

**Charlemont Planning Board**  
**March 17, 2022 at 6:00 pm**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Via in-person and conference call**  
**Town Hall**

Members Participating: Bob Nelson Chair, Gisela Walker, Carlene Hayden – in person

Others Participating: Colleen Champ via telephone; she expressed her interest in serving on the Planning Board and wants to listen in. Laurie Griswold and her partner John Brooks attended for their public hearing.

Call to Order

Planning Board Chair Bob Nelson called the meeting to order at 6.09pm.

Minutes from 2/2/2022 and 3/3/2022

BNelson moved to approve these minutes, CHayden 2nded, all voted in favor of approving.

Public Meeting with Consultants Report

On March 15 RKG consultants held a public meeting to solicit input from residents re economic development potential in town. Since CHayden had not been able to attend, BNelson and GWalker reported to Carlene their impressions of the meeting. Members agreed on the need to have a conversation with the consultants some time in April via telephone. GWalker will set that up.

Public Hearing: Lorie Griswold Special Permit

BNelson opened the hearing at 6.35pm.

At issue is the renewal of a special permit for the use of a mobile home, attached to Ms. Griswold's house, for the use of her mother. The is permit has been extended several times; there are no changes needed to the assessment of the permit criteria but the language in the conditions will change:

GWalker made a motion as follows: That the Board approve the special permit for the temporary mobile home on 495 Zoar Road for the exclusive, single occupancy use of the applicant's mother during her lifetime or as long as she resides in it; and that after her departure the building has to be removed from site within 30 days. The permit goes with the applicant.

The motion was seconded by BNelson; Walker, Nelson and Hayden all voted in favor.

Conversation with Bob Handsaker about the proposed telecom bylaw zoning amendment

As Mr. Handsaker is the chair of the Broadband Committee and MLP manager, the Planning Board had asked him to give us his comments to the proposed amendment. He voiced several significant questions for clarification and concerns about the impact on development in town. One major critique focused on the Definition of what constitutes a CRS (commercial radio service) Facility. The broad definition would severely limit all kinds of reasonable smaller commercial applications of wi-fi and other wireless devices and uses. He also pointed out that so far at least one residence is not reachable by Broadband and will need to be served with a point-to-point alternative antenna on a telephone pole - exactly what the amendment is prohibiting. Board members pointed out that they have the authority to offer waivers for such exceptions. There followed a discussion of the validity of health concerns and the issue that a municipality cannot regulate 5G use based on such. If our concerns are based on the aesthetics of these installations then, Mr. Handsaker said, we should specify aesthetical aspects such as height, size, and location.

The Board had a lively discussion after Bob's departure about the content of the proposed amendment, about how it would play out in what promises to be a very contentious town meeting already because of the serious school issues. All Board members admitted to not having enough knowledge on the subject to be able to aptly defend or answer questions on it, and that they either needed to educate themselves more on the technical details or to solicit input from other experts or to withdraw the amendment for the time being. CChamp participated in the conversation. In the end, BNelson made a motion to table the draft telecom bylaw amendment to the existing cell tower bylaw; section 44 of the zoning bylaws, and to withdraw it from the package of zoning amendments proposed for annual town meeting in May. GWalker seconded the motion, Walker, Nelson and Hayden all voted in favor.

Appointment of new Planning Board members:

At the end of the meeting Colleen Palmer said that she has taken out papers to get on the ballot for town elections, for a Planning Board position. As Laurie Merrigan had also expressed her decision to serve on the Board, the Board decided to bring both before the Select Board to recommend their appointment until they have been properly elected and sworn in in late May. That way they can take up their seats on the Board right after the appointment. By the date of writing these minutes, they have an appointment for March 28 with the Select Board. Present Board members expressed their gratitude and delight in the prospect of finally having a full Planning Board.

Chair BNelson moved to close the meeting at 8.54pm, all in favor.

Documents reviewed:

Draft telecom bylaw zoning amendment to existing section 44 of the zoning bylaw.  
Minutes of 2/2/2022 and 3/3/2022

Respectfully submitted by Gisela Walker