



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES Tuesday, November 14, 2017 6:30 PM

PRESENT: Paul Gorman, Bill Dietrich, Janet Kidder, Tim Paradis, Maryann McEnrue, Jeremy Bonin, Joseph Kubit, Elizabeth Meller

MEMBERS ABSENT: Michele Holton

OTHERS PRESENT:

Adam Ricker, Town Planner
Frank Anzalone
G. William Helm
Jerry Gold

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm.

2. Review of minutes:

IT WAS MOVED (Jeremy Bonin) AND SECONDED (Elizabeth Meller) to accept the minutes of the October 24, 2017 Planning Board meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Casey Biuso has resigned from the Planning Board as well as from the master Planning Steering Committee. This leaves a vacancy with the alternates. Chair Gorman felt Ms. Biuso was a valuable member, was helpful and will be missed. Another alternate will need to be appointed.

3. Public Comment

Frank Anzalone is an architect and has been retained by the Barn playhouse.

He attended to request the Planning Board to make amendments to the zoning. The request is to create an institutional theater district and place several properties in that district.

The reason for this is that the Barn at one point was in a commercial zone and several years ago and it was converted to residential. The barn is now a non-conforming use through no act of their own. Making it a theater district will allow the barn to do some necessary work and maintain it for the future as a theater.

Chair Gorman asked if we had anything like that at the present time? What kind of action needs to be taken in order to create a zone called an institutional theater zone.

Adam Ricker stated that it would require a zoning amendment. It would be two prong zoning amendment as one would create the district and one would govern the district once the ordinance was established. It would be most similar to the Colby Sawyer recreational district. The period to accept zoning amendments opened yesterday and it is open for four weeks. The Board has until December 13, 2017 to draft and put forth the amendment. This is also the day the public has to provide a petition zoning amendment.

Elizabeth Meller asked if anything else could go in there besides a theater if they made this amendment. Mr. Anzalone stated it depends on how the wording for that zone is. Ms. Meller asked how this will affect the neighbors. Mr. Anzalone stated he already spoke to three neighbors that were abutters and they were in favor.

Mr. Ricker stated that potential impact to abutters would be that this will allow the barn playhouse to more easily expand and do other projects that don't require them to go to the zoning board for a variance. It makes the process easier for them. Mr. Anzalone stated that its very difficult for the barn to do anything. They are non-conforming use so anything they do is an expansion. When they do before the zoning board due to criteria set by the state, it's hard for the zoning board to approve anything they come forward with.

Mr. Ricker asked what the end goal would be and what he would like to achieve? Mr. Anzalone would like the barn be in a theater district and be able to not have to go before the zoning board for every change they want to make.

Steve Ensign is the Chair of the board of the New London Barn playhouse.

He gave an overview of the businesses that used to be on Main Street and when they left the area the barn playhouse remained an island.

They need accessible bathrooms upstairs on the main level. They need part of the red house that needs to come down and be rebuilt and a host of other projects. They just completed their 85th season. The dynamics of putting on productions have led to making changes inside. Now they need to deal with things on the outside. Parking is always an issue. They need to set a new direction and secure its spot in the center of the residential zone.

Jeremy Bonin has volunteered his services to help with writing the zoning amendment for this. A subcommittee will be developed.

Chair Gorman stated a subcommittee will be established. Bill Dietrich will lead this with Mr. Bonin's help. This will be discussed again at the end of the month at the next meeting.

4. Lot Merger Application. Lambert Family Trust, Dennis & Elaine Lambert, Co-Trustees.

Located 1667 King Hill Road. Tax Map(s) 128-003-000 (2.07 acres), 128-002-000 (2.12 acres). Agricultural Rural Residential (ARR). Town received October 17, 2017.

IT WAS MOVED (Tim Paradis) AND SECONDED (Jeremy Bonin) to accept this lot merger as presented. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. TSB Realty Trust, Bacon, Douglas & Whitney, T Trustees Tree Cutting Application. Located at 552 Lakeshore Drive. Tax Map 050-009-000. Proposal to cut (2) two trees. Property located in the following overlay districts: Shoreland Overlay District and Stream Overlay District. Town received October 12, 2017.

Mr. Ricker did a site visit. This leaves the lot with over 200 points even with the two trees being removed. The trees are close to the house and cracked and damaged.

IT WAS MOVED (Joseph Kubit) AND SECONDED (Tim Paradis) to accept this Tree Cutting Application as presented. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Capital Improvement Program – PUBLIC HEARING

The CIP committee consisted of Janet Kidder, Paul Gorman, Bill Dietrich, Bill Berger and Robert Prohl. Chair Gorman commented that many of the things that were identified last year have been accomplished.

The committee met with the Fire Chief, the Recreation Director, the Police Chief, and the President of Colby Sawyer. As a result of those meetings there are four recommendations.

- A. The need for a new Police Facility.
- B. Review of the Transfer Station study
- C. Complete work on second Brookside Culvert Project, Pingree Road Bridge project and the Goosehole bridge engineering study to be completed.
- D. Review of Buker Annex to Whipple Hall should be completed to indicate how the space can be repurposed for the Recreation Department use.

Maryann McEnrue asked if these were in priority order and Chair Gorman stated yes. Chair Gorman stressed that the purpose of the CIP committee is to report to the selectmen what they feel are issues that need to be addressed. It is up to the Selectmen to take action.

Bill Helm addressed the committee and stated he is there representing himself only and not as a representative of the Board of Selectmen.

He expressed his disappointment that the idea of a community Center was dropped as a priority. The old CIP said either to resolve the 1941 building or locate another site. This was not addressed in this set of recommendations.

