

Town of Winchester
Planning Board
Minutes
3-20-23

Meeting opened: 7:00pm.

Members present: Dean Beaman (Chair), Jordan Sharra (V. Chair), Rich Pratt, Theresa Sepe (SR), and Colby Ebbinghausen. Alternates present are Gus Ruth and Robert Browne. Margaret Sharra is the LUA. Public: Neil Stetson, Rik Ekstrom, Lisa Murphy of SWRPC and Rick & Jacqui Rounds.

First order of business: The Chairman sits both alternates to the board. The board reviews the minutes of 1-16-23 for approval. **J. Sharra moves to approve, C. Ebbighausen seconds. The vote is 6 yes, 1 abstain (TS).** There are no minutes from Feb because there was not a quorum. The LUA informs the board she invited Neil Stetson, Jeanne Hadid and Jack Marsh to the meeting tonight.

Second order of business: The board reviews an application for site plan submitted by Rich Pratt for property at 46 Manning Hill Road, map 20, lot 17. The applicant wishes to convert the existing commercial building into a laundry mat and ice cream stand. The LUA confirms all notices were done. R. Pratt recuses himself from the board. **J. Sharra moves to accept the application as complete and move into a public hearing, R. Browne seconds. The vote is 6 yes.**

Rich Pratt explains the property. It was built in 1971 and shares a driveway with 48 Manning Hill Road (he also owns). He wants to move his laundry mat from the kulicks mall to this spot. He goes through 84K gallons of water a year. He has an existing private septic, but this operation will have a new septic and the design has been approved by NHDES.

J. Sharra and D. Beaman ask about hours of operation. Rich says the laundry will be 6am-8pm and ice cream 11 am-9pm. 7 days. J. Sharra asks about parking? Rich says it is a huge parking lot. T. Sepe asks about town water. Rich says Rick from the water department approved it. G. Ruth asks if the bathroom is open to the public? No. J. Sharra asks if there will be a sign, Yes on the roof. Rick Rounds, an abutter, asks about the shared driveway with lot 48. Rich explains lot 48 has a ROW across lot 46. There are no further questions.

J. Sharra moves to close the hearing, R. Brown seconds. The vote is 6 yes. 7:10pm.

Discussion: G. Ruth questions about second means of egress. Rich explains a garage door outback. Members question that. It is agreed to have the Fire Department ok it.

J. Sharra moves to approve the site plan on 46 Manning Hill Road for a laundry mat and ice cream shop subject the Fire Department review. R. Browne seconds. The vote is 6 yes.

Third order of business: R. Pratt back on the board. The LUA introduces Rik Ekstrom to the board. He is the Housing Navigator hired by SWRPC to assist Winchester, Hinsdale, Fitzwilliam, and Chesterfield in engaging our community in activities to focus on addressing housing concerns. This work is being done by a grant from InvestNH, a program set up by the state to review and address our housing needs in a local manner. The initial core group attending classes are Jordan Sharra, Penny Seaver and Margaret Sharra.

Rik addresses the board. He explains his role in this project. He has begun sample phone interviews with residents, about 8-9 so far with more to go. These residents are of a broad range of ages, income levels and walks of life. There will be community assessment needs conducted by way of surveys, meetings, and attending events such as Winchester Food festival and school activities. He will develop the assessment with the board and bring the information gathered to the community. This process will occur

over 12-18 months. With this information he will suggest to the board zoning reforms to address the housing needs of Winchester based on community input.

D. Beaman asks how many towns he has done this with before? Rik responds this is a Pilot program and results will be used in the future. Rik is an architect by trade. Rik stresses each town he is representing has different needs. D. Beaman asks where did this program come from? This program was born out of the housing crisis in the state. This is the state level deciding to provide towns with the tools and resources to help towns decide their approach. D. Beaman asks how the towns were chosen. Lisa Murphy responds by saying she knew Winchester was looking at cottage housing and other changes, Chesterfield focusing on Senior Housing, and Fitzwilliam on updating their Master Plan. All have a correlation to housing.

T. Sepe asks if there will be zoning reform at the end of the project? Yes. D. Beaman adds, any proposed changes will be based on what the towns want. Rik also speaks of additional professional help the board can get with a complete review of the land use regulations and ordinances. The application for this grant is due at the end of June.

T. Sepe comments she is aware of a lot of building in town and the amount of low income properties we already have. Rik explains the "missing middle". This core group in the community is where the focus is.

G. Ruth asks if this is statewide? Yes.

R. Pratt states you can't change zoning without hearing from the residents and the 8-9 people interviews isn't enough. J. Sharra responds that is true but that is not the process being discussed. Any proposed changes are the end results. There is a year of gathering information from the residents and compiling it and then deciding zoning proposals. Rik says future surveys are developed from the first group interviewed. He is trying to just get a sample of thoughts to know how to proceed with surveys. R. Pratt says we can't push residents with zoning changes so quickly. J. Sharra said its not quick, this is a long process. The LUA thinks there may have been some confusion with the June 30th date. The June 30th grant is a spin off of this grant. The June 30th one offers a complete review of the regulations and suggestions for improvements. Lisa Murphy explains this does not focus on housing, this review is for any inconsistencies, or conflicts within the ordinance, use of correct statutes, etc. She adds Hinsdale did this about 6 years ago. Simply, the review is done by a hired professional who presents a report to the PB and the PB decides what to do with the information. She will share Hinsdale's report with the board. T. Sepe suggests on election day to do a survey. J. Sharra and LUA volunteered to try and do it. Rik also asks members for volunteers for a housing group for him to work with as well as the initial three. The LUA also asks for names of residents to interview. Rik thanks the board.


Fourth order of business: The board reviews a Volunteer Interest form for an alternate position submitted by Neil Stetson. Neil introduces himself and gives a brief bio.

J. Sharra moves to appoint Neil Stetson as an alternate to the board for 3 years, T. Sepe seconds. The vote is 7 yes.

Next meeting is April 3rd with a site plan application submitted by Barry Bordner.

J. Sharra moves to adjourn, R. Browne seconds. The vote is 7 yes.

Minutes respectfully submitted:

Margaret Sharra, LUA 

Minutes approved by the board on: 4/3/23

Minutes signed by:

Dean Beaman, Chairman

