

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



PLANNING BOARD MINUTES (***DRAFT MINUTES - Subject to change once approved and amended by the board at its next meeting on Jan. 19, 2022***)

Jan. 5, 2022

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 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
Greg Taillon, *Selectman's Rep.* Present at Town Hall
Maxann Dobson, Alternate – excused
Bill Coye, *Selectman's Alt.* - Present at Town Hall
John Cashell, *Planning Director* –Present at Town Hall (non-voting)

Also Present: Chief Chris Knutsen, Plaistow Fire Dept.

2. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 1, 2021 MINUTES:

Draft minutes of the December 15, 2021 meeting were included with the meeting materials.

G. Taillon moved, second by T. Moore to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2021 meeting as corrected.

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

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Continued from December 15, 2021

Ch. Alberti noted that while not speaking about specific applications before the Planning Board, he had asked Chief Knutsen of the Plaistow Fire Department to help provide insight into how an additional urgent care facility might affect Plaistow. L. Milette noted that an existing facility operates from 8AM to 8PM

how would the FD rescue operation be affected by a 24 hour facility. Chief Knutsen said that with hospitals overwhelmed with patients during the pandemic, such facilities play an important role helping to reduce the ER patient load. He noted the FD Rescue service is staffed 24-hours and there is no additional cost to taxpayers for one or ten calls. Ch. Alberti asked whether Plaistow would become a district center and other communities might use Plaistow's services rather than their own community's. Chief Knutsen said there would be no more cost than perhaps some additional fuel costs. He noted the Town's population has been pretty stable for the last 20 years, and the only change is it is now 20 years older. He noted the commercial district is also changing but that it is an advantage to the Town as it brings the tax rate down. K. Robinson noted the commercial district has grown quite a bit and asked if there is a corresponding increase in calls from that area. Chief Knutsen said that 65-70% of their calls come from the residential areas. Ch. Alberti asked if this is more health calls than fire calls; Chief Knutsen said there are more health-related calls to residential addresses and more fire alarm activations to commercial addresses. G. Taillon supposed that with one to possibly three urgent care facilities local people might go to urgent care rather than call the fire department which might make the calls to 911 more urgent. Chief Knutsen said there would be no way to know.

There was discussion of what would drive three urgent care facilities in one town. G. Taillon said all three models are different, offering some similar and some unique services. K. Robinson asked why all three facilities would need to be in Plaistow when there are other areas without anything. There was discussion about Plaistow being a border city and the draw for Massachusetts residents to come to New Hampshire border towns for tax-free purchasing.

Ch. Alberti asked about the overlap between the Planning Board and health and safety in the Town, and if there is anything the Board could do to make it easier on the Fire, Police and Highway departments. Chief Knutsen said that anytime someone submits a site plan the Fire Department has to approve it and they address those specific issues. He noted that the expense for health and safety is never going to decline and development helps offset the cost to the taxpayers.

J. Cashell noted that the business model for ageing, growing populations is the catalyst behind the increase of urgent care facilities; he said they know they will make a profit if they start them, and they are less costly to the insurance companies.

Ch. Alberti thanked Chief Knutsen for coming in. He asked the Board if there was value in having the police and highway come in. It was agreed an invitation could be put out to them once a year.

Ch. Alberti opened the Public Hearing on the proposed Zoning Amendments for 2022

Zoning Ordinance/Subdivision Regulation Amendments

PZO Article II, Definitions

PZO Article III, General Provisions §220-10 Roadway Construction

PZO Article IV, Natural Resources Protection, §220-18

PZO Article V, Establishment of Districts and District Regulations, Table 220-32I Structure Setback Table

PZO Article VIII, Accessory Dwelling Unit, §220-57 General Requirements

PZO Article IX, Signs, §220-58 All Districts & §220-59, Commercial I & Industrial Districts

Delete PZO Articles XVI Storm Water – Illicit Discharge and Connection, XVIIA Storm Water – Post-Construction & XIXA Storm Water – Operation and Maintenance, and combine, including minor amendments, with Article VI Natural Resources Protection

SDRR Article II, General Provisions, §235-8 Rights-of-way; reserve strips

It was noted that these articles had been discussed at the December 15th meeting but were continued in the event there were more questions. Ch. Alberti asked if anything needed to be addressed. T. Moore noted a typo that Amendment 8 was recommended by the Planning Board 5-0-0 not 0-0-0 as it appears on page 6 in the ballot language and it also appears in the Voters' Guide.

