

**MINUTES  
CHARLESTOWN PLANNING BOARD  
SEPTEMBER 6, 2011**

Members Present: Robert Frizzell (Chair); Sharon Francis (Vice-Chair); Andy Jellie, Pat Royce, Rosie Smith-Hull; Roger Thibodeau

Alternates Present: None

Staff Present: David Edkins – Planning & Zoning Administrator

**CALL TO ORDER & SEATING OF ALTERNATES:** Mr. Frizzell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He noted the absence of regular member Steve Neill (Ex-Officio) and alternate members James Jenkins and Eric Lutz. He advised that meetings are tape recorded and asked anyone wishing to speak to identify themselves for the record.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 16, 2011:**

No action was taken on the Minutes of the August 16, 2011, meeting due to lack of a quorum being present from that meeting. Only three members were present to vote.

**PLANNING & POLICY ISSUES:**

**SIGN REGULATIONS:** Mr. Edkins has accumulated a good deal of material on sign regulations over time. He felt that tonight they should identify what the issues, concerns and problems are with the current regulations. Reference was made to Section 8.6 – Signs. They need to be careful of descriptions for signs in different districts.

For example: Under Section 8.5.1 – Zone A – Town Center Residential/Professional -d – specifies that only the following signs shall be permitted: “Town and State Highway directional and regulatory signs, historical signs, and those relating to the sale, lease or rent of the property or to the profession of the occupant. No sign or group of signs shall exceed five square feet in area.”

Section 8.5.3 – Zone B-Business –f– specified that “No sign or group of signs shall exceed twenty-five square feet in area on any one property nor be placed in a position that would be a traffic hazard.”

For clarification these sections should be moved to the Sign section of the ordinance. There should be a section on signs so any reference to signs will be in that section rather than being scattered throughout the ordinance.

Mr. Edkins had a booklet from the American Planning Association entitled “Sign Regulations for Small and Mid-Sized Communities”. It does provide some guidance on sizes of signs. Mr. Thibodeau noted that square footage is important. Mr. Edkins advised that we regulate sign sizes in three ways:

1. In the Residential / Professional Zone the signs cannot exceed five square feet. Home occupations are allowed in this zone.

2. In the Business Zone (Main Street) it states that no sign or group of signs shall exceed twenty-five square feet in area. In the past this has been an issue such as with Dan's building where there are multiple businesses.
3. Everywhere else outside the Residential or Business Zones signs can be fifty square feet.

Mr. Thibodeau felt they need to look at the fifty square feet signs plus there needs to be some wording relative to the size of the lettering. Mr. Edkins mentioned the Municipal Law Lecture Series that will be held on September 14<sup>th</sup> in Keene (the closest one) as the first lecture will be on Sign Regulations. Mrs. Francis feels that the sign and lettering size should be developed based on the speed of passing traffic. Mr. Edkins mentioned that the word "should" could be changed to "shall" in this section. One area he would like to look at is the whole issue of existing non-conforming signs. He read the existing section. It seems there should be more flexible in stating that at least the sign can be changed if a business changes provided that they are not more non-conforming than the existing sign. There was discussion relative to several signs on Main Street that are outside the sidewalk on Town property. It seems the Selectboard should issue a license agreement in terms of liability, etc. There have been requests to up-date these signs but the owners had to go to the ZBA. Mr. Thibodeau feels the biggest issues are the square footage and location of signs. Mr. Edkins added the off-premises and temporary signs for community events. Some groups are good about getting permits but others are not. They do allow off-premises signs for yard sales and real estate directional signs. Mr. Thibodeau thought about having a clause in the regulations to allow community event signs to be put out for a few days without a permit. Mr. Edkins believes that if they were to regulate signs in the National Register of Historic District they would need to set-up a formal local district and a commission. He has copies of the Claremont and Walpole regulations and will send copies to the PB. He will also see what else he can find; maybe the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission can provide some guidelines.

Mr. Edkins noted that the issues are: 1) Replacement of non-conforming signs; 2) temporary signs for community type events; 3) off-premises signs for businesses; and 4) size of signs and the lettering. The regulations should all be in one place in the ordinance.

**ADMINISTRATION & CORRESPONDENCE:**

**State's Ten Year Transportation Plan:** Mr. Edkins distributed copies of the State's Ten Year Transportation Plan that was released this afternoon. The Route 12 Project that many of them worked on for years has been dropped completely from the plan. Prior to this it had been moved up to 2012 / 2013. Next Monday at 8:00 AM in the Town Hall Executive Counselor Ray Burton will be holding the first of a series of public hearings throughout the State on this Plan. It is important for a good turn-out to let them know how important that project is and how much community support it has to try to get this turned-around. The Route 12 Project was the top priority for the UVLSRPC for years. DOT has now disregarded that.

**2011 Local Government Center Law Lecture Series:** Copies of the notice had been sent out in the PB packets. If interested in attending, fill out the registration form and return to Mr. Edkins.

**Enforcement Issues:** Mrs. Francis would like to have regular up-dates on enforcement issues. Mr. Edkins explained that he has priorities but continues to work on enforcement issues when time permits. He will put together a list of the issues that he is aware of and the PB can make additions/corrections. Mr. Thibodeau suggested using a standard form.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**There being no other business, Mrs. Royce moved for adjournment. Mrs. Smith-Hull seconded the motion. With six members in favor, the motion was approved.** The time was 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Regina Borden, Recording Secretary  
(Transcription from Tape)

Minutes Filed: 09-09-11

**(Note:** These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections, if necessary, will be found in the Minutes of the September 20, 2011, Planning Board meeting.)