

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Location: Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

Date & Time: December 5, 2024 6:30PM

Members Present:

Phil Auger – Chairman
Charlie Moreno – Vice Chairman
Don Clifford
Lynn Sweet – Selectman Representative

Alternate Members Present:

Sue Higgins
Susan Arnold

Others Present:

Robert Fletcher, Minutes Recorder

The Chairman, Phil Auger, called the meeting to order at 6:30PM, recognized Board members Charlie Moreno, Don Clifford, Lynn Sweet, Susan Arnold, and Sue Higgins as present. He also recognized as present Robert Fletcher. The Chairman appointed Susan Arnold as a voting Board member to sit in for Terry Hyland.

Continuing Business

Voluntary Lot Merger: KRJ Finance, LLC is requesting approval of a voluntary lot merger pursuant to RSA 674:39-a (Leavitt Lane, Tax Map 37, Lots 54 through 62).

The Chairman asked the applicant to present the case. Christopher Berry with Berry Surveying and Engineering, representing the applicant, provided a brief overview of the voluntary lot merger request. KRJ Finance purchased all the vacant lots, 54 through 62, and the right-of-way for the undeveloped portion of Leavitt Lane. The lot merger will create one building lot with access from the Town maintained portion of Leavitt Lane; however, there is inadequate lot road frontage to allow the lot merger without a Variance. KRJ Finance obtained Strafford Zoning Board of Adjustment approval in October 2024 for a Variance to the 200-foot frontage requirement to allow the lot merger with only a 50-foot frontage-the width of the Leavitt Lane right-of-way. The Variance was approved with conditions that the proposed merger includes all the lots depicted on the proposed plan (Lots 54 through 62) with the undeveloped portion of Leavitt Lane titled to the applicant, and that any proposed development, now and in the future in perpetuity, be in harmony with the subdivision Homeowners Association Protective Covenants and By-Laws. He stated that the merger of the lots will not create any financial issues for the applicant nor any other non-conformities.

The Chairman stated that the Planning Board would only be addressing the lot merger and confirmed with Mike Witcher that there was no mortgage on the property. The Board had no questions or concerns about the lot merger, and the Chairman asked for a motion to approve the lot merger, which was so moved by Lynn Sweet, seconded by Charlie Moreno and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

The Chairman had questions regarding the lot merger plan provided by Mr. Berry. He noted the position of a proposed house site on the plan and asked if it was a firm location. Mr. Whitcher indicated that the Zoning Board asked him to show a proposed house site to ensure that the merged lot would support it, but it was not necessarily a final location. The Chairman questioned the extension of a driveway along the Leavitt Lane right-of-way and the need for a cul-de-sac or hammerhead turnout for emergency vehicles. Mr. Whitcher indicated that the fire department would be consulted when requesting a driveway permit. Tony Spadafora, abutter to the merged lots at the end of Leavitt Lane, indicated that his driveway enters his property from the right-of-way now owned by Mr. Whitcher. He has been working with Mr. Whitcher to create and record an easement for access to his property. There were no further questions or comments from the Board, the abutter or Mr. Whitcher.

Other Business

The Board reviewed the minutes of the November 7, 2024 Planning Board Meeting. Charlie Moreno requested the removal of an inaccurate statement which was part of the Design Review discussion for the Lovely Revocable Living Trusts proposed 5-Lot conservation development. Susan Arnold made a motion to accept the minutes as amended, which was seconded by Don Clifford and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members present who attended the November 7th Planning Board meeting.

Altus Engineering Invoice. The Chairman presented the invoice for Altus Engineering review of the Trademark subdivision plan. There was no record of a request from the Board for this review. The invoice referenced an emailed request for review dated September 6, 2024, and the Board tabled payment of the invoice until the Chairman discussed the issue with Altus, among other things, to determine who sent the email and associated documents. The Chairman will ensure that Altus Engineering is aware that any requests for review must be authorized by the Board. He also mentioned formalizing Board Rules and Procedures with Owen Corcoran, Strafford Regional Planning Commission Regional Planner, at the next meeting. Lynn Sweet reminded the Board that these procedures need to be adopted each year following the Town Meeting.

Class VI Road Policy. The Board was in possession of three draft versions of the Class VI Road Policy and decided to finalize the earliest version from 2021 at the next meeting and resubmit it to the Select Board.

Subdivision Regulation Amendment. The Chairman noted that the proposed amendment has presented and discussed at a Public Hearing during the November 7, 2024 Planning Board Meeting. The Board reviewed the amendment and determined that no changes were necessary. Charlie Moreno made a motion to accept the Subdivision Regulation Amendment as written and presented at the Public Hearing, which was seconded by Susan Arnold and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rules. The Chairman presented an extract of the rules to reference Table 1005: Minimum Lot Size-Residential 1-4 Bedrooms: Sewage Loading Factors. The table may be useful when considering an open-space conservation subdivision and determining minimum lot size. It may also be useful when considering dense population areas under Master Plan guidelines.

PREPA Grant. The Chairman indicated that the grant application is due in March 2025. This grant source provides up to \$25,000 that can be used to fund the Town Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) and/or a watershed management plan (WMP) for Bow Lake. Estimates to conduct the NRI range from \$12,000 to \$15,000 and a WMP may cost up to \$50,000. The Board determined that the WMP was the more important of the two projects and recommended a warrant article for the March 2025 Town meeting to request a \$25,000 appropriation to supplement a \$25,000 grant. The appropriation would not be necessary if the grant is not approved.

Dwelling Units. The Chairman indicated that there may be a need to once again address use of recreation vehicles as other than a temporary residence and that there is now a concern about the use of shipping containers for residential purposes. Lynn Sweet added that there have been issues with shipping containers used for storage as well. The Board agreed that there may be a need to discuss this further at a future Planning Board or joint board meeting with the Zoning Board.

There being no further business before the Board, Lynn Sweet made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Charlie Moreno. The Board voted unanimously in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 7:42PM.