

**MINUTES
CHARLESTOWN PLANNING BOARD
DECEMBER 20, 2011**

Members Present: Robert Frizzell (Chair); Sharon Francis (Vice-Chair); Steve Neill (Ex-Officio); Andy Jellie, Roger Thibodeau

Alternates Present: James Jenkins, Eric Lutz

Staff Present: David Edkins – Planning & Zoning Administrator
Regina Borden – Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER & SEATING OF ALTERNATES: Mr. Frizzell called the meeting to order at 7:12 PM. He noted the absence of regular members Pat Royce and Rosie Smith-Hull therefore he called upon alternate members James Jenkins and Eric Lutz to sit in their places. The meetings are tape recorded so Mr. Frizzell asked anyone wishing to speak to identify themselves for the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 6, 2011 MEETING:

Mrs. Francis moved to approve the Minutes of the December 6, 2011 meeting as printed. Mr. Thibodeau seconded the motion. With six members in favor, the minutes were approved. Mr. Lutz abstained as he was not present at this meeting.

DANIEL & CAROL McSHANE, Cont'd. – Two (2) Lot Subdivision – 449 Calavant Hill Road – Map 205, Lot 34 – Zone E (Mixed Use): Mr. Dombroski, representing Daniel & Carol McShane, advised that at the last meeting the PB requested that: 1) Verbiage be put on the small triangle lot, the dimensions and a better description also be included on the plan; and 2) Proof of the Driveway Permit. Mrs. Francis wanted to be sure that the triangle will not be conveyed until a road is built. Mr. Edkins responded that until that time it will remain a part of Lot #1. Lot #2 would be available to build a home on. Mr. Frizzell noted that in the meantime the triangle is needed for the McShane frontage but if and when a road is built it will not be needed for that purpose. The road would have to be designed and built according to Town standards. Mr. Dombroski noted that the triangle cannot be used for anything else. Mr. Edkins assumes that the conveyance from McShane to Connecticut Valley Auto (CVA) would be immediately followed by a conveyance from Connecticut Valley Auto to the Town for that strip of land. They are just reserving the ability to build a road in the event that the property of CVA might be developed. Mr. Edkins knows the Driveway Permit was issued by Mr. Weed, Highway Superintendent, but he does not have a copy at this meeting. Mr. Neill was with Mr. Weed when he looked at the site.

Mr. Jenkins moved to approve this application as complete subject to receipt of the Driveway Permit. Mrs. Francis seconded the motion. With seven members in favor, the motion was approved.

Mr. Jenkins moved to grant final approval for this Two Lot Subdivision for Daniel & Carol McShane subject to the submittal of the actual Driveway Permit before the PB Chair signs the mylar. Mrs. Francis seconded the motion. With seven members in favor, the motion was approved.

PLANNING & POLICY ISSUES:

Sign Regulations: During the last meeting the members talked about changing 8.6.5 (p) on page 4. Mrs. Royce had mentioned that the Annual Yard Sale Day signs usually go up about a month before the event therefore the members talked about if a sign was erected more than two weeks before an event it would require a permit from the Administrator.

Mrs. Francis questioned what the rationale is for the 80 square foot sign in any Zoning District. Mr. Edkins said there was some discussion that 50-square foot signs, specifically along Route 12 in the Zone E District, might not be fully visible when a vehicle is travelling at 50 MPH. Mrs. Francis noted that the new Whelen sign is about 50-square feet and probably 100-feet away from the road, is very legible and easy to read but that is due to the design of the sign rather than the size. If a sign were to be 150-feet or more away from the roadway then the sign could be larger. Mr. Jenkins felt that if you were on Route 12, had an off-premises sign and complied with the sign ordinances (but still have to apply for it) then that would answer the safety question of people traveling down the road and trying to read the sign. Mr. Edkins mentioned 8.6.2 (e) on page 1 – relative to the off premises directional signs not exceeding 6 square feet in area relating to a business. He noted that “Special Exception” - Under State law – goes to the Zoning Board of Adjustment and not the Planning Board. After an applicant went to the ZBA they would have to come back to the Planning Board for a permit for the design of the sign itself. Mr. Thibodeau thought that a larger sign for people that are traveling by depends on how well a sign is made and how far away from the roadway it is.

Mrs. Francis wrote the following for Zone E – Mixed Use Zone (page 3) “Signs located along NH Route 12 where the speed limit is 50 miles per hour or greater shall not exceed 50 square feet except when the location is 150-feet or more from the travel-way it may be 80 square feet”.

