

## **Minutes of the Planning Board Special Meeting**

Monday November 22, 2021 6:00pm

### **Bonnie Ham called the meeting to order at 6:01.**

Present: Bonnie Ham, Robert McAfee, Scott Rice, Hanna Kinne, Margaret LaBarge, Mike Donohue – alternate

Robert motioned, Scott seconded to appoint Mike as a standing member of the Board. All present voted to approve.

Bonnie read into the record Ben's letter of resignation from the Planning Board and statement that as Vice Chair Bonnie would lead the discussion this evening. Scott motioned, Robert seconded that we accept with regrets. Margaret abstained, all others present voted yes.

Robert suggested appointing Mike to fill the Board vacancy on a permanent basis. Mike thanked him and stated that he would prefer to remain an alternate and be appointed on a meeting-to-meeting basis when he is available.

Mike and Robert suggested that we should buy the laptop needed with the remaining funds we have for this year rather than having to increase our budget for next year. Scott agreed and added that having the resource to be able to store digital resources is an added benefit.

Bonnie added that Judy mentioned that the Town is working on digitizing all the Town records and has suggested that Planning Board records also be digitized as well. She asked whether we want to add budget for this work into this year's allocation. Mike pointed out that Judy had recommended that Ben add \$10,000 which seems like a lot, especially since we don't know all of what we have and whether we need it in archive form or not. He suggested that we form a subcommittee to review and organize the documents first and then find out whether there may be some way to join together with the Town in the digitizing effort so we make use of any possible economy. We agreed to preserve the digital documents that already exist from Ann Marie's work and Judy Boyle's work. Going forward we can also ask submitters to add a digital copy of documentation.

Hanna motioned, Scott seconded that we use this year's budget to purchase a laptop for Zoom and digital documents.

Scott motioned that we form a subcommittee to review the documents and prepare to digitize them. Hanna seconded. Subcommittee members will be Bonnie, Hanna, Mike.

Robert mentioned that we're going to have a hard time hiring someone to do only the Planning Board work, for the few hours typically needed. He raised the question of whether there might be a future need for a hybrid position like this where the job would be more appealing to applicants. Mike noted that this would also help us to restore the communication flow that used to be in place when Judy Boyle was working as a Town employee and PB secretary. Scott asked Margaret whether she was willing to continue in the role while the Select Board

investigates options and she agreed to help bridge the gap. Mike confirmed that we are not asking to use the employees already on staff in the Town, we're looking to staff up. Robert pointed out that having an additional person would support the Town Clerks being able to take a break. Hanna also stated that we should increase the wage for the secretary – having proposed the amount of \$14. Scott said it needs to be over \$20 at a minimum. Robert said it should be more like \$28 or \$30 because it's so few hours and no benefits.

Bonnie confirmed that we need to tell the front office what we're asking for as a budget. Last year we had asked for \$11,000. In the previous meeting we had asked for \$7000, removing the legal budget. Scott recommended that we put forward the same budget. He noted that the legal line was put in in case there were a conflict between boards. Mike mentioned that if we have budget lines we don't use, we could just move money around. Margaret pointed out that payroll is a different kind of entity and needs to be kept separate from other budget lines because it processes very differently. Hanna suggested that we reduce the amount of consultation budget and add \$3000 into payroll. Bonnie suggested that Legal/Consultation be one line item.

Payroll was increased to \$5000

Operating Expenses \$1000 (equipment comes out of 2021 budget)

Legal/Consultation \$5000 for both.

Hanna motioned, Scott seconded that we propose the budget as above. All present voted to approve.

Excavation checklist proposal – this is something that had been on our agendas for a long time to review, and we never did it. I've been using this one unofficially and it occurred to be that this would be helpful to make sure that people make sure that the application packet is complete when they submit it. With the issues we've had with recent permits, I thought we might want to review it and consider adding it to the website for applicants to download as part of their application process.

Mike asked whether we've reviewed the application for December's hearing against the checklist to make sure we have everything needed. Bonnie stated that she would confirm that we have everything needed. Robert asked whether if we have everything we need, but not in sufficient number of copies, could we approve with a waiver? Hanna asked whether Bonnie would give advance notice as a courtesy if something is missing, and she confirmed yes. Margaret noted that Steve LaFrance has been very helpful and has made it clear that if there is anything we need to have the application complete he would provide it.

Margaret will note on the checklist that the plans must comply with the paragraph in the Excavation Regulation that states which elements the plan must include. Scott motioned, Hanna seconded that the checklist be approved with this revision. All present voted to approve.

Public participation: Kevin Foley asked what is the status of the application for the Devine pit? He said that they are working in it. Bonnie stated that there is no application. Robert stated

that the intention for the property is a different project, not an excavation pit, and as such it does not need an excavation permit. Bonnie stated that the opinion of the Town Attorney is that the project is a subdivision. Mike asked why is material steadily leaving the pit without a permit, and that is what Kevin has been asking about. Scott stated that he was not aware of that. Mike stated that when we visited the pits we all agreed that there appeared to still be activity at the Devine pit and we have not addressed it. Bonnie stated that we need to review the photos and probably seek some advice. Scott stated that we will look into this for sure, that we were not aware that activity was happening at the site.

Discussion came up about why the AHEAD project is not considered a subdivision when the proposed project Rex presented IS considered a subdivision. The main factor is that in AHEAD's case there is no division of the land, whereas for Rex's project there would be separate plots. Scott noted that exemptions could be made to the standard requirements for subdivisions if it suits the needs of the project. Hanna noted that we need an application in front of us before we do anything. Neither project has made an application yet – AHEAD does not have the funding to move forward yet and Rex has not yet begun either. We need to be crystal clear what constitutes a subdivision and what does not, because we will need to know going forward and want to make sure we treat all projects fairly, but it is moot right now.

Bonnie will speak with Rex about what is happening at the Devine pit, and if we need some advice, we will get it.

Mike motioned that we make Bonnie the Chair again, Robert seconded. All present voted to approve.

Members signed the permit for Caulder Construction Map 112, Lot 002.

Mike suggested that Hanna be Vice Chair. She was hesitant, but agreed. Robert stated that he will be traveling a lot and not available. Scott motioned, Margaret seconded. Hanna abstained, all others present voted to appoint Hanna as Vice Chair.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.