



**Town of West Newbury  
Planning Board  
Tuesday January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
381 Main Street, Town Office Building  
[www.wnewbury.org](http://www.wnewbury.org)**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Open Session:** 7:00 PM by remote participation (see below)

**Addendum to Meeting Notice regarding Remote Participation:**

Pursuant to Chapter 20 Of the Acts of 2021, “An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency”, Approved by the Governor, June 16, 2021, which extended permissions for boards and commissions to conduct remote meetings, the Planning Board conducted its meeting via remote participation. The meeting agenda included instructions for the public about how to participate remotely. No in-person attendance of members of the public was permitted, but every effort was made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that it has been unable to do so, despite best efforts, the Board will post on the Town of West Newbury website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as practicable after the meeting.

Chairperson Tim Cronin called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Members in attendance were Ann Bardeen, Ray Cook, Jake Cormier, Tim Cronin, & Brian Murphey. Associate Member Deb Hamilton and Town Planner Leah Zambarnardi were also in attendance. All participated via Zoom Conference.

**1. Draft FY23 Planning Board Budget**

**Zambarnardi’s Wage Increase:** Tim Cronin stated that the Select Board did not approve the hourly wage increase to \$43.56 that Leah Zambarnardi had proposed, although the PB had agreed with the wage increase. Brian Murphey stated that this situation was complicated and questioned if Zambarnardi had discussed the wage increase with Town Manager, Angus Jennings. Zambarnardi stated Jennings supported the wage increase. Murphey mentioned the study on wages being performed across all town positions and stated the wage increase proposed could essentially be too high or too low compared to other town planners. Zambarnardi told the PB the next step would be to have a meeting with Cronin, Jennings and Town Accountant, Stephanie Frontiera to further discuss the wage increase. Ann Bardeen suggested the PB wait until the wage study results come back before going any further. Zambarnardi stated she has had a very difficult time performing her job in only 25 hours per week and had agreed that she would work 30 hours per week if approved. Cook questioned if the PB wanted to propose the 30 hours per week first or keep it at 25 hours per week with the understanding that Zambarnardi can work the additional 5 hours per week, as needed, to reach 30 hours, without prior approval. Zambarnardi stated the scheduled 25 hours per week with the additional 5 hours per week, as needed, would provide her flexibility whereas the scheduled 30

hours per week would provide less flexibility. Cronin mentioned that Zambenardi is not only doing her own work but also the work of the administrative assistant position that has yet to be filled. Cronin also mentioned that the Town is working on various projects and expressed concerned if the position is under budgeted. Cook suggested the PB put the proposed hours at 25 per week with the higher proposed hourly wage of \$43.56 to see where it goes from there. Bardeen brought up a point regarding the 6 hours per week that is unfilled by an administrative assistant and stated that money could be used to cover additional hours for Zambenardi. Cormier stated that if Zambenardi is averaging 30 hours per week then it would not be beneficial to propose a lesser schedule of 25 hours per week. Cormier also supported Zambenardi's wage increase. Zambenardi stated there has been an increase in requests for permits which is supported by the help of the unfulfilled administrative assistant position. Murphey suggested to propose a 25 hour per week schedule at the \$43.56 per hour wage with the ability to work the additional 5 hours as needed. Cronin stated that he and Zambenardi would meet with Jennings and report back to the PB.

Expense Lines: Cronin mentioned the need to increase the expense lines for equipment and repairs. Cronin proposed an increase to \$1,000 for equipment and repairs. Cronin also suggested an increase in consulting services. Murphey disagreed with the increase for consulting, and stated there are no definitive projects that would need additional consulting. Bardeen stated that most consulting costs would come out of a different Town budget line and normally would not be taken directly out of the PB's budget. Murphey and Cook suggested to keep the focus on the increase in wages for Zambenardi.

## **2. Draft FY21 Annual Report**

The Board discussed the FY21 Annual Report. Cronin questioned if Deer Run Place should be renamed on the report to the actual address of 519 Main Street. PB members agreed. Hamilton brought up the fact that the Affordable Housing Trust was not listed in the annual report but Bardeen reminded Hamilton that the reports are by fiscal year which ended June 30, 2021 and would not include the Affordable Housing Trust.

