

Woodstock Planning Board Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2022

- Present: Bonnie, Margaret, Jerry, Diane, Christina
- Absent: Scott, Robert, Patrick

Motion to appoint Christina as a full member to fill Scott's place for this meeting. Margaret, seconded by Jerry. All present approved.

Approval of Minutes- July 11, 2022, August 8, 2022, November 1, 2022 – carried forward to next meeting until a quorum of members is present who were present at those meetings.

Selectmen's Report – Scott (not present – deferred to next meeting)

Secretary Appointment (Cathy not present). Margaret is filling in these duties this evening.

Election of Vice Chair –

Jerry motioned and Christina seconded to appoint Margaret as Vice Chair. Margaret abstained, all others present voted yes.

Budget Approval –

Of the \$5000, we have \$4525 left. Margaret has been volunteering her time as Secretary, but with a paid secretary on staff now we will need the salary budget. We have not spent any consultant fees, but we have spent legal. We may want to increase our Operating Expense as well, particularly if we are interested in spending time on public meetings to gather opinions on revising the Master Plan.

Meeting with North Country Council – presentation by Kaela Tavares and Michelle Moran-Grey.

Subdivision regulations, division of land, how people get safely to and from their homes. How do we plan for bigger road projects? How to get funding for these projects? Environmental, economic development work. Council has been involved for about 40 years in this type of work.

Regional planning commissions are set by state statute. NH RSA 36:46 establishes the commission. Extra resources are provided to help with economic development. The council is made up of the northern 1/3 of the state of NH including 25 unincorporated places and 50 municipalities. Towns who participate pay in some membership dues, and we use those funds to bring in a lot of other money, federal funding, state grants, etc. Some fee-for-service work is also available.

NCC services fit into one of three general categories: Planning, Engagement, Technical Assistance. Engagement includes working with you to conduct surveys of your community to get public input on plans. Technical Assistance is coaching and practical

support to move a plan into action. All of these services are conducted at both the Regional and Local level.

Focusing on Local Planning services – We lead consulting work and can support towns in drafting various plans. (Floodplain Ordinance(?)) We also assist with special projects, such as setting up a parking plan for a downtown pedestrian zone.

Local Engagement Services – we have a variety of tools for gathering public opinion and engagement in planning initiatives. Public forums, Roundtables, Stakeholder outreach. We can be a neutral facilitator to help work through challenging discussions.

Technical assistance – we can help to find the practical solutions needed to bring a plan into fruition. Grant writing, project development, GIS & Mapping services, Research, Data analysis, Infrastructure assessments, Shared planner services – which is practical assistance in managing the logistical burden of the planning process.

Funding comes mostly through state and federal grants. Also through specific contract work, and partially through membership dues.

As a planning commission, we are committed to being a neutral party, to find what the community actually believes and get across the board opinions. We feel strongly that discussion should be fair and balanced and we work towards managing discourse so that everyone who wants to has an opportunity to be heard.

When there needs a legal review of a document we will make sure it happens before we put it before you. We fully agree that you need to have confidence in your documents.

How does what we do tie in with what you do?

A Master Plan guides how a community will develop. What goals does the community see for itself over the next 10-20 years, and how does it see itself reaching them. How do we frame what is important to ourselves to build back when change inevitably comes? What does it take to reach our vision for our town? How can we guide the town, as best we can, towards what the community wants to see for the town? How do we make sure that it doesn't become politicized, that the Master Plan becomes a unifying force for the town and not a dividing one. How do we identify the points of agreement amongst the members of our population, and how do we address the points of disagreement? How much detail is needed? The plan must include a vision, and must include a section about land use. Engage as many people as possible in the process of determining the vision and making the decisions about the plan for land use. Where are the gaps – things we want to do that we don't have capacity for right now? Perhaps external resources can help. The Master Plan has to back up any other structures we put in place.

The State of NH gives communities the right to regulate land. Some communities are very concerned about transportation systems. Some are heavily focused on economic

development. The planning board is the chooser of which elements are important for their town and which are most valuable to place emphasis on.

The vision and goals of the Master Plan provide guidance to local officials across the board in making decisions about local actions, budgets, capital improvements. It can also help to support and provide justification for grant applications, increasing the likelihood of securing funding for specific projects.

