

Zoning Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes

Location: Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

Date & Time: February 15, 2024 7:00PM

Voting Board Members Present:

Ashley Rowe – Chairman
Aaron Leff
Katrina Labrecque
Scott Hodgdon
Jean Chartrand-Ewen

Non-Voting Board Members Present:

Others Present:

Blair Haney, Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Regional Planner
Dan Howard, Strafford Building Inspector
Robert Fletcher, Minutes Recorder

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00PM and indicated the closing date for new applications to be filed for the agenda for the regular March 21, 2024 meeting is Thursday, February 29, 2024. He recognized Board members Aaron Leff, Katrina Labrecque, Scott Hodgdon, and Jean Ewen as present.

Continuing Business

Zachary and Kristina Elliot are requesting a Variance to Article 1.4.4, Section 3 of the Zoning and Land Use Ordinances in order to allow a partially constructed building to remain in place. The structure is located within approximately 10 horizontal feet of a designated wetlands area as shown on the 2016 subdivision plan, which is up to 40 feet closer to wetlands than ordinances require. (Location: 1050 Second Crown Point Road, Tax Map 19, Lot 1-1)

Zachary Elliot Provided the Board with a plot plan and pointed out the location of a two-foot swale between the current structure and the wetlands. The plan did not depict any topography, and the Chairman questioned the direction of runoff from the swale. Blair Haney provided a copy of the original subdivision which indicated topography, and the Chairman confirmed that runoff would be retained in the swale and it would serve its intended purpose. He noted that the plan did not indicate the depth of the swale from crown to crown, which is necessary to ensure proper construction. The Board agreed that a two-foot wide and one-foot deep swale would be sufficient.

The Chairman opened the meeting for public comments at 7:09PM, and there being none, closed the meeting for public comments at 7:09PM. He asked for a motion to grant the Variance contingent upon the applicant submitting revised plans showing a minimum swale depth of one-foot, and the condition that the current structure in its non-conforming location could never receive an occupancy permit nor have its own individual sewage disposal system. Aaron Leff made the motion, which was seconded by

Scott Hodgdon and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

Jeff and Emily Thornton are requesting a Special Exception under Article 1.4.1, Section K, of the Zoning and Land Use Ordinances in order to convert the upper level of their existing attached garage into a new one-bedroom Accessory Dwelling Unit. (849 Second Crown Point Road, Tax Map 19, Lot 72-2)

The Chairman stated that the Thornton's requested a continuance. They continue to work with a firm on a septic design. Aaron Leff made a motion for a continuance to the March 21, 2024 meeting, which was seconded by Jean Ewen and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

New Business

Case #24-001: Brad Guillemette is requesting a Special Exemption under Article 1.4.1, Section K, of the Zoning and Land Use Ordinances in order to construct a new detached 3-car garage with an Accessory Dwelling Unit. (25 Kristie Lane, Tax Map 20, Lot 22-9).

The Chairman recused himself and appointed Aaron Leff as Chair to address this case. Brandon Guillemette provided the Board with first and second story plans for the garage. The second story contains two bedrooms, a bathroom, kitchen and living area. The first level includes the garage area, utility and laundry room, and a half bath. Blair Haney asked if it was a two-car or three-car structure. The applicant stated that it was a two-car garage with a third area for a workshop and lawn equipment.

The Board confirmed that the square footage of the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) met the minimum requirements, clarified use of the second story space including the need for an entry door to the stairs accessing the attic storage space, and that the deck would not be enclosed or covered.

Aaron Leff opened the meeting for public comments at 7:27PM. Ashley Rowe provide detail regarding a new septic system design. It will include septic tanks and a leach field that is adequate for five bedrooms (three bedroom house and two bedroom ADU). The current leach field will be removed or deactivated if not disturbed during the new septic installation. There being no further comments, Mr. Leff closed the meeting for public comments at 7:32PM. He reviewed the applicant's written responses to the criteria to qualify for a Special Exception, and asked for a motion to grant the Special Exception, which was so moved by Jean Ewen, seconded by Scott Hodgdon and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

Ashley Rowe resumed duties as Board Chairman.

Other Business

The Chairman asked the Board to review the minutes from the January 2024 meeting. Aaron Leff made a motion to accept the January 18, 2024 minutes as written, which was seconded by Katrina Labrecque and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all Board members.

The Chairman suggested the Zoning Board meetings start at 6:30PM rather than 7:00PM, which would align the meeting with the Planning Board meetings. After a brief discussion, Jean Ewen made a motion to begin Zoning Board meetings at 6:30PM, which was seconded by Katrina Labrecque and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all Board members.

Blair Haney suggested revising the Zoning Board application form to include the applicant's email address. This would facilitate communication with each applicant. The Board did not object to this addition.

At a previous Board meeting, some Board members indicated the need to become more familiar with plan contents that the Board has to review regularly. The Chairman indicated that he will put a portfolio of plans together and dedicate 20-30 minutes during each meeting for a general review.

There being no further business before the Board, the Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Scott Hodgdon made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Aaron Leff and voted on in the affirmative by all Board members. The meeting adjourned at 7:42PM.