Mrs. Francis mentioned 8.6.2 –Sign Design Guidelines- on the top of page 2: Mrs. Francis recommended putting something like the following before (a) – “These guidelines are to be addressed in the permit application” because they are worth considering but if we don’t say it then no one will pay any attention to them. Mr. Edkins asked if Mrs. Francis would consider rather than making the applicant address these verbally on the application, which would make it lengthy, putting these guidelines as a checklist on the back of the application and the PB could go down the list. He likes the preamble saying “The following guidelines are to be considered by the applicant when preparing the application and by the PB when reviewing it”. Mr. Thibodeau suggested that there could be two columns / boxes for both the applicant and the PB. Mr. Edkins said these were intended to be general design guidelines but not intended to be specific design criteria.

Mrs. Francis referenced the bottom of page 2 under 8.6.4 – Sign Design Criteria – the Zones: After Zone B-Business she proposed adding Zone G-1- the Southwest Street area to be sure it is

covered. Mr. Edkins noted that this is a mixed residential and commercial/industrial area where traffic is going 25-30 MPH. He felt this makes sense.

Zone E – All other Zoning Districts – Mrs. Francis feels all the zones should be identified and spelled out. Zone D – This is the Watershed Zone and is limited to 25-square feet. Mr. Edkins did not feel they would be approving any businesses in this zone.

Zones F-1 and F-2 – Industrial Zones: Mrs. Francis felt these should be restricted to 50-square feet signs. CEDA is F-1. The property around Saxonville is F-2. Mr. Edkins felt that at some point they might want to look at the boundaries of these zones.

Under (c) Illumination – Mrs. Francis said they do not want to say that all signs should be illuminated. “Shall” should be changed to “may”. Signs should be “internally lit”.

Public Hearing: Mr. Edkins advised that the PB has time to hold a Public Hearing during their next meeting on January 3rd, 2012. After that the PB can make changes as a result of what they hear at the Public Hearing and have a second Public Hearing on January 17th, 2012, at which time it should be almost finalized. They could make minor or editorial changes but not change the substance of the regulations.

During this meeting the PB agreed to the following changes:

- 8.6.3 – Sign Design Guidelines: Add a short preamble “The following guidelines shall be considered by the applicant in the design of the sign and by the PB in reviewing the sign permit application”. He will put the guidelines on the back of the permit application.
- 8.6.4 – Sign Design Criteria: Add Zones G-1 and Zone D as zones where 25-square feet is the limit.
- Zones F-1 and F-2 will have 50-square feet signs.
- Illumination – Change the wording to: “Illumination of signs shall be by means of steady, shielded light sources -----“rather than “Signs shall be illuminated”.

The members discussed the fact that they could approve an 80-square foot sign if the conditions warrant it or an applicant could go to the ZBA for a Variance if they could prove a hardship. The applicant’s other option would be to go to the ZBA for a Special Exception and it could be granted. The Town can spell out the criteria for a Special Exception but State statute spells out the criteria for a Variance.

It was agreed that the signs should not contain any unnecessary verbiage. Mr. Edkins will put together some language pertaining to this; for example, the sign does not contain unnecessary or excessive verbiage. It should only identify the name and nature of the business.

Directional Signs: Mr. Jellie asked if there are multiple directional signs would the PB need to limit the size. Mr. Neill responded that they had talked about directional signs being uniform. The Town could order the sign but the applicant would have to pay for the sign and pole plus a fee for the Highway Department to go out and put it up. If a business wants to erect a directional sign in the State’s right-of-way they would have to obtain permission from the State.

ADMINISTRATION & CORRESPONDENCE:

Former Indian Shutters Restaurant Sign: Following a conversation about an existing regulation that deals with discontinued signs after 90 days, Mr. Edkins will put this sign on his list of things to address.

Borough Road: Mrs. Francis explained that the circumstances are about the same as two weeks ago on the Borough Road with the recreational vehicle. Mr. Edkins will talk to the Building Inspector about taking over the enforcement by having him contact the owner to at least get the area cleaned-up.

Electric Door Opener: Mr. Lutz asked who he should talk to about having an electric door opener installed on this building. Mr. Neill felt a buzzer might be the answer as it would alert someone inside who would come out to assist the person. He will look into this.

Petition: Larry Crocker did submit the Petition that was discussed at the last meeting but it was not in the proper form for acceptance.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no other business, Mr. Lutz moved to adjourn this meeting. Mr. Thibodeau seconded the motion. With seven members in favor, the motion was approved. The time was 8:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Regina Borden, Recording Secretary

Minutes Filed: 12-27-11

(**Note:** These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections, if necessary, will be found in the Minutes of the January 3, 2012, Planning Board meeting.)