

Revised Draft minutes, Planning Board, July 19, 2012

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

The meeting began at 7:15 pm. There were seven agenda items:

(1) Minutes from July 5, 2012 meeting. These were unanimously approved as written.

(2) Planning Board procedures.

Diane said that given the disparity in knowledge about the Planning Board, individual members should not undertake to act on behalf of the Board unless such action has been agreed to by the Board as a whole.

In the future, individual Board members may have areas of specialization and with Board approval, may act more independently.

(3) Master plan—Diane said she was in favor of improving the current plan as best we can and then to accept it. She asked that all Board members read the most recent draft of the Master Plan that David had brought to the meeting and be prepared to make specific suggestions to improve it at the next meeting. She would make sure that Kate had a copy.

(4) Updates—Internet, Parks and Rec, Burkeville development, Waste Treatment

Wired West: Bob Armstrong will give a presentation at the next meeting. He is bringing Reva Reck, who will be able to fill in financial details.

Joe mentioned that the FRCOG Regional Planning Board, on which he sits as Conway's representative, supports the idea of creating a viable wireless system to serve towns throughout the Franklin County region, in contrast to a cable system of the kind being put forward by Wired-West.

Thus, the question about high speed internet access has not been fully resolved where Conway is concerned, and while a bylaw was created and approved when a cell-phone tower was proposed for placement near the grammar school, the future could see a range of options offered residents for high speed internet, each requiring that the Planning Board have thought through the potential problems and determined on the appropriate bylaw protection.

Parks and Recreation: Diane thought the Board should keep in touch with the members of this committee in order to follow the progress they make in fulfilling the first phase of their plans for the recreation field.

Burkeville development: As per the last meeting, Diane spoke with John Gates of the CONCOM for an initial take on what might be possible with regard to environmental issues. After a site visit, he thought there were good possibilities and suggested that

the Planning Board members make a list of proposals and send them to the Con Com, which will take them up for discussion in the early fall.

The discussion about Burkeville and zoning focused specifically on how the seven acres now zoned light manufacturing might be rezoned to include retailing, since this area of Conway is one of the places where it might be possible to have a retailing complex that would be attractive to travelers on the Rt. 116 Scenic Byway.

Joe suggested that the strip between the highway and the South River could be turned into a river walk, and the north side west of the present Orchard Equipment buildings into a shopping complex. When the question of the status of the old industrial canal was raised, Joe said that the State may have relaxed restrictions on what could be done with artificially created wetlands, this canal being one of these.

Wastewater treatment plant: It was suggested that a water treatment system for the center of town needs to be seen in the light of new technologies, for there are in the works elsewhere smaller, more efficient systems than had been envisioned a decade or more ago for Conway. In fact, the kinds of systems being designed could be applied not just to the center of town but in other parts. A group of residences could be served by a single large tank, which would be pumped on a regular basis, with the expense born by the users. Such systems would better assure that water quality around the entire town was protected.

Diane said that she had spoken to the manager of the Buckland treatment plant and that he would be very glad to give a tour of the facility. It was agreed that this tour could be helpful in getting a better picture of how a treatment system works in a small town. When the full Board meets, a date will be set for a site visit that all members of the Board can make

Water sources became the focus of the discussion, the question being whether there had ever been a study done of how many residences and businesses in the town were served by springs and how many by wells. If the latter, how deep? Should a spring or a well go dry, a septic system no longer works, and human waste has to be removed in some other fashion for the duration. The ongoing drought we are experiencing, if prolonged and recurring, could make the matter of viability of water sources and septic systems around town a major health issue in the future.

Joe referred to the fact that the town actually owns a water works, the Sinclair Water Works, a cistern that sits on seven acres on the hilltop above the French and the Hardigg houses, and abuts their properties. This town water works, he thought, should be looked into as a possible source for a municipal water system for the downtown.

(5) Senior Housing: The Senior Housing Committee is one of the Town Committees that will be invited to give a presentation in the fall. As this is a special interest of Joe's, he will invite the Chair of the Housing Committee after a meeting date has been established.

(6) Bylaws—Joe had volunteered to review the Protective Zoning Bylaws of the Town of Conway, and had reproduced them with overlays in red for what was missing or he thought needed changing. The discussion was focused especially on the recent addition to the Bylaws of a section about solar energy systems, which began with a direct quote about such systems from State Law. What followed seemed to Joe to be flawed by references to generalized authorities, rather than to the Town Meeting as the “Legislative Body” and the Planning Board as the “Site Plan Review Authority.” Where maps of Town-owned parcels where solar installations could be built were cited, none had actually been shown, nor the parcel numbers as found on Assessor’s maps. It was agreed that because John O’Rourke was the point man for the “Green Community” initiative and this Bylaw had been created with help from Tom Spiro, that Joe should talk to John about corrections.

Joe had other concerns about the Bylaws, one being that the Building numbering Bylaw refers only to new houses. He thought the bylaw should be made retroactive to include all residences and businesses built before the Bylaw was adopted.

It was indicated that Bob Baker had a concern that the Bylaw about “Curb Cuts” was being violated because the law does not refer to the construction road cut into a property before a driveway is created. Once this first road exists, the curb cut has been established, but usually not to code, and an adjustment is never made afterwards. The problem here is lack of enforcement: who should be looking at these construction roads/ driveways and what are the penalties for failure to comply with the Curb Cut Bylaw?

Joe had a particular concern about the lack of specificity about the Zoning Board of Appeals, which shall act “ on all matters within its jurisdiction under this Bylaw and Chapter 40A of the General Laws in the manner prescribed by the said law and by this Bylaw.” Joe wanted to see printed out what the law says the ZBA is required to do before the Bylaw takes up, in Section 63, “Special Permit Guidelines.”

(7)Bylaws will be on the agenda at the next meeting. Joe’s proposals will be reviewed, in addition to other topics. [Diane Pol1]

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:20 pm.

The next meeting will be August 2, 2012 at 7:00 pm in the Town Office.

Respectfully submitted,

David Barten, clerk