

Charlemont Planning Board
February 6th, 2025, 6:00 PM Meeting Minutes
Remote meeting Via conference call and Teams

Members Participating: Bob Nelson, Liz Bouyea, Lori Shulda-Merrigan, Jennifer Mooney

Members Absent: Bill Harker

Others Participating: Star Atkeson, Eli Bloch, Dillan Sussman, Jonathan Mirin, Joe Pelligrino
Sarah Reynolds

Bob Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM.

Citizen comment time 6-6:15 PM

- Jonathan Mirin spoke about the National Grid pole replacement project. The poles near his house on Avery Brook Road would be taller and ready to be equipped with small cells. He brought up the recent cell tower bylaw that was passed, there were no setbacks included in the bylaw. He wonders if the Planning Board would insert one line into the bylaw making the bylaw like what other towns have passed. Currently a small cell could be 0' from a house.
- Jonathan spoke about the pole hearing that happened, the select board is helping to accommodate them. The pole hearings are unrelated to the Planning Board, but they do set the stage for future small cell installations. Jonathan said that boards can do a lot preemptively to safeguard property values and aesthetics. If there were a 300' setback, the companies could apply for a variance. There would be a higher threshold of scrutiny.
- Bob asked Jonathan to send over the sentence he'd like to add to the bylaw for their review.

Agenda Items:

Animals at 176 Main update

- Joe Pellegrino said the animals were still there. The problem has been ongoing for 5 years. He'd like the planning board to act as the enforcement officer. He is getting to the point where he is thinking of suing the Town, 176 main Street and FRCOG in the district court. He has run out of patience and this action seems like the smartest thing he can do.
- Sarah said she will ask the attorney and see if the Planning Board does have the authority to issue fines
- There was a suggestion that a police officer give the fine. Or it can be mailed, planning board members are not comfortable hand delivering a fine.
- Bob would like to hear the attorney's advice.

Short Term rental bylaw draft review

- Jonathan wanted to discuss the short-term rental bylaw draft. He wonders if his non-profit Art and Ecology center has cabins, yurts, or tent platforms if they will be considered exempt from the bylaw.
- The Select Board will be doing the licenses. There are around 25 or 29 Airbnb's currently. The bylaw restrictions are for non-owner-occupied single-family homes.

- The current short-term rentals would be grandfathered in. But if it is an owner-occupied short-term rental, it sounds like they would be exempt from the bylaw and needing a license, therefore, the license would ostensibly be available for someone else. Perhaps the number should be capped at less, or at least figured out, so it doesn't inadvertently create room for more AirBnB's.
- Lori had a few more points to discuss regarding the draft bylaw, and the other draft bylaw, Abandoned and derelict Housing. She suggested an all boards meeting to discuss.
- Bob would like to meet with Lori, get her additional concerns listed, and send to the Select Board as feedback.

Approve Minutes from January 16, 2024

Minutes were not approved at the meeting

Appointments:

6:30 Consultants of Dodson and Flinker Inc: to discuss scope of master plan update

- The Consultants spoke about the deliverables that they would like feedback on: a collated action plan, a series of existing conditions fact sheets, and an Issues and Opportunities section. They would like two members to review the action plan. They should highlight the important stuff and focus on those first.
- They would like to know if the facts are correct and ask if there is information missing that would be useful for making good decisions. They would also like to know what the facts mean for the future of the community.
- The town wide visioning meeting is scheduled for March 27th, they'd like everyone to do outreach for that.

Bob Nelson motioned to close the meeting at 7:45 PM. Lori Shulda-Merrigan seconded the motion. All in Favor.

Documents reviewed in meeting

Agenda for 2/6/2024