

Public Hearing and Meeting, Planning Board, May 2, 2013

Present: Diane Poland (Chair), Joe Strzegowski (Vice-chair), and David Barten.
Absent: Mike Kurkulonis and Kate Eugin-Moore. Also present: Dave Chichester (candidate for open seat), Sue Bridge and Lee Whitcomb. Also present: Kathleen McKiernan (Recorder reporter).

The Public Hearing began as posted at 7:00 in the Town Office. There were two agenda items:

(1) Medical Marijuana Medical Treatment Centers—due notice had been the residents of Conway that the Planning Board would hold as required by law a public hearing on its intention to ask the Town at the Annual Meeting on May 13th, to vote a moratorium on the use of land and existing structures (or the creation of a new structure) for the establishment in Conway of a Medical Marijuana Treatment Center.

The reason for the request is to “allow the Town sufficient time to engage in a planning process to address the effects of such structures and uses in the Town and to enact bylaws in a manner consistent with sound use planning goals and objectives (Kopelman and Paige, PC., memo on how to phrase a request for a moratorium)”. The Hearing is an opportunity for the residents of the Town to ask questions, voice support or express opposition.

Because no residents appeared, Lee Whitcomb and Sue Bridge, who were present, but for reasons of other business, lapsed into their roles as residents and discussed these treatment centers with the Board. Dave Chichester as former Chair of the Board of Health also weighed in. Lee was decidedly in favor of the moratorium because the Town has no zoning bylaws in place to protect a treatment center from being placed beside the grammar school and either of the churches. She added that there were security issues as well as health issues that need to be addressed.

Dave B. and Joe read portions of the 46-page draft statement from the State Department of Health on implementing the law allowing the treatment centers. Dave Chichester responded that the regulations regarding cleanliness of facility and people, and process of creating the product, read like those State regulations for restaurants which the Board of Health has to enforce. So, clearly the BOH will have a role to play in overseeing the activity in the centers.

Diane suggested that the PB invite Rick Bean, Selectman and liaison to the PB, to discuss with the Board, should the moratorium pass, the desirability of creating a working group to discuss the relevant issues presented by a medical treatment center. That group would include Rick, a member of the PB, BOH, and Police and Ambulance Depts. The PB members were in favor, and so Diane will invite Rick, once Town Meeting is over.

Because no other residents appeared, Diane at 7:45 asked the members for a vote to end the hearing. A motion was made and seconded, and the vote was unanimous to end the hearing.

(2) Regular Planning Board meeting—Diane called the meeting to order at 7:46. There were four agenda items:

(a) Minutes—the minutes for two meetings, April, 18th and a Special meeting on April 25 with Peggy Sloan, were accepted unanimously.

(b) Wetlands assessments—Diane reported that Emily Stockman was going to make her study of the wetlands on the Rose property on May 6th. As for the French property, she said that Jack Gates, Chair of ConCom, supports Emily's work fully and because of this, Diane thinks Emily is the person to make an assessment as well of the French property in Burkeville. Diane says Jack is looking for solutions, just as the PB is, to help Russ expand his business. She suggested that Emily be asked also to think in terms of solutions when making her study of the French's property.

Diane asked the members to vote on whether to ask Emily to make an assessment of the French land, the Board paying her from its own funds. The members voted unanimously to have Emily do the second assessment. Diane suggested that when Emily has completed her analysis of the French land, Russ French and Jack Gates should be invited to discuss with the Board the results and implications.

(c) Master Plan—Sue said the Master Plan is completed, 200 copies having been printed. The members congratulated Sue on a job well done. She said that other towns were expressing an interest in the Plan.

The question was discussed of how the plan should be distributed. The conclusion was that the existence of the Plan should be mentioned by Diane at the Annual Meeting, and that those who want it should sign up, giving name and address, and a copy would be set aside for them.

(d) Elder transportation—the matter of how often and to what places, the elders in Conway are transported to surround communities was the last topic. Diane expressed concern that because Conway is not proactive on their behalf, they are at the mercy of the local transporters who shape pick-ups and drop-offs to suit their own convenience. The suggestion was made that the elders organize on their own behalf, and ask Conway to purchase a van and employ a driver who would transport seniors to and fro on a scheduled daily basis. This is not an unreasonable request since Seniors, through their taxes pay part of the cost of educating Conway children in the Grammar School, when their own children have long since flown the coop.

Diane called for a motion to end the meeting at 8:00, and the motion was made and seconded. The next PB meeting will be on May 16th, at which time Emil Stockman will make her report.

Respectfully submitted, David Barten, clerk