

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Location: Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

Date & Time: August 3, 2023 6:30PM

Voting Members Present:

Phi Auger – Chairman
Tim Reed – Vice Chairman
Charlie Moreno
Terry Hyland
Lynn Sweet – Selectman Representative

Non-Voting Members Present:

Don Clifford – Alternate
Donald Coker – Alternate
Susan Arnold – Alternate

Others Present:

Blair Haney, Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Regional Planner
Scott Whitehouse, Strafford Fire Chief
Robert Fletcher, Minutes Recorder

The Chairman, Phil Auger, called the meeting to order at 6:32PM and recognized Board members Terry Hyland, Tim Reed, Lynn Sweet, Susan Arnold, Donald Coker, and Don Clifford as present. He also recognized Robert Fletcher as present. Phil appointed Donald Coker as a voting Board member for Charlie Moreno who had not yet arrived.

The Board reviewed the minutes of the May 23, 2023 Planning Board Work Session. Donald Coker made a motion to accept the minutes as written, which was seconded by Tim Reed and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members present who attended the May 23rd Planning Board Work Session.

The Board reviewed the minutes of the June 20, 2023 Planning Board Work Session. Tim Reed made a motion to accept the minutes as written, which was seconded by Terry Hyland and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members present who attended the June 20th Planning Board Work Session.

The Board reviewed the minutes of the July 6, 2023 Planning Board Meeting. Lynn Sweet made a motion to accept the minutes as written, which was seconded by Tim Reed and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members present who attended the July 26th Planning Board Meeting.

The Chairman recognized Blair Haney as present.

Continuing Business

Major Subdivision (cumulative impact) and Lot Line Adjustment – Bertha L. Huckins Revocable Trust, 2-lot subdivision, 22 Hillside Drive (Tax Map 11, Lot 4) & lot line adjustment with Tax Map 11, Lot 4-3 (Donna Huckins) and Lot 4-2 (Sharon L. Huckins)

The applicant requested a continuance. Lynn Sweet made a motion to continue the application to the September 7, 2023, Planning Board meeting at 6:30PM at the Strafford Town Office, which was seconded by Donald Coker and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

Site Plan Review - Navigator Properties LLC (Mariner Tower), Telecommunications Facility: Proposed 160-foot lattice telecommunications tower on the property of Gail J. & Michael A. Barry Jr., 15 Strafford Road (Tax Map 11, Lot 83)

The applicant requested a continuance. Tim Reed made a motion to continue the application to the September 7, 2023, Planning Board meeting at 6:30PM at the Strafford Town Office, which was seconded by Terry Hyland and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

Site Plan Review - Navigator Properties LLC (Mariner Tower), Telecommunications Facility: Proposed 160-foot lattice telecommunications tower on the property of Jessica M. McMahon, 581 Barn Door Gap Road (Tax Map 14, Lot 13)

The Board received a written request from the applicant to withdraw the application without malice. No action by the Board is required, and the applicant may present the proposal again at a future date.

Minor Subdivision (3 lots or fewer) - Michael R. Thivierge & Dawn S. Thivierge Revocable Trusts, 2-lot subdivision, 681 First Crown Point Road (Tax Map 19, Lot 72)

The applicant requested a continuance. Tim Reed made a motion to continue the application to the September 7, 2023, Planning Board meeting at 6:30PM at the Strafford Town Office, which was seconded by Donald Coker and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

Charlie Moreno arrived, and the Chairman recognized him as a voting Board member and reinstated Donald Coker as an alternate Board member.

Major Subdivision & Lot Line Adjustment - David L. & Pamela R. Perkins, 3-lot subdivision and lot line adjustment, 1716 Province Road (subdivision of Tax Map 1, Lot 18 and lot line adjustment with Tax Map 1, Lot 19)

The Chairman asked Raymond Bisson of Stonewall Surveying to present the application. He stated that the lot calculations table on the drawings had been updated to reflect correct proposed lot, wetlands, steep slope, net lot, and contiguous buildable areas. Donald Coker asked for a review of the drawing notes, and Mr. Bisson read the notes aloud, explaining the intent of each. Tim Reed indicated that the Board had thoroughly reviewed the Plan at a previous meeting, and the Chairman mentioned the excessive driveway slope for one of the proposed lots. Mr. Bisson stated that he would add a note to the Plan to indicate the driveway exceeding eight percent slope would be paved. Blair Haney indicated that all concerns regarding the drawings had been satisfactorily addressed.

