

WEST NEWBURY PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
JANUARY 3, 2017

Pursuant to a meeting notice posted by the Town Clerk that was delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the West Newbury Planning Board was held on January 3, 2017 in the 2nd Floor Hearing Room at the West Newbury Town Offices, 381 Main Street. Board Members Ann Bardeen, Richard Bridges, Raymond Cook and Brian Murphey were in attendance. Planning Administrator Leah Zambenardi and Associate Member Dennis Lucey were also in attendance. Board Member John Sarkis was not in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM

Public Informational Session – Amendment to Signs Bylaw

Zambenardi stated that the Planning Board has been diligently working on creating a proposed Signs Bylaw. She stated that the reason for the proposed Signs Bylaw is to create clarity for the building inspector, businesses, and residents as well as help maintain the aesthetics of the Town of West Newbury. Zambenardi stated that the proposed Signs Bylaw will be submitted for consideration at the Spring Town meeting, and requested that all public comments be submitted to her by January 17, 2017.

Zambenardi shared with the board and public attendees a presentation that discussed the new Signs Bylaw. Within the presentation Zambenardi discussed Permanent Signs, which included freestanding signs and attached signs, special permit criteria, non-commercial signs, A-frame signs, temporary commercial signs, and multiple tenant signs. Zambenardi's presentation included multiple provisions including dimensions on all the different types of signs. Bridges stated that agricultural signs would most likely be exempt from the Signs Bylaw. Zambenardi also provided the public attendees with a sign-up sheet if they wanted to be notified of updates and progress of the proposed Signs Bylaw.

Jeb Brackbill 114, Crane Neck St. suggested that the proposed sign dimensions are too small for businesses that are in a building with 1-3 businesses. He stated this could potentially give businesses that are in a building with 1-3 businesses hardship. He also addressed the board regarding his parking signs that he posts during the Christmas season. He stated that the signs are on other's property, but he has never received a complaint. Cook stated that he doesn't believe there will be an issue. He suggested it might be a good idea to request that the police put up the signs.

Deb Schnappef, 615 Main St. questioned if political signs on private property were covered under the proposed Signs Bylaw. The Board Members concurred that that they would be allowed. The Board also shared that any sign on private property is allowed if it is within the allowed sign dimensions, but over a certain size would require a special permit.

Jeb Brackbill suggested that A-Frame signs be 15sq. ft. Murphey replied that the reason for the proposed dimension, 6 sq.ft., is for ease of portability. Cook added that the Board Members researched the standard sign sizes for the different types of signs.

John Ellewell from Maple Crest Farm, 102 Moulton St., wanted to verify how the signs for his farm are going to be affected. Bridges stated that the agricultural use is exempt from zoning therefore his signs

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would be treated differently. Elwell also questioned if he would have to remove all of his signs at the end of the business day as some are off-site. Zambenardi stated that she will consult with Town Counsel about implications of the Bylaw on uses that are exempt. She stated there are certain rules and regulations that can be imposed, and if that is the case they will add clarification within the Bylaw.

Street Trees Subject to the Scenic Roads Bylaw – Discussion with Selectmen

Bridges stated that multiple members of the Planning Board have been receiving complaints and concerns of tree removals in the town. The Planning Board has not been notified of the trees being removed and requested that the Selectmen and Gary Bill, Tree Warden, attend the meeting to discuss the tree removal process. The Planning Board's main objective is to make sure that West Newbury follows the Massachusetts State Law. Bill shared with the Board references to the Statute on Shade Trees, in which he stated that the utility company, in this case National Grid, notifies him of the trees that need to be removed because they could cause a potential power outage. The Tree Warden has 90 days to respond to the requested removal. Within the 90 days Bill verifies the tree(s), notifies residents of the tree removal on or near their property, and proceeds to notify the utility company whether the requested tree removal is agreed to. Bill shared with the Board a sample of the notification that is shared with the affected residents. Bill also stated that as Tree Warden he has the right to remove trees if they propose a hazard, and he does not have to request a public hearing to remove the tree. Bill also stated that the local Scenic Roads Bylaw only applies when he is doing road work. The Planning Board and Bill then agreed that they are in fact compliant with the State Law and local Bylaw. Bardeen suggested that the public be notified of the tree removals in the event there is a large-scale tree removal project, thus diminishing the concerns that have been relayed through the Planning Board. The Board and Bill agreed that notification of future tree removals would be posted online.

Subdivision Approval Not Required Plans (SANR's)

Woody Cammett shared with the board that the Cook family is subdividing their land on 157 Middle St. The plan includes 6 subdivided lots. Cammett stated that the Cook family wish to keep the existing farm. He presented the proposed 4 main plans with the Planning Board, which included Street trees, wetlands, and each lot. Bridges made a motion to endorse the ANR for 157 Middle St. as one not requiring approval under the Subdivision Control Act, and it carried 5-0.

FY2018 Budget

Zambenardi stated the budget needs to be submitted by Jan 9, 2017. Zambenardi stated that the Selectmen requested that the meeting minutes taker be under salary and wages line of the budget. Zambenardi stated that she added professional certification, and organization membership conference attendance into the expenses line. After the board reviewed the details of the budget, Bridges made a motion to accept the fiscal year 2018 budget as proposed, and it carried 5-0.

General Business

Sullivan's Court Extension – Zambenardi stated that there are no updates.

Haverhill Bank – Zambenardi stated she has received the approved as-builts, and she will ask for final As-Builts for Board signature. Bridges asked if they have addressed the lighting of the Open/Closed signs over the drive-through. Zambenardi stated she has not yet follow up with them.

Minutes – Members of the board agreed to review the meeting minutes at a future meeting.

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Vouchers – Zambernardi shared timesheets for the Chair’s signature.

Zambernardi provided the board and meeting minutes taker with a form to sign which acknowledges that they have received the Summary of the Conflict of Interest Law for Municipal Employees.

Zambernardi stated that she has received a legal notice from Haverhill. Zambernardi stated that she received 2 occupancy permits for 18 Kimball Rd., and 35 River Rd.

Administrative Details

Zambernardi stated that John Sarkis had discussed her providing input at meetings as her knowledge is valuable to the projects at hand. Zambernardi stated that now that there is a meeting minutes taker she has more availability to be an active participant. The board agreed with Zambernardi.

Bardeen reminded the board of the site walk for Drakes Landing, which will be Saturday, Jan 6, 2017 at 9am.

Other

Bardeen shared that 902 Main St. was sold to the society of St. John the Evangelist for 1.5 million, which is 160 acres. Bardeen also stated that the buyers want to protect the land.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30.

Submitted by,

Lori Dawidowicz
Recording Secretary