

# Planning Board Meeting Minutes

**Location:** Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

**Date & Time:** November 2, 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  
Autumn Scott, Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Regional Planner  
Keri Roman, Planning Board Legal Counsel  
Robert Fletcher, Minutes Recorder

The Chairman, Phil Auger, called the meeting to order at 6:31PM, recognized Board members Charlie Moreno, Terry Hyland, Tim Reed, Lynn Sweet, Susan Arnold, Donald Coker, and Don Clifford as present. He also recognized as present Blair Haney, Keri Roman, and Robert Fletcher.

**Continuing Business**

**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)**

Charlie Moreno recused himself, and the Chairman appointed Susan Arnold as a voting Board member. The Chairman asked Attorney Roman to begin the discussion, and she noted the following documents requested by the Board:

- Navigator Properties draft Letter of Credit for tower removal by Town of Strafford - Attorney Roman stated that the draft letter was acceptable. No Board action is required.
- Tower Lease Agreement between Navigator Properties and Verizon Wireless - Attorney Roman stated that the lease was acceptable. No Board action is required.
- Documented Record of Coverage - Attorney Roman indicated that the applicant's engineer provided cell tower coverage and analysis and Verizon concurred in writing to the stated coverage and analysis. Attorney Roman considers this to be sufficient and indicated that a Board vote is needed to accept this as a record of coverage.
- Waiver and Release of Municipal Liability and Responsibility - The Town of Strafford is not responsible for maintenance of the cell tower site access way and is not liable for damages if Town emergency services are not able reach the cell tower site. Attorney Roman stated that the applicant has provided a waiver and release, the language is acceptable, and indicated that it would be a condition of approval if the Board approves the site plan design.

The Chairman asked for a motion to accept the Verizon Coverage Analysis Letter, dated September 28, 2023, which was so moved by Susan Arnold, seconded by Lynn Sweet, and voted upon verbally by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

The Town tasked CMA Engineers, Inc. with reviewing the Stormwater Report provided by the applicant. The Chairman asked Ben Clark, Project Manager for CMA Engineers, to present his findings. Louis Vitali of Mariner Tower asked to be heard and stated that they responded to CMA's comments regarding the Stormwater Report and addressed each identified issue. Mr. Clark began discussion of his findings by indicating that there were minor issues with the Stormwater Report. He provided an overview of issues as follows:

- Sand filter basin outlet control device for two separate basins require a minor update,
- Inverts for the HDPE pipe from the control structure are inconsistent between the drainage report and the plan. The plan needs to be updated,
- Outlet control structure has additional orifices listed, but do not appear on plan detail, and
- Curve number for gravel driveway is lower than expected for an impervious surface. A higher number changes the water quality volume and runoff curve numbers. The plan needs to be updated.

The Chairman questioned the need for sand filters on undeveloped landscape with no contaminants in the runoff. Mr. Clark stated that runoff from the impervious surface needs to be pretreated and treated. He was not aware that an AOT permit was not required. The project is under the 63,000 square foot threshold. Tim Reed indicated that he is more concerned with safely managing the volume of stormwater runoff rather than treating it and suggested that the sand be removed from the ponds to provide more capacity. He also was concerned about the aprons at the outlets of the control structures, and he noted that emergency spillways are not depicted on the drawings. Additionally, use of sand filters without liners on slopes 15 percent or greater may affect slope stability. The planned use of silt socks, extending perpendicular to contours and around the project area, may create more erosion than they prevent. Lynn Sweet questioned maintenance responsibility. Maintenance was determined to be the applicant's responsibility, and an Operation and Maintenance Plan is on record.

Blair Haney asked if a DOT permit for site access from state highway 202A had been obtained. Mr. Vitali indicated that they did not have the permit, but planned to obtain it once the site plan was approved. The Board suggested the applicant immediately contact DOT for approval in case DOT requires any change to the planned site access.

Don Clifford suggested relocating the cell tower site to allow an alternate access and reduce stormwater runoff. Attorney Roman stated that the applicant's chosen location for the cell tower is in the Town's approved zone, and the Board cannot legally require a site relocation. Mr. Vitali indicated that the FAA approved the proposed tower location, and using a different location would require subsequent approval, which could take up to six months. The Board did not support site relocation.

The applicant requested that the Board address the driveway steep slope waiver. The Chairman stated that the Board would entertain the waiver when a final plan is presented. Tim Reed offered the opinion that the driveway slope is not a concern, because it is an access to a utility location and not subject to normal driveway activity. Additionally, access to the site will be gated.

