

Town of Winchester
Planning Board
Minutes
11-1-21

Meeting opens: 7:00pm

Members present: Rich Pratt, Gus Ruth, Jenny Rhodes, Dean Beaman (Chair), Christy Davis(Alt) and Jordan Sharra. Lindseigh Picard and Mike Doherty were absent. Margaret Sharra is the Land Use Administrator.

Public: Sara Carboneau.

First order of business: The Chairman sits C. Davis as an acting member tonight. The board reviews a letter of resignation from Mike Doherty. **D. Beaman moves to appoint Christy Davis to move up from alternate to fill the position until March. J. Sharra seconds. The vote is 6 yes. The Chairman clarifies the board accepts the resignation letter.**

Second order of business: The board reviews possible zoning amendments. The Chair asks the LUA to proceed. The LUA explains to the board the process of adopting Zoning amendments: Planning Board discussion during meetings and hopefully come to some type of agreement, come to an agreement on intent of change and wording and schedule a public hearing, then hold a hearing and hear from the public, then make any changes the board agrees upon, agree upon final wording, then present to the voters as warrant articles. The LUA reminds the members the volumes of information she has shared with them regarding the housing shortage.

1. The LUA asks the board to consider permitting a duplex by right, same as a single family min lot size. Presently in order to have a duplex, the lot size must increase by 50% over what's required for SF. J. Sharra supports this suggestion to help ease the limited available housing in town. There is no decent housing for the young professionals and seniors of middle income. R. Pratt asks why change something that is already working? J. Sharra asks how is it working when there's a housing crisis? He also asks what about if there are disputes between the two families, how will they be addressed? G. Ruth expresses his concerns about wells potentially running dry with some developments in the outskirts. The LUA has no information to respond to well water. D. Beaman doesn't think wells will be impacted by development. The LUA asks J. Rhodes for her input. Her concern is that the town is not addressing concerns now with substandard apartments, so she not sure more housing is a good idea. She asks how many people has this requirement of 50% impacted? The LUA says she doesn't have anyone directly who has complained about it but explains that most town hall employees are asked about homes for sale or places to rent daily. The point is people are looking for housing. J. Rhodes says its mostly the people migrating who are looking for places. The LUA says that not exactly true, it is both locals and out of staters. C. Davis is contemplating the proposal. It was suggested to only allow the change with properties that have municipal water & sewer. R. Pratt asks about what of the properties that just have town water? The board will need to decide. The majority of the board agrees to duplex by right in areas with town water & sewer.
2. Add more description to housing requirements. It noticed this is not needed and doesn't make sense in this section. Minimal discussion
3. There is discussion on minimum sqft of a single family home. The LUA had brought the request to the board to decrease it to 400sqft as people had asked her to. She expresses her thoughts that 400sqft in very small and board members agreed. The Building Inspector suggested this change. The board considered 700sqft but the majority decided 800sqft should stay.
4. The board discusses the proposed addition to the multifamily housing definition. It is suggested to add that multiple buildings on one lot are also multifamily, which is a standard definition.
5. The board reviews the suggested changes to the Planned Residential Ordinance. All members had two weeks to review it.
 - Add to purpose an additional reason, fulfilling the needs of affordable housing by targeting medium income to help the young professionals and seniors by keeping costs lower by adjusting sizes of units to smaller households.
 - Promote open space.
 - Update standards with expanding PRDs to other districts by SE.

- Reduce the minimum parcel size to 5 acres unless served by water and sewer.
- Architectural designs to be in character with the neighborhood based height, layout, design and landscaping.
- Assure 90% of the units shall be no more than 2 bedrooms, unless the project is a MH park.
- Remove the density calculations.
- Add land density for multifamily developments shall be exempt from the specific density already in the ordinance. Discuss min and max number of units for a project.
- Specify occupancy densities
- Remove dedicated open space to the general public. And open space can include amenities.
- Decrease perimeter buffer to 25ft instead of 100ft.
- Remove dedication of land to the CC
- Add list of materials and style to floor plans submitted

There were minimal comments from the board. G. Ruth is concerned about water quantity in the AG districts. He feels if you drill too many wells people will run out of water. Can the developer guarantee it? The LUA does not know. Sara believes with 25% of the property is open space, there is plenty of area for recharge. The Chair recognizes Sara Carboneau, a resident and past Planner for the Town of Swanzey. She explains to the board there is a serious housing crisis which critically affects our retirees, young families and professionals. Currently in Winchester there is no housing for them. Employers cannot get workers without housing. Our seniors should not have to struggle to maintain large homes because there is nothing that is new, safe and affordable for them to move into. The existing housing stock is in need. She gives an example of housing constructed about 10 years ago in Swanzey, Haley Park now Princeton Properties. These 90 unit 1&2 bedroom apartment buildings were constructed on 5.6 acres. She believes it fits well with the surroundings and has not affected values in neighboring properties. She recommends that the board consider % of lot coverage in their PRD. Some board members and the LUA are questionable about a project of the size of the new apartments going in in Swanzey.

6. Regulating storage containers- the board is in favor of regulating storage containers and describing the difference between temporary and permanent. They also must meet setbacks. D. Beaman reads the permit requirements from Pittsfield.

Third order of business: other. The LUA informs the board that Mitchell Materials wants to erect a silo for liquid asphalt storage. This is not an expansion of the business but to make their business more efficient. She does not think a SPR is required. Also, because the liquid asphalt solidifies when cools and hits the air it is not an issue for the APD. The board agrees and believes this is also approved by NHDES.

The LUA informs the board she has been in contact with Diane Cyr who manages the storage facility on Keene Road, who recently received approval for outdoor storage. It was found out during the conversation that Diane did receive approval from the ZBA for pods but mistakenly did not include pods in the PB app. The board feels she needs to come back to the board for approval. The LUA will contact her.

Next meeting 11/15.

J. Sharra moves to adjourn, C. Davis seconds. The vote is 6 yes. 8:30pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted:

Margaret Sharra, LUA

Minutes approved on: 11/15/21

Minutes signed by:

Dean Beaman, Chair