Ch. Alberti closed the Public Hearing on the Zoning Amendments for 2022.

Ch. Alberti opened the continued Public Hearing on Proposed Subdivision Amendments for 2022

Proposed Subdivision Amendments for 2022

Add a new subdivision section § 235-8A to be titled Driveways. Do not make any changes to the existing section § 235-8 Rights-of-way; reserved strips. In that section paragraphs A, B, C are designated as Reserved for Future Use.

Modify the language existing language that appears incorrectly in 235-8 as follows:

§ 235-8A. Driveways.

1. Each existing lot; or new lot(~~s~~) created by a subdivision; for *a* single-family dwelling unit must have a separate driveway that connects to a Class V or better road ***or to a proposed subdivision street.***
2. Each ***existing lot or new lot created by a subdivision for a*** duplex dwelling unit may have two separate driveways or may share one driveway for some or all of the driveway length, provided that each dwelling unit of the duplex dwelling unit has its street address clearly displayed on the mailboxes, as well as each dwelling unit. Each driveway (shared or unique) must connect to a Class V or better road ***or a proposed subdivision street.***
3. ***Each existing lot or new lot created by a subdivision for a*** ~~M~~ multi-family dwellings-unit may *have* shared driveways provided dwelling unit numbers or other address identifiers are clearly displayed at the driveway entrance/mailbox, as well as each dwelling unit. ***Each driveway (shared or unique) must connect to a Class V or better road or a proposed subdivision street.***

G. Taillon moved, second by T. Moore to adopt the change to Subdivision Regulation by Adding a new subdivision section § 235-8A to be titled Driveways. Not make any changes to the existing section § 235-8 Rights-of-way; reserved strips. And designate paragraphs A, B, C are designated as Reserved for Future Use.

The motion to adopt passed 5-0-0

Ch. Alberti closed the Public Hearing on Subdivision Amendments for 2022.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

Ch. Alberti asked the members what big picture items the Planning Board should work on for 2022.

J. Cashell noted that Dee Voss had sent an email about the free online seminar about master plans and what municipalities can do to further them. He said we should work on it not just let it sit and suggested the Board should attend the webinar. Ch. Alberti agreed the Master Plan should be revisited and see what is slated for 2022.

J. Cashell said staff had spent some time on a determining what the Board had approved for a relatively new subdivision that has been under construction for many years and there are residents living along on of the particular roadways and it appears the road wasn't built in accordance with the approved plan. He said he spent a lot of time researching the original plan. He said the Board should be sure that developments approved by the Board should be well documented and that they are being well inspected as they are built, and the inspectors are well taught so everything is built and installed properly. Ch. Alberti said there isn't a full-time code enforcement officer and this causes problems. J. Cashell said the roadways, utilities and subdivisions are the Planning Board's jurisdiction. He said field inspections should be done and are paid by the developer, and the planning staff needs to be sure the inspections are being done as called for as things are being constructed. He suggested asking Steve Keach to explain the field inspection process that goes on with site plans as well as subdivisions. It was agreed this would be worthwhile. Ch. Alberti asked if the Board could tighten up the process when it is involved to assure that inspections happen post plan approval. J. Cashell said the Board might at least ask for annual reports presented on the construction progress of developments as a requirement of plan approval, and they have a well-documented field inspection process leading to a plan presented to the Board and certified that the project has been completed as approved or amended. He said planning boards have statutory approval authority for roads and installation of utilities in subdivisions and with the authority should be sure it is being correctly and according to what was approved. G. Taillon asked if a step is missing where the consulting engineer reports back that roads, drainage, etc. have been done properly. J. Cashell said subdivisions can have 20, 30, 40 house lots and can go on many decades. He said once the roads and utilities are in there they are not required to completely finish the development which can lead to development going on for many years. G. Taillon asked if the Board could put these reviews into the process so that the builder understands occupancy will not occur until they have the review. J. Cashell suggested having one of the firm's lead representative come in and the Board devotes a workshop evening to go over the whole subject. Ch. Alberti suggested this be done soon. He also asked if it would make sense to have discussions with an attorney about the legality of some things the Board may choose to do. T. Moore said that for general legal issues NHMA has a series of excellent workshops that answer all kinds of questions.

