



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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**PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
August 4, 2015**

PRESENT: Bill Helm (Chair), Michele Holton, Bill Dietrich, Jeremy Bonin, Janet Kidder (Selectmen's Representative), Elizabeth Meller (Alt.) and Tim Paradise (Alt.)

ABSENT: Paul Gorman, and Marianne McEnrue (Alt.)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jay Lyon, Fire Chief; Bob Tucker, Elkin's resident and Harry Snow, for Rocky Ridge Subdivision.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Public Comment

Bob Tucker of Sherman Street in Elkins said he had attended the July 28th meeting to discuss the idea of the Town adopting a Demolition Delay Ordinance regarding historic structures. He explained that this is in response to the recent demolition and building of a new house in Elkins. He distributed a copy of the Town of Windham Zoning Ordinance provisions regarding Historic Buildings/Structure Demolition/Substantial Modification Delay Ordinance and a page from Preserving Community Character: A Preservation Planning Handbook for New Hampshire. He said that there are about 15 other towns in NH that have such an ordinance. The Planning Board will discuss this at the September 1st meeting.

Rocky Ridge Subdivision Plan. 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 21, June 23 and a brief update provided at the July 28th meeting.

Fire Chief Jay Lyon and Harry Snow were present to discuss the issue of water for the pond at the entrance of Rocky Ridge Subdivision. Chief Lyon explained that Harry Snow recently had a well drilled next to the pond. Harry Snow explained that the well is a true artesian well. He provided some details on the flow rates. The well is approximately 720' feet deep and is producing about 50 gallons per minute. The pond has maintained its level even during this dry weather. Mr. Snow said the well is producing 50 gallons a minute and the overflow is 17 gallons a minute. Currently they have the well temporarily piped into the pond and it has been going about 10 days. He felt the amount of water coming out would easily maintain the aesthetics and functionality of the pond. The pond is probably 9-10' deep.

Chief Lyon said they were fortunate to have the well drilled and he hoped it would continue running. Chief Lyon and Harry Snow noted that at this time they agree that the pond issue has been addressed. Chair Helm noted that if in the future there are issues with the use of the pond, they would need to come back to the Planning Board and at this time no further action is needed.

Site Plan Regulations – Review of Institutional Exemption draft language

The proposed changes to the draft language were expressed in underlined text. The Board discussed item (a) and thought the semicolon should be removed after the words, “1,000 square feet, and that the word “and” should be added to the end of each subsection (a and b). It was noted that the articles must reference the hospital and college specifically so that the rules only apply to those entities and not to others who may eventually rent/use those spaces once occupied by the hospital or college. The conclusion was that the language was likely fine.

Site Plan Regulations, Parking Provisions- Review of draft language

The Board reviewed the draft language provided, and other information from Mr. Bonin and Ms. Meller. Ms. Meller emphasized the need to maintain the existing on-site parking spaces, as well as provide for handicapped parking, on-street parking and to provide some definition for a shopping center. She noted that the 2004 New London parking study noted capacity at various locations on the street.

Jeremy Bonin reviewed the current provisions of Appendix A, providing a review of these provisions based on 1,000 square feet. He looked at worst-case scenarios for changes in businesses along Main Street and how parking would change. He noted that typically the most intensive parking provisions relate to restaurants and places of assembly.

Ms. St. John explained the need to include the word “existing structure” and to discuss if a downtown building were demolished and a new structure were built how the parking would be reviewed.

The Board discussed various changes to the downtown business over the years, and what were the most dramatic changes, including Tuckers (used to be a hardware), Everett House, and the Dunkin Donuts site. The Board asked staff to review the Dunkin Donuts site plan, which was formerly Wild Berry Bagels and others uses. They discussed how the on-site parking and access to the site is an issue, and what parking provisions the Planning Board used when this was approved.

There was discussion of parking in front of or behind businesses, and the need to maintain a village look as opposed to suburban parking standards which typically encourage parking in the front of a business. They realize the requirement for off-street parking is not possible in some instances and so they are trying to be realistic. Mr. Bonin felt it was important to have a table in the ordinance spelling out how parking should be required. Otherwise, how will they guide new businesses to design their parking?

Ms. St. John said there are some universal standards that exist that could be used, however the Board may want to look at the parking based on the location, as there are three distinct and different commercial areas of town- in Elkins, Main Street (downtown) and the strip and shopping center areas on Newport Road.

Mr. Bonin offered suggestions on how to abbreviate the table for parking for new structures by eliminating the “.5” of spaces and combining headings. Mr. Bonin agreed to take his ideas consider list of “land uses” provided by Ms. St. John and develop a draft table for the Board to review at the September 1st meeting.

The Board discussed the need to review the amount of open space required, percent of impervious surface and address the issue of snow storage relative to parking requirements.

There was discussion as to parking requirements for residential homes. Ms. St. John explained that Site Plan Regulations address 2 or more residential units, and the Planning Board Regulations do not dictate how many parking spaces a single or two-family home has. She noted, that the Zoning Ordinance can include provisions regarding the number of parking spaces for single-and two family units, and the Board may want to look at the issue of cars parking on lawn areas, and the number allowed. The Board discussed if there should be provisions regarding the number of parking spaces on a residential property, as currently there are sites where parking is on the front lawn areas, or for example, the large parking area on the Rowse site (18 Sutton Road). The existing chart should say multi-family dwellings.

Zoning Board of Adjustment Request for Discussion regarding Article XX - Non-conforming

Ms. St. John referred to the recent ZBA discussion of July 27th. The ZBA had asked the Planning Board to review the provisions regarding nonconforming issues.

Selectman Kidder said the ordinance used to just say “A non-conforming structure could not be made more non-conforming.” She was not sure when the nonconforming provisions were changed over the years, but said the language used to be more cut and dry.

Mr. Bonin added that a non-conforming use should be limited by detail of what is not allowed instead of simply saying that it can’t be made “more non-conforming.”

Ms. St. John noted there are several sections of the Zoning Ordinance that would need to be reviewed, including several definitions, provisions of the Shoreland District, and other sections.

Chair Helm noted that the definition of “substantial improvement” is confusing, and this needed to be reviewed.

Chair Helm asked the Board if this topic should be considered this year as a possible zoning amendment. The Board agreed that the nonconforming provisions are confusing and that they should be reviewed and discussed over the next year. The board agreed that this issue should be addressed but not rushed through as it requires more time.

CIP Subcommittee Update

Mr. Dietrich said a CIP meeting was scheduled for August 14th at 9 am with Tom Galligan, President of Colby-Sawyer College. They plan to discuss how the town and college can work together on space issues.

Town/School District Meeting Update Regarding the 1941 Building and Site

Selectman Kidder reported on the meeting held between the Town and the school district regarding the 1941 Building. There was concern about safety and the flow of traffic. The District is not willing to give up the usage of the athletic fields. The school district isn’t sure what they want to do with the building at this time but they are not looking to tear it down at this point. They will keep the Town involved in their decisions. The School District has the authority to lease the building to the Town of New London but could not sell it to the Town for \$1 without a district-wide vote. Selectman Kidder felt it was a positive meeting and there could be a partnership of some sort in the future with the Town being able to use the space.

Next meeting is scheduled for August 11th at 6:30pm.

Motion to Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London