The Planning Board is tasked with preparation of the Master Plan. It does not go to the public for vote. It is important to include a wide range of voices providing input on their views on the community and what they would like to see for the future. Include residents, business and property owners, Town officials and staff, interest groups, Advocacy agencies, and to get support from NCC or other planning consultants.

What to include – enough data and information to back up the goals and strategies in the plan. Information should be explained to support the vision and goals presented.

- Goals – wide ranging, long-term, with a view to the future
- Policies – to help address the unanticipated that isn't covered in the plan
- Action items – practical steps to take along the way

All of these need to be based on the current, existing capacity of the town so that there is a baseline we are working from. View to the future so there is a concrete point we are working towards, a benchmark of success to measure against.

Implementation: "Goals should be something you can reach." Implementation is the heart of the plan, and it has to be rooted in the local community, connected to local values, aimed at local needs and opportunities, and based on the capabilities of the town in its present state and foreseeable growth.

Master Plan is much bigger and wider than the ordinances. It should be continually revisited at a minimum every 10 years, and be considered as a working document.

Our Master Plan has always been very broad, "motherhood and apple pie" and not very specific. It is very basic with a few simple goals. We are at a crossroads now where it makes sense for us to think.

We are the planners. The select board are the administrators.

It is our responsibility and duty to decide how much we should plan. When we had the informational meeting about zoning there were people who felt we should have more discussion. We are in a time of change, similar to the time of growth when all the condominiums were developed. It behooves us to learn more about what folks want. Change is inevitable. We can't stop it, and we can't intrude on people's rights to use their property the way they want to. But we may wish to get input on whether we may

want to send out any messages on what the majority of our community would like to see for our future.

We should all read through it and find a way to ask the public what they want.

Review of Subdivision Regulations

Laura has gone through the regulations with one objective in mind, which is to confirm that they conform to current law. Bonnie has received her very rough draft, and we will get a copy of it to Board members to review before our December meeting. Laura is willing to meet with us and discuss the revision. This document goes hand in hand with our Master Plan, it is one of our key working documents. It is very small print, with tracked changes – may be easier to read on the computer.

Proposed Amendment to Earth Excavation Ordinance –

the Town Attorney also recommends a slight change in wording to clarify a few points. (copy text from Laura's email)

Review of Floodplain Management Ordinance –

there has been a significant amount of work already done on this. Scott and the Select Board have started the process and have received information from FEMA and OPD. Judy Welch, Town Clerk is also willing to help. The revised ordinance needs to be ready in time to be included in the ballot for Town Meeting in March.

Bonnie suggested we work in subcommittees to address the various ordinances.

- Jerry and Diane will work on Earth Excavation Ordinance
- Christina and Bonnie will work on Subdivision Regulations
- Margaret will work with Scott and Judy on Floodplain Ordinance.

Report on Excavation Pit Visits –

Two were done on October 17, Conn and Donohue. Nothing unusual to report. Photos were taken. This evening the two East and West side Caulder pits were reviewed. The first was seen in perfect daylight, the second in twilight with flashlights. We may wish to return to the sites earlier in better daylight. Rex was asked permission for us to return, he said it does not matter to him. Diane suggested using a drone to take a wider angle photo and Rex gave permission for that.

Bonnie stated that the only element we needed to confirm is to be certain that no work is done in the wetlands area, and also to ensure that good notification is being given to

neighbors for any blasting. Bonnie suggested that the map be brought to the visit the next time and Rex could indicate the boundary of the wetlands.

Returning to Map 112, Lot 008 on Friday 11/19/22 at 9am with the map.

Letter to Rex Caulder re: Conditions of Map 112 Lot 008 Excavation Pit Permit –

Bonnie paraphrased the letter and copies were given to Rex and Cheri Caulder and to John Kimball, members of the public present. Motion Jerry, second Diane, all present voted to adopt it and send it officially.

Short term rental questions –

We have received a number of questions, intermittently throughout the summer and continuing through this month, asking for information about our town regulations regarding short term rentals. What Bonnie has told them is that the Planning Board currently does not have any jurisdiction over short term rentals, we do not have zoning. She recommended talking with the Select Board, Fire Inspector, considering whether there may be others in the town who regulate any aspect of the building. This may be an area we would like to consider in any revision of the Master Plan. It is also something we may need to discuss further to ensure that we have a specific response to give to people who make these requests such that we are being fair to all. Bonnie will write up her explanation so that we have it to give to people.