Chair Gorman replied that they were prioritizing issues and they felt that a Community Center was not anywhere near the top.

Mr. Helm stated that he doesn't have a problem with what the CIP has identified but is disappointed that the Community Center isn't on there. It has been in the top four items for years and now it isn't. For nearly a decade, the residents of New London have discussed the need and desire to build and create a community facility to bring together a variety of town, educational, cultural, recreational and service related activities. Several groups including the current Board of Selectmen, worked extensively to obtain the vacant 1941 school building from the Kearsarge Regional School district to be repurposed as a community center but were unsuccessful in preventing the building from being demolished in the fall of 2017.

The importance of developing a community facility has not diminished. There is no single place in New London where residents of all generations can gather to learn, play, exchange ideas and mingle across generations. Many other towns have such a facility.

Real Estate professionals note that while New London is attractive to existing residents and buyers for its physical location, its small town feel, its healthcare and educational assets, its cultural programs and its competitive tax structure, it lacks a place for people to interact informally and lacks space to encourage the growth of recreation and arts. Future property values may be challenged by buyers seeking a location that is more community friendly. The current time presents a unique opportunity to revitalize the development of a community facility plan. New London Hospital has expressed a willingness to provide a portion of its land for use by a community facility that could also be used by residents of the proposed housing project. Several town based not for profit organizations have talked openly about their need for improved and/or large facilities. The ability to finance a community facility is enhanced in the current economic environment with historically low interest rates, the willingness of some residents to make larger charitable contributions based on their investment gains and the debt capacity of New London.

The difficulty in planning for a community facility could be the lack of a viable site within the walkable center of the town. However, New London Hospital has expressed a willingness to carve out a portion of its undeveloped land abutting Newport Road for possible use of a community center. While this site does present some challenges, the engineering report did not point out any insurmountable barriers. The site has several strong advantages. The location is central to important supporting commercial activity, direct access via existing walking trails in easement right of ways to Outing Club land and fields, sidewalks from Main Street along Newport Road, possible integration with the housing project, public water and sewer, adequate land to build a large size structure, siting that could permit inclusion of a significant solar panel system, and a minimum number of residential abutters that might be impacted.

Earlier discussions surrounding the 1941 building adaptation included the importance of including a gymnasium area that would accommodate indoor sports and larger events, such as town meetings and music and theater programs. The Newport road site incorporates an area in the conceptual design. An outdoor field is not feasible on the Newport Road site but further investigation might lead to other solutions if a field is considered to be important.

The need, the time and the place together argue strongly for the town of New London to take a leadership in developing this plan for the future betterment of our community.

Janet Kidder stated that in discussions regarding the Community Center it was felt that the hospital site wasn't an appropriate site for all of things they wanted to do. A field was important and there were challenges with parking and wetlands. She feels it would be a good idea to step back from the idea now, in the hopes that the Outing Club or another organization, which may have property that is more suitable for a facility will become available in the future. She'd rather wait on something as significant as this building will be to the community, than try to put it in a site that isn't appropriate for all the uses she would like to see.

Joseph Kubit commented that we need to think about what is the bigger priority and better for the town. It doesn't seem feasible to be able to do both. Mr. Helm responded that this is a subject that they will debate at a Selectmen's meeting.

Ms. Kidder feels they are both equally important but the necessity is for the Police and Dispatch to have adequate facilities.

Mr. Ensign felt it would have been nice to have something in the document that acknowledges the community center as an item for the future.

Mr. Dietrich suggested adding a short paragraph after the four items listed in the CIP report stating that the town should continue to consider planning for the development of a community facility.

Mr. Bonin discussed that there is not a lot of land left in town but both the police station and the community center take a substantial amount of space. He agrees that a paragraph could be added to keep track of this.

Elizabeth Meller is questioning why money would be spent fixing up Whipple Hall if there might be a community center in the future? Ms. Kidder stated that Whipple Hall is not suitable for numerous recreational activities but there are things that the town could use it for. Storage and meeting rooms are a few ideas.

Chair Gorman dictated a fifth item (E.) based on this discussion:

The town should continue the process of developing a plan for the establishment of a multi-purpose community center for the use of the citizens of the town.

Mr. Helm also feels New London should be thinking about energy related projects as it goes along with its building programs.

IT WAS MOVED (Jeremy Bonin) AND SECONDED (William Dietrich) to accept the recommendation as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Planning Board Alternative Energy Subcommittee

Tim Paradis reported that they made edits to the proposals they discussed at the last meeting.

- Wind – it should be made clear that a small system be defined as one tower.
- There was discussion about which zones allowed wind systems and it was decided it would be all zones except R1, commercial and conservation.
- For setbacks, there were no changes but the language was clarified.

No changes are loosening the restrictions that are in place now, but rather putting parameters and guidelines in place.

Mr. Paradis suggested sending it out to review prior to the next meeting on November 28, 2017. At that meeting the Board will make the recommendation to set that forward for the public hearing in January, 2018.

8. Master Plan meeting – The next Master Plan meeting will be held on November 28, 2018 at 8:30am.

9. Other Business - None

10. Future Meeting Dates: Refer to the Planning Board Meeting Schedule and the Town's website for updated meeting information. Next meet scheduled for Tuesday, November 28, 2017. The December meeting will be held on December 12, 2017. December 19, 2017 will be a backup date.

Chair Gorman thanked Janet Kidder for attending. He expressed that her friends and colleagues feel for her as she has had a very difficult experience with the recent loss of her son.

11. Motion to Adjourn

**IT WAS MOVED (Bill Dietrich) AND SECONDED (Tim Paradis) to adjourn.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson
Recording Secretary
Town of New London