

Charlemont Planning Board
9/16/2021 5.30pm Meeting Minutes
Charlemont Fairgrounds

Members Participating: Bob Nelson Chair, Gisela Walker, Carlene Hayden, Dan Miller, Associate member

Others Participating: Marguerite Willis, Select Board, Sarah Reynolds, Town Administrator; Bill Harker joined later.

Call to Order

Planning Board Chair Bob Nelson called the meeting to order at 5.30 pm.

As there were no citizen comments, CHayden moved to approve the minutes of 8/26/21, seconded by BNelson, all (3) in favor; Dan Miller abstained.

Board held a short discussion about the issue of the special permit for the Long's who find that the conditions in our permit do not correspond with what they remember saying. They have not recorded it at the Registry of Deeds yet. BNelson had sent us his tape of the very discussion of the setback of their tent from the property line. We decided to send them the tape. After discussion, CHayden said that in light of the fact that the permit hadn't been recorded yet, she felt there are enough inconsistencies between what Ms. Long and the Board recalls was said and what was put in the permit, that the permit should be amended. Although it will require a public hearing, there was no opposition by the abutters and it should be fairly simple.

At 6.15 Conversation began about the Select Board's plans for what to do with a \$40,000 planning grant. MWillis began by pointing out that the town has housing shortage for workers to be employed in our outdoor recreation industry and by businesses; that we also need more high value residential houses for which the market looks promising as people are moving out of the cities; SReynolds is working on a grant to bring roads in two of the old subdivisions up to standard which would open up many large lots up in the hills. She has also spoken with a few consulting firms who engage in what is now called Economic Strategy Planning; this has always been part of a Master Plan but the town's Master Plan is more than ten years old and often not acceptable for today's grant applications. The Select Board will pursue this further. Sarah asked what the Planning Board has on their list of priorities. The Board is in the midst of working on this year's zoning amendments with Peggy Sloan, Planning Director from the COG. Mostly these deal with cleanup items from earlier amendments, changes to the backlot development section, and adding the town's non-criminal disposition bylaw for bylaw violations into our zoning bylaw as well as changes to the solar section of the bylaw and a revision of the very old cell tower section. At town meeting it had been suggested that the Board raise more money by having some sliding scale to special permit fees based on the value of the application. The Board had asked the Building Inspector and found his system not applicable. BHarker suggested we just create broad dollar amount categories that any given project application roughly falls into and attach a fee range to each. The Board agreed to pursue that.

Update on the Charlemont Inn

The Planning Board had heard that the process for tax taking of the Inn was languishing in Land Court in Boston and asked what they could do, if anything, to get the ear of the Court. MWillis reported that the Board feels there is little the town can do to influence Court proceedings and that letters from arms of the town like the Planning Board would not be helpful. GWalker disagreed and

suggested going through our State representatives and to impress with great urgency that this building is short of falling down, the doors no longer close, and it goes together with one of the very few public water supplies downtown, also that there is a receiver ready to go with plans for senior housing. MWillis conceded that maybe individual letters to the Court or the representatives not in the name of the Board could be ok.

Non-criminal zoning violation ticket:

CHayden had prepared and presented a draft ticket the Board can file via the Building Inspector for zoning violations. This could hopefully motivate violators to come into compliance to avoid the rather steep fines but we did not know by whom, when or how violators who refuse to pay and comply will be forced and to whom the violator would appeal the ticket. Since she used Buckland's ticket as a basis, there are questions on some of the wording that will need to go to Town Counsel once we are ready to submit all our revisions. More research is needed!

Zoning Amendments

The Board went over the final draft of the amendments agreeing with Peggy Sloan on all that she had submitted except there are still questions about the cell tower bylaw revisions, in particular we cannot find any reference to balloon tests which had been used in previous applications and a reference to any tower being erected needing to have at least one client committed to attach to it. Nelson will do a keyword search to look for the wording.

As to the next meeting several absences of our three member Board put the next meeting out to October 28. Peggy Sloan will join us at that meeting and it will be via zoom.

Documents reviewed in meeting:

Letter from Attorney Berenson to Mr. John Harrington, Land Court, January 18, 2021
Charlemont Non-Criminal Violation Notice draft
Email from Amy Long to CHayden
Zoning Amendment draft of cell tower revisions

Respectfully submitted by Gisela Walker