A request for a waiver to Subdivision Regulation Section 2.7.1.E for surveying boundaries, wetland delineation, and physical features of the entire 112-acres of Lot 18 had been previously submitted. Charlie Moreno made a motion to approve the waiver, which was seconded by Tim Reed and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

The Chairman opened the meeting for public comment at 6:50PM, and there being none, closed the meeting to public comments at 6:50PM. He requested a motion to approve the application, which was so moved by Tim Reed, seconded by Terry Hyland, and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

New Business

Permit Renewal – Excavation of Earth in accordance with NH RSA 155-E, Scott Barry, Gravel Excavation, off Parker Mountain Road (Tax Map 12, Lot 23-1 & 23-3)

The Chairman asked Scott Barry to present the permit renewal. Mr. Barry indicated that he misunderstood the permitted hours of operation until an abutter approached him regarding early morning noise. He was also now aware of the “no Sunday operations” restriction. Tim Reed confirmed with Brian Lenzi, business manager for Mr. Barry, that the Alteration of Terrain permit was renewed in 2019 and is due for renewal again in 2024, that there were no anticipated changes to the permitted excavation plan, and that a copy of the plan would be provided to the Town. Mr. Barry stated that excavation at the site was infrequent and significantly less than the permitted volume.

The Chairman asked if there were any comments from property abutters. Donna Fowler questioned Mr. Barry’s excavation plans for his property near Foss Road, which abuts her property, and if there would be any tree removal. Mr. Barry anticipated there would be tree removal, and when excavation is finished, there would be a turtle pond and an open field. Mr. Lenzi provided a map of the area, which was reviewed by all, including abutter Jeffrey Winders.

The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the excavation permit for an additional five years, which was so moved by Charlie Moreno, seconded by Terry Hyland, and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

At 7:20PM, the Chairman requested a motion to suspend the Planning Board meeting and enter a Public Hearing, which was so moved by Charlie Moreno, seconded by Terry Hyland, and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

Public Hearing in accordance with NH RSA 675:6 – Public Hearing on the adoption of the Master Plan update, drafted based on the comments of Strafford citizens, a community forum held in November 2022, and written by the Planning Board working in coordination with the Strafford Regional Planning Commission over the course of work sessions held between January 2022 and July 2023. More information is available at strafford.nh.gov.

The Chairman opened the hearing for public comment at 7:21PM. There were no comments, and Charlie Moreno, on behalf on the Planning Board, offered a thank you to the Strafford Regional

Planning Commission and members of the Strafford community that helped update the Master Plan. Tim Reed thanked Board member, Susan Arnold, for her efforts to compile and edit the final version of the Plan. The Chairman closed the meeting to public comment at 7:23PM.

Lynn Sweet made a motion to adopt the 2023 Master Plan, which was seconded by Charlie Moreno and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

The Chairman requested a motion to close the Public Hearing at 7:24PM, which was so moved by Lynn Sweet, seconded by Terry Hyland, and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

At 7:25PM, Lynn Sweet made a motion to reenter the Planning Board meeting, which was seconded by Terry Hyland and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed. The Planning Board signed the signature page of the 2023 Master Plan for incorporation into the document.

Preliminary Conceptual Review – Carol Pratt, Board Chair, Independence Inn, 6 Drake Hill Road

Carol Pratt and Steven Nass, two of the nine owners of the Independence Inn, provided information regarding recent operations of the Inn. She indicated the previous requests for outdoor dining had not been acted upon nor were there any plans to expand operations in this manner. They did; however, begin one-day-a-month outdoor “farmers’ market” on the property starting in May 2023. The events included a live band in June, and they planned on continuing them through October.

The Chairman indicated that farmers’ market activities at the Inn are resulting in noise complaints and impacting public safety due to vehicle parking on state roadways near the Inn. She indicated that the owners were previously unaware of the site plan restrictions that they are supposed to be operating under and would like to obtain a copy. An updated site plan to address time of operation, parking, noise, and sanitation for outdoor events must be approved by the Board for the Inn to conduct operations other than indoor dining and overnight accommodations for guests. If anyone is residing at the Inn, the Board would need to know, and it would need to be addressed in the site plan. Scott Whitehouse, Strafford Fire Chief, voiced his concerns with vehicles parking on Route 202A and Province Road, both of which are state highways, due to emergency vehicle access and pedestrian safety.

Farmers’ markets are scheduled at the Inn for Sunday, August 6th and September 3rd. There will not be a band, and the Inn will not be open for dining. The owners agreed to monitor and control parking and not allow parking on Province Road or Route 202A. The Board requested that the owners present an updated site plan to the Board before conducting the September 3rd events, which will require the date for the September farmers’ market to be changed. Blair Haney offered to assist the owners in development of an updated site plan. The Board suggested changing the day of the farmers market to Saturday or changing operation times on Sunday to allow better use of the church parking lot.

Carol Pratt informed the Board that her emphasis for the business is dining and overnight accommodation. Other events are secondary and would be cancelled if necessary.

Other Business

Rick Cecchetti of 55 Brook Lane questioned the Town's restriction (maximum of 750 square feet) for an accessory dwelling unit (ADU). He is having difficulty finding net zero floor plans for that size unit. He is requesting the Board consider an ADU maximum of 1,000 square feet, which allows for more readily available net zero floor plans and more reasonable living space. ADU's provide living facilities without increasing the need for additional buildout area. The Board indicated that they would consider increasing the ADU area limit for Strafford.

There being no further business before the Board, Tim Reed made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Charlie Moreno. The Board voted unanimously in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 8:24PM.