

MINUTES

Sanbornton Planning Board Meeting

Meeting Date and Time: Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 7:00 PM

Meeting Place: Old Town Hall, 19 Meeting House Hill Road

The meeting was called to order by Andy Sanborn at 7:01 PM

1. Roll Call

Regular Members present: Chair Andy Sanborn, Selectman Brandon Deacon, Will Ellis, and Jody Slack

Alternate Members present: Patti Bartlett and Tom Lynch
Planning Board Assistant, Stephen Laurin

2. Seating of Alternates for Absent Members

Andy Sanborn designated Patti Bartlett to serve as a voting member.

3. Approval of draft Planning Board minutes from the March 7, 2024 meeting – Andy Sanborn made a motion to accept the draft minutes of the March 7 meeting as amended. Jody Slack seconded the motion and the motion passed 5-0-0.

4. Annual Business Meeting-Election of Officers

Jody Slack made a motion to nominate Andy Sanborn as Chair. Brandon Deacon seconded the motion and the motion passed 5-0-0.

Jody Slack made a motion to nominate Will Ellis as Vice Chair. Andy Sanborn seconded the motion and the motion passed 5-0-0.

5. New Business

Stephen Laurin announced that all 6 zoning amendments passed by wide margins, and congratulated the Board for putting them up onto the ballot.

The Planning Board had a brief discussion about information in the Annual Report regarding zoning amendments. Will Ellis said the report should include not only the ballot language but a more complete description of the proposed zoning ordinances. Also, the results of the prior year's votes refer only to the article number without any reference to what it was about.

Andy Sanborn handed out copies of some of the research he performed regarding buffer zones. He noted that, in addition to wetlands buffers, there are noise buffers, environmental buffers, visual buffers, and transitional landscape buffers. Whichever buffers are adopted by the Planning Board need to include a clear definition, and a statement of the purpose of the buffer. Andy Sanborn said that Kevin Leonard stated that the DES setback requirements are adequate to protect wetlands, and suggested that the Town eliminate the septic buffer and replace it with a setback requirement consistent with the DES setbacks.

Discussion ensued regarding the definition of a wetland buffer. The concern is that surface runoff collects contaminants and carries them to wetlands.

Brandon Deacon made a motion to adopt the DES definition of wetland buffer as a “naturally vegetated upland area adjacent to a wetland or surface water”. Jody Slack seconded the motion, and the motion passed 5-0-0.

Discussion continued regarding visual buffers and noise buffers.

Discussion resumed to Article 15.F(1) regarding the Buffer Zone. Andy Sanborn suggested removing the Septic column from the table since the Board just voted to apply only setbacks to septic systems. He said there could be a reference somewhere else in the ordinance that highlights the septic setback requirement. After further discussion the Board concurred to remove references to septic systems from the Buffer Zone chart and to state elsewhere that septic setbacks shall comply with NHDES requirements.

Andy Sanborn questioned how the Town might regulate surface water/drainage during the permit process for new homes and buildings. Stephen Laurin said the ordinance used to contain language prior to 2008 that required erosion controls for any land disturbances, but has since been removed. Chairman Sanborn noted that the way the current ordinance is written, it seems to state that there can be no lawns or any other land disturbance within the 75’ building buffer. He would like to ask Kevin Leonard how the Town’s ordinance can protect wetlands during the home construction process. Tom Lynch said it would be helpful to know what other Towns do to protect wetlands, whether by setbacks, no-disturb buffers, etc. Stephen Laurin reminded the Board that Kevin Leonard said there could be a provision for Special Exception to disturb a buffer after an evaluation by a wetland scientist or other engineer. But even with that, what would be allowed in the buffer after construction is complete?

The Planning Board discussed how the Mylars and paper maps depicting wetlands and other water resources can be overlayed onto a basemap of the Town. Chair Sanborn said he spoke to Ian Raymond, a professional photographer, about photographing the maps and superimposing them over each other and the cost of doing so. He would inquire with the BOS and elsewhere to see if there are any grants that might be available to fund mapping work.

The Board began discussion about Article 18.B(1) of the Zoning Ordinance regarding Special Exceptions (S.E.) for outdoor recreational facility. There needs to be a list of criteria for the applicant to meet in order for the ZBA to grant a S.E., or eliminate the S.E. requirement and go directly to the Planning Board for Site Plan Review for a change of use. Stephen Laurin suggested that the Board review the definition of outdoor recreation facility and determine whether the definition needs to be clarified. Once the definition and purpose are clear, the Board may have a better idea of how the activity might be regulated.

Brandon Deacon said that rather than going to the ZBA for S.E., he believes it would be easier for the applicant to stay with the Planning Board for Conditional Use Permit, before going on to Site Plan Review. Other Board members agreed. The Planning Board agreed to schedule a joint meeting with the Zoning Board to discuss Special Exceptions and the appropriate criteria.

Regarding Special Exceptions in general, Stephen Laurin noted that duplexes (two family dwellings) are not allowed by right anywhere in Sanbornton. They are allowed only by Special Exception. The Board discussed the possible history of why duplexes within existing single family would be allowed only by Special Exceptions. They questioned whether new construction of a duplex is allowed by the S.E. They agreed that this is another topic to be discussed with the Zoning Board.

6. Old Business

None

7. Other Business

None

8. Planners Update

None

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm. The next Planning Board Work Session is scheduled for Thursday, April 4.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen Laurin