



TOWN OF  
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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**NEW LONDON PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

**June 23, 2015**

**6:30 pm**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** William Helm (Chair); Paul Gorman (Vice Chair); Michele Holton (Secretary); Janet Kidder (Board of Selectmen's Representative); Jeremy Bonin; William Dietrich; Elizabeth Meller (Alternate); and Marianne McEnrue (Alternate)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Emma Crane and Tim Paradis (Alternate);

**STAFF:** Lucy St. John (Planning and Zoning Administrator), Kristy Heath (Recording Secretary)

**Call to Order:** Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 6:31pm. He appointed Ms. McEnrue to sit in for Emma Crane, who was absent. He welcomed Jane McMurrich to the meeting; she is a new member of the Conservation Commission.

**Approval of Minutes**

- **IT WAS MOVED (Paul Gorman) AND SECONDED (Jeremy Bonin) to approve the minutes of June 9, 2015, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Site Plan Application and Public Hearing**

- ✓ **Colby- Sawyer College Site Plan Application for Change of Use for McKean Hall.** Located at 541 Main Street. Zoned Institutional. Tax Map 085-033-000. The College is seeking to repurpose McKean Hall, currently used as a residence hall for 49 students, into an office building for the Nursing Faculty which numbers 22 individuals and allows for further additions to the nursing faculty in two to three years. Individual residence rooms will be converted to office space. Large residence rooms will be converted to a mixture of conference rooms, storage rooms, break rooms, etc. The transition from residence hall to faculty offices does not require any demolition or construction. Waivers to the Site Plan Regulations are requested.

Ms. St. John noted that waivers were requested. The Board discussed that this project is not a project of regional impact and a site visit was not necessary.

Attorney Brad Cook, representing the college and Todd Emmons, Vice President of Finance and Treasurer were in attendance. Attorney Cook explained that the college had discussed if they really needed to come to the Planning Board. They believe the offices are a permitted use, and

they are not really doing anything different with their building. He explained that McKean Hall is currently a substance-free dorm and due to decreasing enrollment, and the need for offices for the Nursing program they want to shift the use of the building from dorms to office space. He explained that the college, like other colleges has seen a decrease in enrollment and there will be about 126 fewer students attending in the fall. The college plans to close McKean Hall, the residence across the street next to Dufault and Dufault, and reduce the number of triple rooms and change them into doubles. They try to encourage students to stay on campus and offer financial and educational programs to entice them to do so.

Mr. Cook said the nursing program which has been located in what is called “The Caretaker’s Cottage” shares the space with other faculty and staff. To move the nursing program into McKean Hall, there will be no change in the building or additional needs for parking. The “Caretaker’s Cottage” will be cleaned up, prepared, and will house an office of some sort.

With the number of fewer students attending college, the demand for parking will be less on campus. He noted that the Town’s department heads had no issues with this change in use and he asked that the Planning Board approve their request so they can get on with the changeover.

Public Hearing Opened. No public comments received. Public Hearing Closed.

Motion:

- **IT WAS MOVED (William Dietrich) AND SECONDED (Jeremy Bonin) to approve the waivers requested by Colby-Sawyer College. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**
  
- **IT WAS MOVED (William Dietrich) AND SECONDED (Paul Gorman) to approve the site plan application for a change of use for McKean Hall. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **Other Business**

**Rocky Ridge Subdivision Plan** approved August 14, 2007, MCRD Plan # 18662. Located at Pond’s Edge Lane and Bog Road. Memo from Jay Lyon, Fire Chief dated April 12, 2015 regarding the fire pond. Most recently discussed at the April 21st meeting, and discussion continued to the June 23rd meeting.

- ✓ Chair Helm said the Rocky Ridge Subdivision Plan discussion will be postponed and put on the agenda for the July 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. Chief Lyon stated he has been in conversation with Harry Snow and Peter Blakeman in how to resolve this issue. He noted Harry Snow is also interested in improving the appearance of the pond area, as is it less attractive when the water levels are low. Chief Lyon noted they are moving in the right direction. The discussion on this issue is postponed to the July 28, 2015 meeting.

### **Zoning Amendment Ideas for Discussion**

Chair Helm asked Board members about what zoning issues the Board may want to focus on, as Town Meeting is in March 2016, reducing the amount of time the Board has to work on addressing various issue.

Key zoning issues identified included signs, natural resources overlay protection district, accessory uses and tree cutting provisions. He referred to the recent US Supreme Court decision regarding signs, and which has been posted on the Town's website; he urged the Planning Board members to read it.

