing none called for a vote, all in favor, motion approved.

Motion by Dick Lincourt: to move final approval of the subdivision application and annexation application, second by Sharon Francis. Terry Spilsbury asked for further discussion, seeing none called for a vote, all in favor, motion approved.

2020-SPFP-001: Theo Georgiadis (Owner) Jeremy Wood (Agent).

Terry Spilsbury asked if it is known why the applicant is absent again, Liz Emerson confirmed that she does not know as she has not contacted him. As the applicant and agent are not present the consensus is to defer this item until the next meeting.

Motion by Gabe Bailey: to defer this item to the next meeting, second by Doug Neill, all in favor, motion approved.

Sharon Francis commented that this is because the Board wants a chance to talk with the Applicant because some of the things in the application are not clear and the Board wants to understand the intentions.

Terry Spilsbury asked for any other business.

Gabe Bailey spoke about the number of cars from the dealerships in Claremont on the side of the road. Liz Emerson confirmed that this is related to the McGee dealership move and she has had contact with the dealership. This will be followed up on should the situation continue after the dealership has opened. Doug Neill asked about the legality as the land owner is not a registered dealer, Liz Emerson confirmed that a permit will be required should cars be sold from the lot.

A discussion ensued on the zoning and permitted use.

Jeff Lessels spoke about the site plan for the garage to the rear of the property and a sign for car sales. Liz Emerson confirmed that she is not aware of this, she will check on this.

Dick Lincourt spoke about the banner sign below the regular sign advertising LEDs, the sign has now changed to advertise services.

Terry Spilsbury confirmed that the site plans have been approved for the church and school, the auto service shop and the home but nothing about car sales or storage and this raises an issue that was not contemplated with the site plan applications and therefore goes back to the question as to whether this is consistent with the approvals in place.

Jeff Lessels asked about the tax exempt status and the possible revenue income, Terry Spilsbury clarified that the cars are not stored on the tax exempt lot.

Terry Spilsbury posed the question about the sign changing following approval, Dick Lincourt confirmed that it has, Liz Emerson confirmed that she will look into this.

Terry Spilsbury asked for any other business.

Terry Spilsbury moved to discuss the Strategic Plan, he confirmed that he appreciates being asked to be Chairman and stated that what the Planning Board has not been doing is "Planning". The Board has been responsive and active on applications and has the potential to go beyond that. If the board endorses that it is timely to make this a priority and agrees that this is the direction that the board wishes to move in then he is willing to commit a serious amount of time and effort to revisit the plan and went on to speak about the current plan and how little it has been mentioned. The Board should be thinking creatively about how to address the Master Plan to make it a dynamic, useful document with a sense of legitimacy with a buy in from the community.

Terry Spilsbury suggested that the next meeting involve a discussion to figure out how this can be done. The vision is to separate out the primary topics with a sub-committee for each primary topic; 6 elected members with an ex officio from the Select Board there could be up to 6 task forces with each person chairing one and a second member of the board serving on each task force. He then went on to elaborate on the task force composition including members of the community to include for example CEDA. There could be 18 members of the community involved in the task force which would not hold any power or decision making authority, this would remain with the Planning Board.

Terry Spilsbury asked for ideas from the Board, the next meeting should be used to shape the plan of attack, time line etc. the goal should be for the first meeting in May to be the launch of the task force.

Gabe Bailey asked if it would be helpful to have any other Boards or Committees from town involved, the consensus is that this is a good option.

Terry Spilsbury spoke about encouraging participation. Having been involved in the Withdrawal, some of the opposition was not anticipated and was possibly due to a lack of participation in the earlier stages when the plan evolved. The final document has to have legitimacy and buy in.

Dick Lincourt thanked Liz Emerson for distributing the Master Plan. He is impressed by the amount of analysis that was done. The RSAs only require 2 sections for a Master Plan, Visioning and a second both included in the current plan. One section which is lacking in the current plan is implementation, there is

nothing on who is going to do it and how, this has to be included in the new plan. The visioning is one of the required sections, the first and this is an excellent place to have the Committees in town contribute. Patty Chaffee spoke about the tax rate section, in 1995 the entire tax rate was almost the same as it is currently.

