

Minutes

Planning Board Meeting

August 6, 2020

As Chair of the Planning Board of the Town of Strafford, Charles Moreno opened the meeting by stating that he finds that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

The Chair then made the following announcements: Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I (the Chair) am confirming that we (the Planning Board) are:

- a) providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means. We are using the Google Meet platform for this public meeting. All members of the Planning Board are able to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing +1316-500-6792 and using the assigned meeting code or by clicking on the website address: meet.google.com/ofp-mmpj-ngz.
- b) providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing this meeting. We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing this meeting, including how to access the meeting via Google Meet or telephonically. Instructions were posted on the website of the Town of Strafford at www.trafford.nh.gov.
- c) providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with public access: If anybody has a problem they were directed to call or email eevans.trafford.nh@gmail.com.
- d) adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting: In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

The Chairman opened the regular meeting at 7:30 PM by taking roll call attendance; Charles Moreno, Chairman, Phil Auger, and Don Clifford and Donald Coker, Alternate members. Terry Hyland joined the meeting a few minutes later. David Copeland, Susan Arnold, and Aaron and Jessica Leff were also present. The closing date for applications to appear on the agenda for the September 2020 regular meeting will be 5 P.M. Tuesday, August 11th, 2020; revised materials for continuing applications must be submitted by Tuesday, August 25th. Noting the audience, the Chairman then suggested saving review of the minutes to the end of the meeting. The Chair noted that Donald Coker and Don Clifford are designated as voting members this evening due to the absence of regular members.

There were no items of formal business. The first item of informal business was to call on Jessica and Aaron Leff. Jessica Leff has submitted a preliminary proposal for running the "Parker Mountain Farm and Forest School" as a summer camp and home-school cooperative from their home located on Willey Pond Road (Tax Map 9, Lot 18-1). She advised that her husband is a safety consultant and that she has extensive natural resource teaching experience in a diversity of settings. Their three sons attend Strafford School. She said that they have already consulted with the Fire Chief, who has recommended that they will need to widen their existing driveway and create turn-outs. She said that they would run the camp from 9AM to 3PM, so lighting is not a concern. They would use their barn, which is open on two ends, for some of the activities. They would be staying within the ratio standards of the American Camping Association, and hope to serve students from rising kindergarten to rising 3rd grade, with a maximum of 20 children and two instructors and an intern—perhaps from the high school or UNH. They would like to offer a different opportunity than is currently available in Strafford. She said that their proposal had mentioned the home-school coop, but without having made application, they would not be trying for that option at this time. She noted that they will also need to figure out parking, as the Fire Chief has indicated that they would need between 9 and 15 parking spots. They have spoken with their insurance carrier.

Board members advised the Leffs regarding the provisions of the zoning ordinance, noting that the whole community is zoned agricultural-residential. The Leffs noted the provisions for agrotourism, and advised that they do have a farm with a number of animals and are starting a 4-H group. Board members noted that the proposal seems to fit more naturally into the category of a school, which is an approved land use, although a Site Plan would be required. Donald Coker said that he has looked at the state regulations for camps, and that they seem tough. He encouraged the Leffs to begin by working with the state and said that he would send them the links for the regulations that he found for youth camping (He-C 4000). Phil Auger and Terry Hyland both noted that professional site plans will be needed, and agreed that the Leffs should check with the state. The Chairman summarized the discussion, saying that it seems that there is general agreement that the proposal would fall under the category of a school because the Leffs said that they would be teaching and given their emphasis on experiential learning. This means that they would not need a Special Exception for commercial use from the Board of Adjustment. The Site Plan would focus on the area being used for the school—for example where the buildings are located, fire safety plans, driveway, parking and turnouts, etc. The Chairman asked when they hope to open, and the Leffs said that it would be once they are approved. They are hoping for one day a week for the home-schoolers. Board members advised the Leffs that informal discussions are non-binding on both the Board and any future applicants.

Board members then briefly reviewed upcoming business for the September meeting. The Chairman then turned to scheduling work sessions, noting that he has spoken with Atty. Roman and that she will be getting information to the Board shortly on some of the questions, including the question of defining “structure” and ideas for working with Class VI roads. A work session was scheduled for Thursday, August 27th at 6:30 PM. Terry Hyland noted some of the discussion from the Board of Adjustment work session, including the proposal that all applications for business/commercial use be directed first to the Board of Adjustment. Board members agreed that the Boards may need to be flexible on this issue. It was agreed to save review of the minutes for the work session.

There being no further business before the Board, Donald Coker then moved to adjourn the meeting. Don Clifford seconded the motion, there was no further discussion. The Chairman called the vote. Phil Auger—aye, Terry Hyland—aye, Donald Coker—aye, Charles Moreno—aye, Don Clifford—aye. The motion passed by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM.