

Charlemont Planning Board
August 4th, 2022 6:00 pm Meeting Minutes
Via conference call and in person, Town Hall

Members Participating: Bob Nelson, Colleen Champ, Lori Shulda-Merrigan,

Others Participating: Secretary Star Atkeson, Wesley Janssen, Levi Janssen, Bill Harker

By Phone: Andy Mueller

Called to Order by B.Nelson at 6:04 p.m.

APPOINTMENTS:

1. 6:15 Marguerite Willis to discuss Planning Board visit to tubing companies

M. Willis relayed a complaint that she had knowledge of about the surprise visit to the tubing companies on a Saturday in July. She was assured that the plan to inspect was in the permit. (The inspection was stated in one of the permits, and was in the minutes of the public hearing for the other.) Her main message for the planning Board was that it was stressful for the proprietors to deal with a surprise inspection during their peak operating hours; and in general, wanting Town officials to treat the businesses in town respectfully in order to support them, especially the tubing companies as they do provide a substantial safety service by being able to regulate tubing to a large extent on the river which is otherwise unregulated for DIY tubers.

- The Planning Board was a little surprised by the complaint because they had been graciously received by the companies and were very happy to find that the conditions they were there to inspect were being well met.
- B.Nelson says that in hindsight, since they had not been able to visit last August due to the rain (2 months after the permits were granted, as promised) he would have written a letter telling them of the plan to visit the following summer. As it stands, having done the inspections it will be an easy task to renew their permits which needs to be done in the spring.
- B.Nelson suggested adding a standard worded statement on each permit regarding impending inspections and the range of time that the businesses can expect it.
- As Liaison to the Select Board, M. Willis welcomed questions and comments from the Planning Board members
- C.Champ brought up the RKG Economic Plan wanting to voice to M. Willis the benefit of using the report as a guide for the decision making that will need to be done soon regarding the \$400,000. recreation grant.
- B.Nelson questioned whether there had been a decision on the recreation grant.
- M.Willis said there will be one more public meeting, where the public will have a long wish list. In the end, it is the Select Board's decision. She noted there is demand for a Town park and parking area; they will find out the cost of the land and the cost of preparing it. With parking meters it could be a revenue source for the town.
- M.Willis hopes that the recreational offerings of the town attract more families with second homes on roads which allow subdivisions.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Review meeting Minutes from 7/21/2022
 - **B.Nelson moved to approve the Minutes from 7/21/2022, C.Champ seconded the motion, all in favor.**
 - The minutes were initialed
2. Go over timeline for Zoning Bylaw revisions, including public meeting on August 18th and how to promote it.
 - With G.Walker and C.Hayden absent it was thought better to wait for them to be in attendance to go over the timeline.
 - B.Nelson has a schedule conflict with the proposed date (9/22/2022) for the public hearing.
 - **C.Champ made a motion to postpone timeline discussion until G.Walker and C.Hayden were in attendance, seconded by L.Shulda-Merrigan. All in favor.**
3. Review Final Zoning Bylaw revisions (for the Select Board meeting on August 8th.)
 - A. Mueller questioned whether the solar bylaw amendment was in regards to rooftop mounted as well as ground mounted.
 - B.Nelson clarified that the Board was not proposing to restrict rooftop solar.
 - B.Harker recommends that people use ground mounted in order to prevent damage to the roof.
 - The Zoning Bylaw revisions were gone over one last time, a typo will be fixed and the revisions will be given to K.Reynolds by S.Atkeson.
 - **Motion made by B.Nelson to approve Zoning Bylaw revisions as amended, seconded by L.Shulda-Merrigan. All in favor.**
4. Go over Permit Tracking Spreadsheet and decide next actions
 - The Tracking spreadsheet was looked at and the question came up as to whether the Planning Board should be tasked with following up with the businesses to see if they have registered their businesses with the Registry of Deeds or not.
 - The question remains to be discussed about the negative ramifications for the town and for the business of operating without a valid Special Permit.
 - For contrast, Site Plan Reviews are not required to be registered with the Registry of Deeds

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

1. Board Organization
 - With the absence of G. Walker and C.Hayden, no new developments to the Board organization were discussed.
 - C.Champ mentioned that those who want to resign can do so, and then new members can be appointed.
 - The discussion will be postponed.
2. Public comment period for RKG Economic Development Plan closes on August 12th
 - C.Champ is very impressed with the Economic Development Plan, finding it “rich” and “robust” with strong strategies; ‘purposeful’ and ‘data driven’ and wants to utilize the report for future decision making by the town.

- C.Champ encouraged the Board to either singly or as a group write a letter to RKG with positive feedback, highlighting areas of agreement.
- C.Champ found a small math error about the future population of Charlemont that she will bring to their attention (or someone should.)
- B.Nelson will read the report and draft a letter and send to the Town Administrator to pass on to RKG by August 12th.
- L.Shulda-Merrigan pointed out that the report compared Charlemont with other small New England towns with rivers, and that one of the recommendations was to review zoning to reduce barriers to campgrounds and creative lodging.
- B.Nelson mentioned G.Walker was said to have thought that it was not a step in the right direction (to lessen the requirements from 10 Acres to 5 acres;) but as it is by Special Permit, it could be taken on a case by case basis and with consideration of the surrounding land. (i.e. one wouldn't want a 5 acre campground next to a residential lot, however if it were surrounded by woods 5 acres could be enough)
- A.Mueller would like the camping zoning bylaw to be worked into the bylaw amendments.
- B.Nelson said there wasn't enough time to do it in time for the Fall, but for the Spring Annual Town Meeting it would be possible.

1. Complaints about ice cream parking at Wells Provisions

- The Janssens came to address the complaint about parking congestion during peak ice cream hours. Unfortunately, C.Hayden who had received the complaint was out sick, so was not there to relay the actual complaint.
- The Janssens noted that the Mass DOT used 8A to park all their heavy and oversized equipment during the road work project, and that both sides of the road are parking spots according to the DOT, although DOT will not paint parking spots onto the road.
- The Janssens noted that the bigger issue is that drivers speed down 8A. They would really like to see a "thickly settled" sign and traffic speed signs installed.
- A.Mueller said 8A is a state Rd, no jurisdiction of the town.
- L.Shulda-Merrigan offered to reach out to John from the DOT or the appropriate office to see what it would take to get some signs put in.
- After the Janssens left, A.Mueller spoke of cafes and restaurants in San Francisco which were allowed to claim their parking spaces as outdoor seating and create visual barriers which also created traffic calming.

B.Nelson made a motion to close the meeting at 8:27, seconded by L.Shulda-Merrigan, all in favor.

The next meeting will be held August 18th, 2022

Respectfully submitted by Star Atkeson 7/27/2022

Documents reviewed in meeting:

- August 4th, 2022 Planning Board Agenda
- The Minutes from the 7/21/2022 Planning Board meeting
- Draft of Zoning bylaw Revisions from Peggy Sloan
- Planning Board's Permit Tracking Spreadsheet