

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON  
PLANNING BOARD MEETING  
Tuesday, March 6, 2012  
356 Main Street, Farmington, NH**

**Board Members Present:** Paul Parker, David Kestner, Charles Doke, Glen Demers, Cindy Snowden

**Selectmen's Representative:** Charlie King

**Town Staff Present:** Director of Planning and Community Development Kathy Menici, Department Secretary Bette Anne Gallagher

**Public Present:** None

**At 6:10 pm Chairman Parker called the meeting to order and all present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD:**

- **Pledge of Allegiance**
- **Review and approve Meeting Minutes of February 21, 2012**

*Charlie King motioned to approve the minutes of February 21, 2012 as written; 2<sup>nd</sup> Glen Demers. Motion carried with five in favor and one abstaining.*

Chairman Parker told the Board that Glen Demers had obtained the handbook, Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques, from the State and that it was free of charge to Planning Board members. He will email the contact information to the Chairman for sharing with the other members.

The Chairman asked Planner Menici to start the discussion on Chapter 2.1. The Planner said she would like to take care of other business first as the items could be quickly reviewed.

- **Any other business to come before the Board**

The Richard's Way update is the latest received from FST and is an informational progress report that does not require any Board action.

Workshops: There are three educational opportunities being offered – two in March and one in May.

The UNH workshop on March 21<sup>st</sup> is probably not of critical importance to the Board, but may be to other Town staff.

The Strafford Regional workshop on March 22<sup>nd</sup> on local water supply is all day and there does not appear to be a charge. This should be interesting to any member able to attend and registration is no later than March 16<sup>th</sup>.

The workshop offered by the Department of Environmental Services is on drinking water source protection. This one is on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. There is a \$40 fee and the Planner said there are some training funds available and there is no OEP spring conference this year.

Planner Menici said she is planning on attending the Strafford Regional workshop and the DES workshop and asked any interested Board members to let Bette or herself know as soon as possible.

- **Discussion of Sections 2.1, 2.5 and 2.9 of the Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques: A Handbook for Sustainable Development covering stormwater management and groundwater protection**

Planner Menici said the handbook that the chapters were taken from was a joint effort by the Department of Environmental Services, the Office of Energy and Planning, Regional Planning Associations, and the NH Municipal Association. There were also contributors from the private sector including soil scientists and foresters.

The Planner said that since the Board will be discussing what could be significant changes to regulations, it might be helpful to review the chapters pertinent to the Town. Chapter 2.1 discusses permanent stormwater management techniques and Chapter 2.5 discusses the protection of groundwater and surface water resources. Chapter 2.9, a new chapter currently available only online, discusses fluvial erosion hazard area zoning. This issue is important to Farmington. The material is very technical and more than one reading is beneficial. The chapters have several pages of a general overview of the subject, technique, when to use and then a model ordinance.

The Planner felt that Chapter 2.1 would be pertinent for site plan issues as well as for subdivisions both residential and commercial. The material in Chapters 2.5 and 2.9 might be more applicable to zoning than to either site plan or subdivision.

Planner Menici said low impact development (LID) is the direction in which site development is headed and can see the Town using LID to retain natural features. She said planning is moving away from traditional types of drainage and moving toward vegetative solutions to retain natural hydrology.

In communities throughout the State developers often make significant changes to topography with little or no thought given as to how existing properties down slope are affected. Groundwater can also be impacted under these circumstances.

The Chairman asked if LID would work better for smaller or larger subdivisions. The Planner replied that standard site planning would be the most cost effective for a four or five lot subdivision but for one of twenty or more lots, LID would be beneficial to both the property owner and the Town in the long run.

David Kestner commented that using LID would increase wetland buffers and consideration should be given to maintenance that could involve clearing by hand rather than equipment and be more costly than cleaning out a swale. He said there are definite positives to LID but the engineering would be changed away from the use of catch basins and swales. He also felt it would be beneficial for the Board to have an option when considering the impact a project's site development could have on surface waters. The

Planner agreed and said LID would be appropriate in some but not all areas and the regulations could specify the areas that would benefit.

Chairman Parker asked how LID would impact existing residential lots and what a property owner could do to the parcel. The Planner said there is a way to deal with that and the Board could discuss it. She said the existing wetlands ordinance offers no real protection and should be revisited by the Board. Additionally, there is a way to limit the impact on lots approved prior to adoption of any changes.

Cindy Snowdon said LID has been a topic of discussion statewide for some time and wondered how long it would be before it became State mandated. Her concern was that previously buildable lots could become unbuildable. Planner Menici replied that many towns have adopted LID and these typically are towns with significant resources to protect. In the case of lots that are affected by new State regulations, a town can grant a variance if there is a State regulation that cannot be waived.