T. Moore suggested that Plaistow and the towns around it do not do a very good job on economic development due to lack of experience. He suggested Route 125 has evolved the way it has is due to a lack of a development plan. He asked if the Rockingham Development Corporation might work with the Board to develop a master plan. Ch. Alberti asked how Plaistow could diversify development and not repeat the same type of business over and over again. T. Moore said it is very hard and borderline illegal to say you can't have a type of business. He discussed how car dealerships had been handled by the Town and how zoning for different uses can be used. There was discussion about attracting specific types of services. J. Cashell said the paramount thing is the economic engine that creates all the development interest; the economy is doing well and communities with a development plan will benefit. He said the high end economic development is along the Route 95 belt in Massachusetts and the rest is forced north. Ch. Alberti asked what are the Town's pros and cons and what are its opportunities? It was agreed there is work to be done to identify what the Town has to offer and what it would like to happen. J. Cashell said the Town needs to preserve and enhance the residential and rural neighborhoods so there is a high quality of living in the Town. He noted there is a good economic/commercial base that can be enhanced to support the residential base, and the residential base can be enhanced with good schools, good walking areas, etc.

Ch. Alberti suggested putting actionable items on paper and see what can be created from it. J. Cashell said creating an economic development plan for the commercial zones could also reflect what the residential areas should be like. G. Taillon suggested also defining the kind of services to be provided for the residential neighborhoods and what standards should be set for creating nice neighborhoods.

Ch. Alberti asked if starting the development of an economic plan should be the Planning Board's goal for 2022; it was generally agreed to proceed. Ch. Alberti asked if working on this would be a use for some of J. Cashell's time, or who would actually do the work. J. Cashell suggested an ad hoc committee of volunteers who will get the Board the feedback it needs, and suggested using social media to engage the community. K. Robinson suggested inviting the townspeople to the Board's workshop meetings. It was agreed this would be a good idea – to gather information, questions and comments about what Plaistow should look like in the future. A survey was recommended to ask the community to help the Planning Board plan for the future. There was discussion of how surveys are written and how to get an effective survey. G. Taillon suggested that inviting townspeople to attend a Planning Board workshop meeting could create a committee of volunteers with a Planning Board representative as the chair to help them understand what the Board is looking for and get their ideas back.

Ch. Alberti noted the Board has agreed to make the development of an economic development program a priority for 2022, that public input is needed for that, and that we need to determine who does what work and what resources are available to the Board to further these ends. He asked the Board to bring to the next meeting questions that need to be answered so a survey can be developed. He also asked for thoughts on what survey platform to use and what date we might want to have the public attend a meeting. He said he will follow up with G. Colby about the Code Enforcement Officer, to plan to bring in Steve Keach regarding inspections, and to review the Master Plan for tie-ins to development of an economic development plan.

G. Taillon asked about the Planning Board member on the Conservation Commission and asked if there are any restrictions on a Planning Board member to run for another Board or Commission seat. T. Moore said there are no restrictions, but it often a dicey position because conflicts of interest. G. Taillon noted that the Town's ZBA is appointed and the BOS remove someone who they felt had a conflict of interest which they could not do if it was an elected position; he asked if other towns in the area have appointed or elected ZBAs. T. Moore said he didn't know of any elected ZBAs.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There was no additional business before the Board and the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charlene A. Glorieux
Minute Taker