### **Natural Resources Overlay District issues and ideas discussed included:**

- ✓ Lots of repetition in the Ordinance in the various overlay district, can be consolidated.
- ✓ References to State Statutes need to be updated
- ✓ Map and language in ordinance, discrepancies. Need to address the mapping inconsistencies, and what map (GIS or official paper map)
- ✓ Map- what is or isn't included- what stream, what wetlands, etc.
- ✓ Input requested from the Conservation Commission on the streams and wetland overlay map.
- ✓ Addressing the Overlay District is a big task, won't be able to do it all this year, but need to keep this in the forefront.
- ✓ Need to recognize and approach resource protection not as a single resource but as interrelated.
- ✓ Natural resources are so important and they don't want people building where they shouldn't be.
- ✓ Tax map/GIS mapping project funding is included in the CIP document.

### **Tree-Cutting Provisions Discussion:**

- ✓ Should one person or other professional such as a surveyor be reviewing the sites?
- ✓ Current process is time consuming and many applications are incomplete when submitted.
- ✓ Lack of specific criteria to determine when a tree should be removed, should an arborist or other tree expert provide input.
- ✓ Lack of consistency in the information presented and accepted by the Board.
- ✓ Is this really a Planning Board function or is this more appropriate for the Conservation Commission, Town arborist or other forestry/wetlands professional?
- ✓ Staff to see research how other town's address tree cutting in the waterfront buffer, who reviews the applications- Planning Board, Conservation Commission, a professional retained by the Town or some other person.
- ✓ Intent of the waterfront buffer- natural or a landscaped look.
- ✓ How to maintain a mix of vegetation- trees, bush, low-lying vegetative
- ✓ Long term economic effect on Town if water quality is degraded.

### **Signs Provisions Discussion:**

- ✓ Need to get the public involved.

- ✓ Sue Andrews and Tom Cottrill invited to discuss their concerns with the sign ordinance
- ✓ The draft sign amendment language proposed in 2015 is a good starting point for future discussions of the sign ordinance. The sign provisions should be a priority.

**Accessory Dwelling Units Discussion:**

- ✓ Changes in demographics, need to get a handle this issue.
- ✓ People have expressed need and want to have accessory/in-law apartments
- ✓ Senate Bill 146

**Site Plan Amendments- key issues identified included:**

- ✓ Parking provisions
- ✓ Change of Use provisions

**CIP Subcommittee Update – Bill Dietrich**

- ✓ Next meeting of the subcommittee is Friday the 26th at 9am.
- ✓ Subcommittee has toured all the major facilities in town to see where they would be likely to expend a substantial amount of capital over the next several years. The transfer station, police station, and the 1941 Building were of particular interest.
- ✓ A memorandum was sent to Board of Selectmen from the subcommittee encouraging them to try and acquire the 1941 Building and site. Ms. Kidder said the Selectmen have agreed to meet with the School Board and discuss the 1941 Building site; it is right in the middle of town and was the property of the Town in the past. Whatever happens there affects the town. Chair Helm said he was at the Board of Selectmen's meeting when the memorandum was discussed and was impressed with the diversity of people at the meeting who were in favor of the idea of acquiring the 1941 Building and site. Ms. Kidder felt getting a Memorandum of Understanding from the school board would be a good start. This would insure that the Town would be a part of what was going on with the building.
- ✓ There are legitimate storage issues in Town.
- ✓ Meeting at the Springfield/New London Water Precinct on July 10<sup>th</sup> at 9am to discuss their plans for the future.
- ✓ Need to engage and solicit input from the public in the CIP process and how to do this.
- ✓ Suggested a brief article be included in the Town Administrator newsletter.
- ✓ Ms. St. John suggested that in addressing long-range planning issues, engaging school aged students in the process may provide some insights. She noted that she has done this in another community and other communities have done this as well.

**Other updates**

- ✓ Ms. St. John indicated that a Planning Board Agenda email list is being created to notify people when an agenda is created and hopefully encourage them to come.
- ✓ Ms. Kidder said the next Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting would be held at the police department. They have already been to the fire station and the highway department. She welcomed anyone interested in coming to the meeting.

**Future meetings:**

- ✓ July 7<sup>th</sup>
- ✓ July 28<sup>th</sup> – Discussion: Rocky Ridge Subdivision

**Motion to Adjourn:**

**IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (William Dietrich) to adjourn.  
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London