

Town of Plaistow, NH
Office of the Planning Board
145 Main Street, Plaistow, NH



PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
April 6, 2022

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

1. ROLL CALL:

Tom Alberti, *Ch.* – Present at Town Hall
Tim Moore, *Vice Ch.* - Present at Town Hall
Laurie Milette - Present at Town Hall
Karen Robinson – Present at Town Hall
Darrell Britton, *Selectman's Alt.* excused
Richard Anthony, *Alternate* – Present at Town Hall
Bill Coye, *Selectman's Rep.* - Present at Town Hall
Dee Voss, *Zoning Official/Administrative Assistant* –Present at Town Hall (non-voting)

Also Present: Jeremy Hill, resident

2. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MARCH 16, 2022 MINUTES:

Draft minutes of the March 16, 2022 meeting were included with the meeting materials.

K. Robinson moved, second by B. Coye to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2022 meeting as issued.

The motion to approve the minutes as issued passed 5-0-0.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND SURVEY

Ch. Alberti said that the Board's main focus for the year would be to lay the groundwork for a clear economic development/redevelopment plan for the community so there is a clear strategy to help shape the Town for the next five to twenty years.

T. Moore reported he had reached out to the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) to engage them and they will come to the May 4, 2022 workshop meeting. He suggested sending RPD Executive Director Tim

Roache an email inviting him to the meeting. He said that Tim, Jennifer Rowden and new planner Sarah Tartarczuk will likely attend.

K. Robinson asked the Chair to send a letter to the selectmen and Town Manager to ask for a joint meeting for all parties with the RPC to help find a planner for the Town. Ch. Alberti noted that the former planner has resigned and he had spoken with Town Manager Greg Colby about the Board's focus on creating an economic development plan. B. Coye suggested the Board should decide what type and qualifications of the person is desired. Ch. Alberti asked about the credentials of the RPC planners and if they serve on other towns' Planning Boards. T. Moore said a minimum require is a bachelor degree and some municipal planning/administration. He guessed that 60% of planners in New Hampshire would have a Master's degree as well. He noted there are other circuit riders besides Jen Rowden in the RPC and it was possible we could contract with one of the circuit riders for assistance. T. Moore suggested it might be helpful for the RTPS to describe what the circuit riders normally do for towns.

Ch. Alberti suggested that the first needed priority would be for support relative to laws, ordinances and regulations, to help clarify information and provide direction, to assist with warrant articles to help shape the community's vision and plan. He noted that 12 hours a week might not be sufficient to meet the Board's needs. T. Moore suggested that such a person's primary focus should be on economic development, noting that plans can be developed but the key is the execution of the plan, and that requires a knowledgeable person who could spend 20 to 30 hours due to the need for outreach to perspective businesses, as well as support D. Voss and the Planning Board. Such a person should understand NH laws, regulations and ordinances, who knows what is happening nationally, understands master plan development and execution.

It was agreed that D. Voss needs someone to help carry the work of the department. Ch. Alberti said he had recommended such to G. Colby. It was noted that hiring decisions are made by the Town Manager. R. Anthony suggested that it would be good to have someone with New Hampshire roots but noted the possibility of some cooperation with Haverhill for the Route 125 corridor infrastructure. Ideally a candidate would have the ability to cooperatively reach out to the community and surrounding area as well as reaching out to other businesses, trades, organizations which would be beneficial to the Town, and execute the economic development plan.

Ch. Alberti suggested the Board reach a consensus about its recommendation to the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen. It was suggested that perhaps immediate support from the RPC might be replaced by a Town hire. Ch. Alberti asked about the role of a circuit rider; T. Moore suggested it would typically involve plan review and zoning impact.

D. Voss explained the typical application process through the planning office. She said the applications are received and checked for all the documentation required for making decisions. She said complicated applications are routed to Keach-Nordstrom Associates (KNA) for an engineering review. If there are any legal aspects to it, such as a home owners association, the documents are routed to Atty. Cleary. Depending on the type of application it could be routed to the Police, Fire or Highway departments. She does a check list review which applies all the site and subdivision regulations that relate to the physical plan set. She said the KNA review is sent to the applicant for adjustments before it comes to the Board. She does the staff reports and then the legal noticing, and then the plan comes to the Board. She was asked what the planner would do in support of this and she said nothing, this was her job.

The importance of the planner would be to help shape the economic development plan, assist with warrant articles, and helping to shape the future of the Town.

D. Voss said she manages the administrative parts of the department well, but that input from the RPC on the big issues would be beneficial to the Board. Ch. Alberti asked if the Board would recommend to the Town Manager that the RPC play a larger planning role in the short to mid-term. It was felt that the process itself would lead in profitable directions, as well as possibly provide ideas for funding or grants. Ch. Alberti said he would sum it up for the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen.

R. Anthony asked about the role of the Master Plan. D. Voss said it supposed to be a view of what the Town is and its future. She noted there are many things that cannot be done without an up-to-date Master Plan, such as Zoning. The plan was last updated by the Planning Board in 2019, and has an implementation chapter which should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the Town is keeping in touch with what is in the plan. It was noted the Planning Board has reviewed it and should look at it with the RPC when that meeting is held.

