

TOWN OF THORNTON PLANNING BOARD

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PB Initials: TBP
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PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

July 11, 2013

CALL TO ORDER:

T. Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

ROLL CALL:

The following members/alternates were present:

T. Phillips, Chairman

G. Kimball, Member

S. MacIntosh, Member

R. Gilman, Alternate

F. Gunter, Alternate

S. Babin, Vice Chairman arrived at 7:05pm.

Gerry Coogan introduced himself and shared a bit of his work experience in Planning in New Hampshire. The Board discussed with G. Coogan the possibility of engaging his services to assist in working on the Zoning Ordinance.

T. Phillips explained the need for a review of the Zoning Ordinance and related some of the history of the development of the Town of Thornton.

F. Gunter stated there is value in getting the opinion/assistance of a professional, and that it will be beneficial for someone outside of the Town of Thornton to take a fresh look at the ordinance.

T. Phillips indicated that responses from the last two surveys put out for the town's Master Plan did not show a huge shift in the way residents feel about the Town.

F. Gunter agreed that the Master Plan survey responses show that residents are for the most part content to keep the town the way it is.

G. Coogan indicated that after his initial review of the Zoning Ordinance he thought it could be better organized and more user friendly.

T. Phillips stated that the goal is not to make sweeping changes to the rules/regulations of the current ordinance but rather to better communicate the rules/regulations of the current ordinance.

T. Phillips indicated that in 2011 the Planning Board attorney drafted a letter that listed out some areas of the existing ordinance that need attention and suggested G. Coogan take a look at that as well.

The Board thanked G. Coogan for meeting with them.

After a brief discussion the general consensus of the Board members was that they are comfortable with the possibility of presenting a new document for voters at the annual meeting rather than multiple amendments if that is what proves to be the most effective method to accomplish the goal.

The Board directed N. Decoteau to gather the hourly rate, experience and availability of the prospective planning professionals so that the Planning Board can make a decision at the next regular meeting as to who they will engage the services of.

The Board discussed financial issues related to legal expenses of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment.

J. Demeritt, ZBA Chairman, explained that the recent litigation against both the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment has resulted in the need to take a look at the remaining funds available for FY2013.

J. Demeritt explained that much of the legal expense for the Planning Board has been covered under the Insurance Policy of the Town whereas the legal expense for the Zoning Board of Adjustment has not.

J. Demeritt requested that the Planning Board agree to work together with the Zoning Board of Adjustment to assure the two Land Use Boards stay within the total budgeted amount for FY2013.

T. Phillips stated he understood the issue and concern.

After a brief discussion, the general consensus was to work together.

T. Phillips stated that it is still very important for the Planning Board to use some of the remaining funds to pay for the review/update of the Zoning Ordinance and other town regulations.

R. Gilman voiced some concerns regarding recent Planning Board decisions.

R. Gilman restated the opinion he shared at the June 20, 2013 meeting regarding having reservations approving the "recreational vehicles" to be used as rental units at the Pemi River Campground as they do not meet the R.V. I. A. standards.

T. Phillips reviewed the rationale used in the recent Planning Board approvals.

T. Phillips stressed how important it is for the Planning Board to have good regulations to base decisions on.

J. Demeritt updated the Board on the pending litigation.

J. Demeritt stated he attended the court proceedings earlier that day and felt that the Town was represented well.

J. Demeritt stated he was told it could be 2 to 3 weeks before a ruling is made.

A discussion followed regarding using a different attorney to represent the Planning Board.

T. Phillips directed N. Decoteau to collect information regarding two attorneys for the Board to review at the next meeting.

F. Gunter shared information regarding the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program and the Pemigewasset Local Advisory Committee that he works with.

F. Gunter stated the Pemigewasset Local Advisory Committee was formed in 1992 to do the following:

- Advise NH DES and municipalities pertaining to management of river and tributary drainage areas.
- Consider/comment of any federal, state or local government plans for facilities that would alter the resource values of the river.
- Develop and adopt a corridor management plan.
- Report to municipalities annually and NHDES biennially on compliance and plans relevant to the river.
- Major areas of concern are:
 1. Impacts of development on water quality
 2. Impairments – Dissolved oxygen, ph, and invasive species
 3. Cumulative impact of land use activity

F. Gunter stated the first Management Plan was adopted in 2001 with an update in March 2013 which needs to be specifically referenced in the Thornton Master Plan.

F. Gunter agreed to work with N. Decoteau to see that the information is included in the Master Plan.

Board members received copies of the Planning Board minutes of June 20, 2013 for review/comment.
Board members received a final version of the updated Excavation Regulations for review/comment.
Board members received a draft of the agenda for the July 18, 2013 regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

T. Phillips adjourned the meeting at 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Nancy Decoteau, Planning Board Assistant

Approved on: 7.18.2013