## **3. General Business:**

**Updates: 87 Main Street, 519 Main Street, Drakes Landing, Sullivans Court Extension, Poor House Lane, Affordable Housing Trust Bylaw Committee, Multi-Family Zoning District per MBTA Communities Act**

- **87 Main Street:** No updates. Murphey suggested the developers find a company to salt the driveway depending on the weather.
  - **519 Main Street:** No updates.
  - **Drakes Landing:** Zambenardi stated she needs to follow up with the Drakes Landing Homeowners Association regarding its request about traffic signs within the property.
  - **Sullivans Court Extension:** Cronin mentioned that he spoke to Brad Buschur regarding the potential reconfiguration of the trail to River Meadow Drive. Zambenardi stated that the Town's Legal Counsel, K.P. Law, specifically Robin Stein will assist the Town with accepting \$10,000 for the trail construction project. Zambenardi stated that the trail easement has been approved by the Select Board and the Conservation Commission. Zambenardi stated the as-built plans have gone through the first round of review by David Kelley at Meridian. Zambenardi also stated that she would like to have the project closed out in time for consideration at the Spring Town Meeting.
  - **Poor House Lane:** Zambenardi stated a developer was previously interested in a substantial project on the property but later backed out. Zambenardi stated the owners would like to market the property as two house lots, and are hoping the 1985 Agreement is still in effect. Zambenardi spoke
- West Newbury Planning Board Minutes January 4, 2022. Approved August 1, 2022.

to Michelle Greene, the Town's Conservation Agent, on what improvements need to be made to the property to provide access to the two lots. Zambarnardi made a note that current requirements for wetlands protection differ from those in effect in 1985. Cook stated his concern that the PB never received a definitive answer as to the point where Poor House Lane was abandoned and he would like K.P. Law to weigh in on the matter. Cook mentioned the PB needs to establish that the road exists before discussing whether to modify the road. Murphey agreed. Zambarnardi stated she read in the 1985 Agreement that the developer has to improve the portion of Poor House Lane to a certain standard to obtain building permits. Cormier confirmed via MiMap that a portion of Poor House Lane was abandoned in 1985. K.P Law has been apprised of the project. .

- **Affordable Housing Trust Bylaw Committee:** Zambarnardi stated there have been two meetings and she attended both. The committee is focused on writing a bylaw in time for approval at Spring Town Meeting.
- **Multi-Family Zoning District per MBTA Communities Act:** Zambarnardi performed an analysis as to how the guidelines would apply to West Newbury but is awaiting confirmation from DCHD before forwarding information to the PB. Murphey expressed concern regarding the requirements of 50 acres for multi-family housing in a rural town like West Newbury. Murphey stated the implementation for small towns is not required until 2024. Zambarnardi stated towns that do not follow requirements will lose access to Housing Choice grants, Local Capital Project Funds and MassWorks infrastructure grants, and possibly other programs. Zambarnardi stated that the zoning district can be an accumulation of parcels as well as parcels with existing units. Cook expressed concern regarding the wastewater that would ensue from the additional units due to this Act. Hamilton questioned if this Act would support the conversion of single- and two-family homes to three- to five- family units. Bardeen stated the Town would run into septic issues.
- **Minutes:** There were no minutes reviewed.
- **Correspondence:** Zambarnardi stated there were two Public Hearing notices: One from the City of Haverhill regarding a zoning amendment for home occupations. The second was from the Town of Newbury for a Public Hearing on the modification of a site plan for the Parker River Environmental Building at the Governor's Academy.
- **Administrative Details:** There were no items.
- **Placement of Items for Future Planning Board Agendas:** There were no items
- **Items not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair 48 Hours in Advance of a Meeting:** There were no items

**Adjournment:**

**Cronin moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 P.M. Seconded by Cook.**

**Roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Katelyn Bradstreet, *Administrative Assistant to the Planning Board*