

Town of Winchester
Planning Board
Minutes
8-2-21

Meeting opened: 7:00pm.

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

First order of business: The board reviews the minutes of 7-19-21 for approval. **J. Rhodes moves to approve, M. Doherty seconds. The vote is 6 yes.**

Second order of business: Work session. The Board is to discuss their ideas on possible zoning amendments. The LUA tells the board about Bill McGrath's comments regarding the APD. He feels the entire ordinance should be removed because by omitting the commercial district he says the intent of protecting our water is now not being done. He has also said and submitted documents in the past that he says showed large lot sizes are not needed to protect the aquifer. G. Ruth says the board should consider changing the APD to only commercial district lots with town water and sewer be exempt. J. Rhodes asks for an explanation on the APD. Most members do not agree with discontinuing it or reducing lot sizes. G. Ruth explains where our well locations are and the transitivity rates. For example, on Rt.10 this area has a low rate while on Plum Pack it is a high rate. Town wells are only about 30 or so feet deep. R. Pratt thinks the residents should tell the board their thoughts on the APD. The board agrees to review the map of the town and discuss this further. J. Rhodes now realizes what Mr. McGrath was talking about at deliberative session.

The LUA asks about definitions. Any suggested changes? Members remember some that were discussed last year but not agreed upon. The LUA will bring them again for the next meeting.

The LUA asks the board to think about if there should be any changes in uses or lot sizes to entice businesses? The board should consider what has been issued for variances the last few years. Is there something repetitive? R. Pratt asks the LUA to bring in a list of what the ZBA has granted.

R. Pratt asks about building in the flood plain. After the recent floods should this be looked at? The LUA refers the board to the ordinance and asks them to read it. It was drafted by the Planning Office at the state and by FEMA. She is not very familiar with it but says the town can be more restrictive but not less. R. Pratt describes the 18 inches of water that invaded Kulicks Plaza. It was noted that Family Dollar that was constructed about 10+ years ago had no problems because it was built above flood plain.

Continuing from last meeting is a discussion on medium income housing. The board is in receipt of information to discuss. There is a housing shortage in NH and Winchester. The facts are listed, the pros and cons of more housing as well as types of housing, impact to schools, considerations of sizes, designs, open space, and number of bedrooms, and terminology and what areas could possibly hold additional housing. Types of housing that is being looked at is small housing of 1 & 2 bedroom units whether to rent or own. It is not being said to change lot sizes for density, but to be creative with innovative land use techniques. To bring in some housing to meet the needs of middle income households that are usually senior housing and young professionals. The LUA shares information on cottage neighborhoods and offers a book for all to read. Jordan Sharra submits her opinion in writing to the board for the need of this type of housing. Her choices when looking for decent housing in town were very limited and

notes verbiage in the town Master Plan about the need for medium income housing. L. Picard tells the board her mother had to move to Hinsdale because there was not affordable, medium income, housing available in Winchester. G. Ruth asks about water and sewer availability. The LUA spoke with Rick and he sees no problem with a few small developments. R. Pratt asks about the process of approval for something like this. The process could be subdivision but definitely site plan because of the change of use. D. Beaman concurs there is a need for decent housing. It is known that prospective interests in the business park have asked about obtaining staffing and housing. The LUA gives an example with current zoning, by right you can build a 4 bedroom 3 bath home on one acre. Think about building 4 small 1 bedroom homes on half of that one acre lot..... Then there would be a half acre of open space. Discussion will continue at the next meeting. The board questions where it would be suitable for this use. They will review the zoning map at the next meeting.


G. Ruth recommends deleting the dumpster paragraph of the ordinance because many do not abide by it.

D. Beaman would like the BOS to review the Master Plan. L. Picard will bring this up with the BOS.

Next meeting on the 16th there will be a hearing to discuss extending Alltown's hours of operation.

L. Picard moves to adjourn, D. Beaman seconds. The vote is 6 yes. 8:26pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted:

Margaret Sharra, LUA 

Minutes approved by the board on: 8/16/21

Minutes signed by:


Dean Beaman, Chair