Ch. Alberti recapped the Economic Development Plan discussions. He said the Board has discussed the need to develop a survey, engage the community, gather information and develop a plan. Ideas about the survey have been discussed but it was agreed to ask the RPC for help with its design and presentation of the results. Ch. Alberti will reach out to T. Roache regarding what they may be able to help the Board with, and speak with G. Colby about the Board's plans.

4. PLANNING BOARD RULES OF PROCEDURE

Ch. Alberti asked if anyone had any changes that should be made to the document. L. Milette asked him how much correspondence he sees that comes through the planning office; he replied he sees what the whole Board sees. He asked D. Voss if any information comes in that is not sent to the Board and was told absolutely not and that nothing is filtered out. L. Milette said the last applicant before the Board said that information was provided in February which the Board did not see until just before the meeting. D. Voss said she had shared the drop box link for that applicant as the files are too large for her to send. She said the review documents are not sent out until they go through KNA and others as they change repeatedly between the initial application and the end of the review process. She noted this particular application has lots of information to be found in various places. There was discussion of getting information in a timely manner.

D. Voss discussed the levels of interaction on an application. She said an applicant can come before the Board with an application for conceptual review that is non-binding and has no physically engineered plans and abutters are not notified, just to get a feeling of what the Board would/would not be OK with on a plan. After that is a preliminary design review with more developed plans and abutters are notified; feedback is given but no decision is made on that plan. Then the final plan is what the Board makes decisions on.

D. Voss explained that sometimes a developer will come in and ask if a plan would be a permitted use in the district, and she tells them she does not have a vote in this but could set them up for a preliminary discussion with the Planning Board. She said that learning about some things may come about if an applicant needs to go to the Zoning Board for a variance needed before the application could be made. She noted the applicants have to get their variances before they can make an application. When asked if the Planning Board could attend a ZBA meeting she said they could as a private citizen, though only the abutter are notified, and stressed that if a Planning Board member voices an opinion at the ZBA meeting they would have to recuse themselves from the Planning meeting since they would be on record with an opinion regarding the application.

There was discussion of what happens if a Planning Board member speaks at a meeting as if on behalf of the Board. It was noted that an individual should not be speaking on behalf of the Board, that only the Chair should, and that it would be better to have a discussion at the Board level and then send a letter from the Board expressing an agreed upon statement to the ZBA.

There was discussion of the timely distribution of information to the Planning Board. D. Voss noted that she tried to get information from the applicants so the Board will have the materials before the weekend. She said she will never recommend an application be accepted as complete if she does not have all the needed materials from the applicant. Once an application is accepted as complete the RSA gives 95 days to make a decision on it and it can be continued as needed. R. Anthony suggested a reference table in the document with appropriate governing timelines for easy reference. D. Voss noted it take a public hearing to change the Rules of Procedure document, and that the timelines are in the staff reports also.

The Board agreed to make the following changes:

§225-2 Members, B Selection, (1) Training to strike the following “the Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI) or other”

§225-4. Duties, A. Chair of the Board, (7) add to the sentence “unless another representative is appointed designate”

The Public Hearings for these changes will be held during the May 4, 2022 workshop meeting. It was noted the changes have to be read at three successive meetings.

There was question of whether the Planning Board’s meetings have to be televised, and whether might be closed to the public. The procedures and specific criteria for doing this were discussed. D. Voss will send this information to the Board members. There was discussion about whether staff could inform the Board that someone came in to discuss a piece of property and it was reported that staff could inform but any discussion by the Board could be considered by an applicant as forming an opinion before seeing any of their presentation. This applies to any comments Board members might make on platforms such as Facebook.

5. OLD BUSINESS

D. Voss reported that she had met with the engineer for the 214 Plaistow Road projects and they are working hard to get the site plans and that the staff report will have a recommendation to vote whether to declare it a Project of Regional Impact, and if it is then the hearing will need to be continued, the affected communities notified and expected to go through their processes to be shared at the next public hearing.

Ch. Alberti reported that he will not be able to attend the next meeting and alerted R. Anthony he would be appointed a voting member for that meeting. D. Voss reported that she expects the applicant to ask for a continuance as there is considerable work still needed on the plans.

Ch. Alberti asked whether S. Keach has been invited to a Board meeting in the past. D. Voss said if the 214 Plaistow Road applications are continued into May she would ask S. Keach to be at the meeting to answer any questions from the Board.

6. NEW BUSINESS

D. Voss reported that all the Board's RPC commissioners need to be reappointed. She noted the Planning Board makes one recommendation for a commissioner to the Board of Selectmen, and the BOS appoints the two commissioners and the alternate.

K. Robinson moved, second by L. Milette to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that Tim Moore be appointed as a Rockingham County Planning Commissioner to represent the Town of Plaistow.

The vote to recommend T. Moore passed 4-0-1 (B. Coye)

7. COMMUNICATIONS, UPDATES, FYI'S AND OTHER BUSINESS

Ch. Alberti noted again he will not be at the next meeting. He invited the audience member to speak. Jeremy Hill, 18 Elm Street, Plaistow, said he had thought he might want to become an alternate, but that he might have business before the Board, so he would just continue to attend on occasion. Ch. Alberti said his input and the public's is welcomed.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There was no additional business before the Board and the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charlene A. Glorieux
Minute Taker