Dick Lincourt confirmed that this will be hard work, the town is in trouble and we need to make changes, this is a good place to start.

Sharon Francis commented that everyone needs to take ownership of the work on the Master Plan. Before the next meeting Sharon suggested that each member should review the Master Plan and make comments to be brought to the meeting. Her feeling now is that everyone has had a chance to see the bad place the town is in financially, we have wonderful people who care and we need to consider what we can do to improve our financial situation. Her vote is that the board struggles with the issues to be addressed and come up with ideas that can be implemented in terms of the financial improvement tying into the cost of education and our tax base.

Terry Spilsbury asked for further comments.

Bill Rescanski asked for a copy of the Master Plan, Liz Emerson confirmed that his copy is in the town office.

Terry Spilsbury spoke about having the Select Board involved in the process from the beginning and their recognizing that the Planning Board is making the Master Plan a priority in 2020 and to have their blessing.

Patty Chaffee asked about the cost of redoing the Master Plan, is this to be done in house or will professionals be involved as there is nothing in the budget? Terry Spilsbury confirmed that this may depend on the process the board decides on but there may be a need for outside input. Liz Emerson confirmed that a Master Plan completed by an Organization such as Upper Valley would be \$30k to \$40k, there are some grants available.

Gabe Bailey asked how an organization like Upper Valley can create a Master Plan for a town like Charlestown, Liz Emerson confirmed that they poll the residents and use that information, they have more state information and pare it down.

Jeff Lessels asked about Liz Emerson's involvement with Upper Valley, Liz Emerson confirmed that she has involvement with regards to transportation. The town of Charlestown does pay a membership fee to the Upper Valley. Jeff Lessels spoke about official statistical information that he has in the town office so this information is already available. Jeff Lessels further spoke about the decision making bodies in the town getting onto the same page. He continued to talk about a visioning town meeting in Charlestown in 2003, one of the main items that came up was that the town had a poor self-image and this to an extent holds true today.

Terry Spilsbury spoke about the comments by people against the School Withdrawal on the Community Forum and the United We Stand Facebook page. There was a broad recognition of the serious finance and tax base and tax rate problems, there was not a sufficient buy in that Withdrawing would solve this. In the course of the comments, many people called for the Select Board and the Planning Board to step up and find ways to address the issues. There was a chorus calling for the Planning Board to be proactive. The proposed process will be welcomed and Sharon's Francis' suggestion will help with the next meeting to have the board get as specific as possible.

At the next meeting Terry Spilsbury is looking to talk about what the board thinks a process will have to look like to get broad buy in so that the final document is an action plan with a consensus behind it with actual actionable steps with accountabilities etc.

Jeff Lessels suggested that a member of the Planning Board reach out to Dave Richardson on the Finance Committee for his involvement. He further explained that Steve Neill observed after the vote that the FMRSD Withdrawal vote was voted down by a considerable margin, the FMRSD budget either passed by a small margin or was voted down in Charlestown and the town budget passed which is telling us something about the strength of people with regards to the town budget.

Terry Spilsbury commented that three members of the Finance Committee serve on the Planning Board. Sharon Francis asked Jeff Lessels if he could bring communication from the Select Board to the Planning Board so that there is a 2 way communication between the 2 boards. Sharon Francis specifically referenced Albert St Pierre and if he has any ideas for how the town should proceed for the Withdrawal vote.

Jeff Lessels commented that he has this on the agenda for the next Select Board meeting. He is hoping to have a priority list in the next month or so.

Terry Spilsbury asked about petitions for the next meeting, Liz Emerson confirmed that there is one application for an annexation together with the tabled item from tonight's meeting. Terry Spilsbury stated that there should be a solid hour dedicated to the Master Plan.

Dick Lincourt recommended that everyone on the Planning Board should look at the RSAs, Liz Emerson will send out the RSAs to the board members.

Terry Spilsbury asked about Administration: there is none at this time.

Communications: no public comment

Terry Spilsbury asked if anyone has anything further for the meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Sharon Francis, second by Gabe Bailey, meeting adjourned at 8.25.

Sarah Davis
Secretary