

Minutes of the Planning Board Meeting

Monday January 11, 2021 - 6pm

Roll call: Present Mike Donahue, Bonnie Ham, Scott Rice, Margaret LaBarge, Robert McAfee
Hanna Kinne joined at 6:06

Absent: Patrick Griffin

Public: Charyl Reardon

6:00 PM Public Hearing Earth Excavation Redraft

The Board reviewed changes to the Earth Excavation Regulation and noted where updates had been made, specifically:

- Section III, D. Application Fee: amount has increased to \$150 per application.
- Section V, A. Excavation Plan: added items 14. Proposed hours of operation. and 15. Alteration of terrain permit, if applicable.
- Section VI. Project Site Requirements: added subsections E. Noise Abatement. The Board will consider methods of noise abatement, if necessary, when noise would jeopardize the health and welfare of the residents of surrounding properties and/or degrades the quality of life of residents of Woodstock, but without unduly prohibiting, limiting, or otherwise regulating the ability to use noise-producing equipment and pursue routine earth excavation operations. and F. Markers. The applicant must install pre-approved visible barrier markers at the site to denote perimeter of the approved site.
- Section VII, C. Bonding: Increased bond rate from \$10,000 to \$25,000 per acre.
- Section VII, D. Action on Permit: added "A permit will not be issued until proof of Bond is received."
- Section VII: Added subsection E. Consultation. The Board shall have the discretion to consult with an expert for "peer review" of any site over one acre. The consultation, paid for by the applicant, could include, but is not limited to, review of the application, site review, and annual inspections.
- Section VIII, A. Subsequent Permit Applications. Clarified application procedure for subsequent permits where documents exist in file and no changes are being made: 2. The procedure for subsequent permits is to submit a new application to the Board in the manner set forth in Section IV of these regulations. These forms must include: the application form containing the owner's name and address, location of project, abutters' names and addresses, access routes, etc. These documents may be copied from the initial permit applications, if there are no changes. However, current abutters must be duly noticed of the new application, a hearing must be held in accordance with Section VII:D above, and all required fees must be paid prior to the hearing. If for any reason they are not on file, the Board reserves the right to require the applicant to submit the missing documents with the current permit application.
- Section XI, A. Fees: Clarified that costs incurred by the Board related to enforcing this regulation will be passed on to the applicant: 1. Reasonable Fees may be imposed to cover the costs of notice under RSA 155-E:8, and to cover administrative expenses,

document review and any other costs which may be incurred during the permit process. The applicant will also be assessed any annual fees associated with annual inspections and to address noncompliance issues.

- Updated effective date of regulation, and updated permit and bond dates to be concurrent.

Discussion: The Board agreed with most of the changes as presented. There was discussion about including a section on Noise Barriers as we do not have any noise ordinance in Woodstock and some Board members felt that this may be placing an undue hardship on an industry which is known to cause noise, particularly since existing excavation pits would be subject to the regulation once their current permits expire. Bonnie noted that this is part of raising awareness of the importance of a “good neighbor” attitude on the part of businesses and is not intended to encourage enforcement as much as to raise awareness. The section was edited to its current version and renamed as “Noise Abatement.”

Voting on the amended regulation was tabled until the February meeting to give Board members a chance to re-read the regulation one more time with these changes in place before taking a vote.

Minutes of the December 14th Meeting

Scott made a motion, Margaret seconded, all members present voted to approve the minutes as presented.

Selectmen’s Report

Scott noted that the Selectmen would be using their meeting this month to prepare for how to hold Town Meeting effectively and safely while adhering to COVID safety regulations. Nothing else to report.

Master Plan Revisions

Margaret stated that the subcommittee had completed its initial review of the Master Plan and have presented a draft for review by the Board. Board members agreed that this is a topic requiring our full attention and requested that it be reserved to the next meeting to allow time to read the draft carefully before discussing as a group.

Excavation Sites Activity, Compliance Process, and Bond Renewals

Consultant Steve LaFrance is working to bring both sites into compliance. New bonds and new permit applications are in process.

2021 Planning and Land Use Regulation Books

Books have been received and are available for pickup at Town Hall. Call to schedule an appointment, or drop by and if someone is available, a copy can be brought out to you.

North Country Council

Bonnie raised the question of whether we would like to consider renewing our several years lapsed membership in NCC. Board members asked what the benefit for us would be. Membership dues are approximately \$2500 per year, and any services we would need from them would bear additional fees. We have not been in communication with the Council over the past several years, despite the fact that Bonnie is a past NCC president. Scott noted that it did not seem to offer good value for money. Margaret noted that it seemed to be out of our allocated budget. Margaret made a motion, Scott seconded to not rejoin. All members agreed unanimously.

Secretary Recruitment

We are back to square 1 with recruitment. The candidate who had expressed interest was looking for full time work and is not open to part time. There have been no other applicants yet. Bonnie raised the option that a Board member could be paid to take on the additional work, but no one was willing/able to take on additional responsibility at this time. Robert suggested that his daughter may be interested in taking this on as an internship. We briefly discussed salary, noting that \$1500 has been allocated in the budget. Hanna proposed \$14/hr and Mike seconded. Bonnie voted no, all other Board members agreed. Robert will speak with his daughter to ascertain her level of interest and whether she would be willing to do the work for \$14/hr.

36 Partridge Dr – Grandview

We have received an inquiry from the property owner regarding a proposed 3-unit triplex development on this property. It is not a division of land, but will remain under one ownership. The plot is a 2.3 acre parcel with steep slopes. He believes it would support ware and septic for the three units. Scott noted that when adding a third unit the regulations are different than for two. We will need interpretation from the Attorney – this may need Planning Board review before proceeding.

Telecommunications Tower Proposal in Littleton

For our information, a hearing is scheduled on Thursday January 14, 2021 beginning at 8pm at Littleton Grand Opera House, 2 Union St Littleton, and we have been invited to comment regarding a proposed telecommunications tower. Dwight Thibeault, Property Owner and Francis Parisi, Authorized Representative for Vertex Tower Assets LLC are requesting a special exception. Details of the application are available at <https://www.townoflittleton.org/planning-zoning>

Budget Amendment Update

We have \$1500 allocated for legal expenses for the planning board already included in the general Town budget. Additionally, because payroll is a special type of line item, we cannot have a single line-item budget that includes payroll for Secretary along with other types of costs. We need to separate that out. Legal and consulting fees can be included together in one line item. After further discussion, Hanna made a motion and Scott seconded to offer a salary of \$14/hr for Secretary and to continue discussions to see whether we could find someone who would be interested in part time work at this rate. Robert mentioned that he would discuss it

with his daughter to gauge whether she may have interest in taking it on in the context of an internship.

Rules of Procedure

Members were asked to read through the Rules of Procedure and to be prepared to discuss any needed changes during our January meeting. This has been deferred to our next meeting.

Terms expiring this March (Margaret & Mike)

Sign up to run for re-election is during the period of 1/20-1/29.