The Board discussed that it is important for the property owner to be aware of State and local regulations that could potentially impact his/her parcel. Cindy Snowdon said several people had asked her about the proposed amendments on this year's warrant and how they could get information on them. The Chairman said they are on the Town's website. Copies will also be available the day of voting. Glen Demers said the Board does not meet in secret and the proposed amendments had been discussed over the course of several months.

Chairman Parker directed the discussion back to the agenda and Section 2.1. Glen Demers said LID is a good idea and should be part of planning. He said that as development makes surfaces less capable of absorbing water when rain comes it is channeled into smaller areas. The Planner said that stormwater management might be better considered as a site planning technique rather than as zoning. She suggested that from this chapter the Board could select those items most beneficial to the Town. This approach would give the Board an opportunity to waive conditions instead of directing applicants to seek a variance. The Planner said the Board could talk about the areas in Town where LID would be applicable.

The Board discussed that since UNH was sponsoring a seminar on this subject maybe someone would be willing to make a presentation to the Board that interested residents could also attend.

All the members agreed that the material should be read several times and careful consideration given to changes to buffers and percent of coverage. Chairman Parker said introducing LID could be a gradual process.

Planner Menici said that Sections 2.5 and 2.9 are more applicable for the zoning ordinance and suggested that the Board hold off on them. The Chairman agreed but felt a brief discussion would be appropriate.

Section 2.9 covers fluvial erosion and how to recognize the impact development, storms and the long term effects of natural flow with management techniques to minimize impact and reduce hazards. Planner Menici said the presentation from Strafford Regional Planning last summer clearly made the point that at some point Farmington will be dealing with these erosion issues. Overlay districts would be created if the management techniques in this section were implemented.

David Kestner said this section raises awareness of the impact on water resources due to development. Glen Demers commented that LID and erosion management are designed to minimize and lessen

damage. Charlie King said he had some concerns that some of the recommendations would have major impacts on the development of some of Farmington's land and suggested that the Board look at specifics as these issues are further discussed.

The difference between permitted and prohibited was briefly discussed. Planner Menici said changing to a prohibited use system could be potentially damaging to the Town. If a land use is missed, it must be allowed but under a permissive system, if a land use is missed, the ZBA can grant a variance. Review is the purpose of the ZBA because it is not possible to think of everything.

Planner Menici said some of the material as written is not appropriate for the Town but some is of benefit and she was glad to the Board giving consideration to the potential benefits.

***At 7:25 David Kestner motioned for a five minutes recess; 2<sup>nd</sup> Charlie King. Motion carried with all in favor. At 7:30 the Board reconvened.***

The subject of Section 2.5 was protection of both groundwater and surface water resources. Chairman Parker said this was the most important of the three sections because the protection of these resources is increasingly becoming a priority. He said this section gives good direction as to the necessary steps to take. Planner Menici said this section was more of a zoning item rather than subdivision or site plan which are the areas on which the Board is focusing. She said it would be addressed as an overlay district initially to protect municipal water supplies and then taken step by step.

Chairman Parker suggested identifying all groundwater resources not just municipal. The Planner said geotechnical surveys are costly and suggested enlisting the help of Water Superintendent Dale Sprague. Charlie King said the Town has a study of water resources underway to identify alternate sites if a well becomes contaminated. The Chairman said the study results can be used in determining what steps can be taken to protect the Town's resources.

It was agreed that Superintendent Sprague would be a valuable resource in determining overlay areas. Planner Menici said the Board could speak with the Superintendent regarding adopting some of the techniques in this section to protect Well 6 and as other sources are identified then other overlays might be adopted. The model ordinance would combine and replace some the existing overlays but would have the same intended outcome.

Some final comments from the members were that the material is very technical; impacts of increased buffer zones on abutters must be considered; would like to hear Superintendent Sprague's views; look at the issues closely. Planner Menici said her intent was to make the Board aware of some of the new approaches to planning with regard to development and the techniques that could be beneficial to the Town. She said she appreciated the Board's willingness to consider and discuss the material presented in the context of today's needs.

Charlie Doke said the Board wants to encourage development along Route 11 and it is important to deal with these matters before development takes place.

Planner Menici said the Board will be reviewing the first pass on the subdivision regulations at the April 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting and in April or May will look at what projects will be undertaken this year. Her suggestion is that if the Board decides to adopt any innovative techniques it should be done as an appendix rather than within the body of the regulations – for example Road Standards. The goal will be to work on the

body of the regulations then any appendices. She also stated that the subdivision and site plan regulations should work together where appropriate and the Chairman said both should work with the zoning ordinances.

There was no other business to come before the Board.

*At 7:53 pm Glen Demers motioned to adjourn; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cindy Snowdon. Motion carried with all in favor.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Bette Anne Gallagher  
Department Secretary

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Chairman, Paul Parker