Attorney Roman asked Attorney Springer to request a shot clock extension and presented several invoices and a request for \$7,500 escrow increase to the Board for approval. The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the invoices and escrow increase, which was so moved by Lynn Sweet, seconded by Tim Reed, and voted upon verbally by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

The Chairman asked for a motion for a continuance to the December 7, 2023, 6:30PM Planning Board meeting, which was so moved Susan Arnold, seconded by Terry Hyland, and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

The Chairman opened the meeting for public comments at 7:24PM. Scott Schroeder expressed his disappointment with the lengthy process to approve site design for the cell tower. He asked the applicant how much this process costs. The Chairman indicated that the applicant did not need to respond; however, Mr. Vitali indicated that the costs far exceeded any other cell tower project. Mr. Schroeder also asked the applicant if there was a point in time when the carrier could retract their agreement to provide communication services. Mr. Vitali indicated that the carrier has the right to terminate the agreement if the site is not completed by May 31, 2024. Tim Reed reemphasized the possibility to use a simple access design to reduce construction time. The Chairman closed the meeting to public comment at 7:30PM.

The Chairman recognized Charlie Moreno as a voting Board member, and reinstated Susan Arnold as an alternate Board member.

**Conservation Subdivision – Riley Family Trust of 2013, Dal Ray Riley and Joanne D. Riley, Trustees, 2-lot conservation subdivision, 845 Second Crown Point Road (Tax Map 19, Lot 17-1)**

Ray Bisson of Stonewall Surveying, representing the Riley Family Trust, indicated the applicant's desire to place the entire parcel in conservation and eliminate the excluded area. The Chairman noted that the excluded area was created to allow an unrestricted residential area and the site walk provided evidence that most of the conserved area is not suitable for conversion to agricultural use.

Mr. Bisson expressed concern regarding the proposed conservation deed restrictions, which would limit the applicant's use of the conserved area. These were discussed at length with the Board, and the Board concluded that an additional area in the eastern section of the conserved area could be added to Area 1 with the allowance that it be cleared for pasture. Stump grinding was advised rather than stump removal. Additionally, a three-sided, run-in shed enclosure for animal shelter would be allowed in Area 1. The Board also determined the need to modify the deed restriction to clarify the allowed recreational uses for the designated conservation areas and provide advanced notification requirements for Town inspections.

The Chairman asked for a motion for a continuance to the December 7, 2023, 6:30PM Planning Board meeting, which was so moved Lynn Sweet, seconded by Charlie Moreno, and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

## **Other Business**

### **Master Plan** – Autumn Scott, Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC), Regional Planner

- Septic System Infrastructure Survey around Bow Lake. The Strafford Regional Planning Commission requested a state grant to support the effort to create a database to document the status of septic systems. State funds are not available for this fiscal year cycle. However, SRPC will request a grant from the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) to develop the database. The Chairman noted the need for an incentive fund to assist Bow Lake property owners to help upgrade their septic systems.
- Community Engagement Toolkit. SRPC created the toolkit to provide a variety of templates and links to resource hubs to assist efforts to engage community members. The toolkit contains:
  - 1) Tips for managing Planning Board subcommittees.
  - 2) Community meetings and workshops – “step-by-step.”
  - 3) Sample meeting materials.
  - 4) Developing a plan to implement action items.
  - 5) Other resources and information.
  - 6) What comes next and tips for common challenges.

Charlie Moreno will lead the efforts to organize the committees to address Master Plan action items. He assigned action items to specific committees and each committee will need a charter to provide appropriate committee direction. Community members will meet on November 14, 2023, at 6:30PM to establish committees.

## **New Business**

### **Preliminary Conceptual Consultation** – Warren Buzzell, First Crown Point Road, Tax Map 19, Lot 42

Ray Bisson of Stonewall Surveying, representing Warren Buzzell introduced the proposal to subdivide a portion of Lot 42, which is approximately 47 acres. The owner is considering two options to create four buildable lots with frontage on First Crown Point Road:

- A four-lot conventional subdivision with three two-plus acre lots and one lot comprised of the remaining acreage of the parcel.
- A four-lot conservation subdivision with all lots one-plus acres in extent and the remaining acreage in conservation.

The Board did not offer an opinion on a preferable option, but indicated that preservation of open fields, the exceptional view, and tree retention would be a priority.

## **Other Business**

The Board reviewed the October 5, 2023, Planning Board Meeting minutes. Charlie Moreno 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 October 5<sup>th</sup> Planning Board Meeting.

The Board reviewed the October 5, 2023, Planning Board Non-Public Session minutes. Charlie Moreno 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 October 5<sup>th</sup> Planning Board Meeting.

The Board reviewed the October 10, 2023, Planning Board Site Walk minutes. Charlie Moreno 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 October 5<sup>th</sup> Planning Board Meeting.

There being no further business before the Board, Lynn Sweet made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Tim Reed. The Board voted unanimously in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 9:10PM.