

Minutes, Planning Board, July 5, 2012

Present: Diane Poland (Chair), Kate Eugin-Moore, and David Barten. Absent: Joe Strzegowski and Mike Kurkulonis

The meeting began at 7:10 pm in the Town Hall, not the Selectmen's office as had been posted. Reason for the change: No one of the participants had a key to the Town Office Building, whereas two had keys to the Town Hall. Because there were three of five members of the Board present, it was possible to conduct a legal meeting.

There were seven items on the agenda:

(1) Meeting procedures—Diane wanted to establish a policy about how discussion should be conducted from this point on and into the future. In general, members should not talk at the same time, and out of courtesy should listen to each other without interrupting.

She wants to set the agenda in advance of a meeting and will inform members and invite them to add to the agenda by e-mail. David noted that Open Meeting Law requires that notice of meetings be posted 48 hours in advance, and that the notice has to include an agenda for the meeting. The law allows for changes in agenda once a meeting has been posted, but only in an emergency.

David said that as clerk he is required to put in the minutes the motions made and by whom on any issue that after deliberation by the members has led to a vote. He will remind members of this during the meeting, so voting becomes more formalized.

(2) Open Meeting Law—it had been expected that Select Board member Rick Bean, who is the liaison between the Selectmen and the Planning Board, would be in attendance to help members understand the potential problem in communicating with each other through e-mail, specifically when deliberating morphs into decision-making, the latter being a violation of the law. Rick was unable to attend, but the members present addressed the matter by reading what the law actually says about "deliberation." There is still need to discuss the matter with the other members present.

(3) Master plan—Diane put forward three options facing the Board as regards the existing draft: do nothing about it for the present; rubber stamp what exists; start from scratch and make a new plan, knowing this is a lengthy process. She said that Kathy Dorval was interested in participating with others, including her husband, in evaluating the plan, and that she was going to research the kinds of plans other small towns had.

The discussion that followed showed that there was need for members to examine the most recent draft of the proposed plan that Whit Sanford had composed and which shows the dates when additions and amendments had been made, for she had

responded to suggestions as they were made by members of previous Planning Boards, and members of other Town committees. David has a copy of this plan with dates of changes shown and amendments written in, and will have copies made by the next meeting, so each member can see the actual state of the plan.

(4) Diane wanted to identify the Town committees and boards with which the Planning Board should have an ongoing connection. These, it was concluded, are the Parks and Rec Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals, Housing Committee, Broadband Committee, and the Garage Committee. Mike in an e-mail had suggested that the Planning Board not ask to meet with the Garage Committee until the Garage Committee itself has met. It was agreed this was a good suggestion. Diane put forward the idea that Bob Armstrong, Chair of the Broadband Committee, be asked to attend the next Planning Board meeting. Diane volunteered to invite him. The proposal was accepted, no vote being taken.

(5) Action—

Diane wanted the members to identify future projects where the Board should be proactive in researching the information needed to move projects forward.

The discussion that followed focused on two projects that have been hanging fire for nearly a decade: a wastewater treatment facility for the center of town, and need for a municipal agency or committee, or a non-profit business owner's association to address the matter of economic development in Conway.

David pointed out that since the State has designated Rt. 116 as a scenic by-way, and the planners for the towns and counties through which the road passes are already formulating a plan for it, as required by the State, the Planning board needs to take seriously the matter of the zoning of Burkeville, which should include light manufacturing, but also retailing. Also, there should be a committee created to focus on the business retailing activity as it exists in Conway, beginning with Boyden's Sugar House and extending through the center of town to Sunset Package, to see what might be done to make this corridor attractive to travelers. For once a final report by the planners has been accepted by the State, there will be grants available to towns along the by-way to help them serve travelers.

The focus being on small business activity in the town's center, Kate brought forth a set of concerns and problems facing her own business, Pages. Because she and her partner, Laurie, are centrally located in the 116 by-way corridor, and have already faced and are facing the problems other small businesses will meet or have met, she was able to provide a picture of the struggle that would have to be made, with support from the town directly or indirectly, or through private investment, to make these businesses attractive enough to cause travelers to want to stop and spend money.

The list of small Conway businesses in the Rt. 116 corridor includes: Boyden's Sugar house, Holly Barn, Pumpkin Hollow Bed and Breakfast, Maggs' Antiques, Megan Hart's Pottery, Barbara Taylor's "Tap Room", Claus (?) idea of a gallery in the

old Germain Garage, Deb Hale's Conway Healing Arts, Megabass, Pages, Baker's Country Store, Oesco, and Sunset Package.

The discussion about potential and problems for retailing ventures in the corridor was vigorous and only came to an end because of time constraints.

As regards the wastewater treatment plant, Diane proposed that a site visit be made to the Buckland plant, whose manager she knows. Kate indicated that she would be available on Wednesdays after 3:30 or 4:00. David is free on these days at this time. The question is whether Joe and Mike are available— so, day and time of visit yet to be determined. Diane volunteered to work out the logistics.

(6) Minutes of 6/14 meeting-- Kate motioned to accept, and Diane seconded, and the minutes were approved.

(7) Next meeting—The next scheduled meeting will be July 19 at 7:00 in the Select Board's office in the Town Office building. Mike has indicated that he will be away most of July, and so it is likely he will not be able to attend this meeting.

Diane called an end to the meeting at 8:30.

Respectfully submitted,

David Barten, clerk