

Town of Gorham
Planning Board Minutes
September 19, 2013

Members Present: Michael Guay, Dan Buteau, Paul Robitaille, Reuben Rajala, Earl McGillicuddy, Barney Valliere, Wayne Flynn

Absent: John Losier

Excused: Michael Waddell

Members of the Public Present: Robin Frost (Town Manager), Jan Eichler, John Scarinza (Code Enforcement), Sally Brassill, Odd Bersvendenson, Debra Thornblad (Berlin Daily Sun), Becky Theberge, Burke York and Jason Hunter

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 7:04 by Chairman Guay. Chairman Guay appointed Reuben to sit in place of Michael Waddell as a full voting member for the meeting.

Acceptance of Minutes of August 15, 2013: Wayne asked that the minutes be corrected to change the Call to Order – Wayne did not recuse himself from the meeting only from the case for Boisclair/Brouillette/Kelly/Munce. Paul made the motion to accept the minutes as amended which received a second from Wayne. All members voted in favor.

Continuation of Case #03-2013 – Lot Line Adjustment – Lot Merger: Brouillette/Boisclair/Kelley/Munce Neither Chairman Guay nor Town Manager Frost have any new information regarding this project. Burke York informed the board that Mr. Kelly has presented documents to the Bankruptcy Court and are waiting on paperwork which has a deadline in October and that the debtor is dragging their feet. If he does not have any information by the Board's October meeting, he will ask for a continuation. Paul made a motion to extend the deadline to the 3rd Thursday in December 2013 which received a second from Barney. All members voted in favor. Paul then made a motion to continue Case #03-2013 to the October 17, 2013 meeting which received a second from Barney. Wayne abstained, all others voted in favor

Continuation of Case #05-2013 – 443 Main Street - Chairman Guay reported he had no new information on the case and there does not appear to be any activity at the site. On a motion from Paul with a second from Wayne, all members voted in favor to continue the hearing to the October 17, 2013 meeting.

Preliminary Minor Subdivision – Theberge –Burke York presented a preliminary subdivision of Tax Map U18, Lot 4. The parcel was previously 2 lots and were merged for tax purposes. Currently there is a double wide Mobile Home and a single wide Mobile Home on the lot. To subdivide back to the original format would

make non-conforming lots. The current carport is to be moved and each mobile home will have it's own water & sewer. Mike Guay requested setbacks be added to the plans. All members felt that there would not be a requirement for the TRC to review the plan. Burke will bring plans to the Town Hall to get the case on the October 17, 2013 meeting agenda.

Lot Merge – Eichler – A lot merge application for Jan & Pam Eichler for property on Spruce Street was approved in January 2013. As there is a Town Street (Spruce Street) which separates the two parcels, they cannot be merged. The question is how to undue the merge as it has been recorded at the Coos County Registry. Mr. Eichler stated that the original request to merge the parcels came from the fact that one parcel is useless land that was a parking lot that floods every yuear and they were being charged high value for the land. Paul presented a motion to have Town Manager Frost contact Town Council and bring the information to the next meeting. The motion received a second from Barney and all members voted in favor.

Preliminary Site Plan Review – Top Notch Property Management

Odd Bersvendenson presented the preliminary plans to the board. The building located at 259 Main Street is a single family home that has been empty for the past 4 years. Top Notch would like to incorporate it into the Motel as a single family short-term rental unit with housekeeping service during the open season and longer term rentals through the winter months. John Scarinza did a walkthrough of the building and the second floor has an efficiency unit currently. The unit will accommodate up to 10 people. The building will be renovated to bring it up to code with new windows and insulation as well. The existing pavement and garage will be removed and pervious ledgepack will replace it for parking. The building footprint will remain the same. A 6' fence will be installed between the property and the neighboring properties and a 4' fence 1' from the property lines near the road. John Scarinza suggested they contact NH DOT regarding the fence. Wayne felt that if the unit would have a kitchen it would require a variance from the ZBA as did the Duncan case. Jason Hunter felt that precedence had already been set as there are other motels in Town that have kitchens. Paul requested that the plan indicate where the water & sewer lines are located. Mike requested that the setbacks for the shed be on the plan. Barney stated that the Top Notch Inn's history is to have a first class, well manicured property and that they should move forward with this project. In order to get on the ZBA agenda for their October 10, 2013 meeting the variance application would need to be received by the ZBA secretary no later than 9/27/13. John Scarinza will look into the line-of-sign concerns and the setbacks.

New Business:

Absenteeism: The board discussed attendance at meetings. Some alternates are not showing up at meetings. The Board's by-laws do not address how the board will handle absenteeism but RSA 673 dictates that the Board should send a letter to the Board of Selectmen with a list of reasons why a member should be removed at which time the Selectmen would need to hold a public hearing regarding the removal of members. At this time, the board is not going to tackle the issue and will look at changing the by-laws to better be able to access the issue.

Parking: John Scarinza received a call from an architect from Maine regarding parking spaces. Currently the ordinance does not accurately address parking for day care centers. This is also something the board will look into.

Signs: Currently the zoning ordinance states that abandoned signs or those not in good condition be removed. Strictly adhering to the current language would require all signs for businesses that no longer exist would require that the sign be removed from the property. Paul stated that he did not feel that the original intent of the ordinance was to remove the façade and not the whole sign. Michelle Lutz cautioned the board that strictly adhering to the ordinance and making property owners on Main Street remove their signs could cause them not to be able to put another one back up. The Bond Auto property originally removed the sign on the property when they purchased it from Mr. Rugs and when they went to replace it in the same place, DOT made them remove it as it was in the State's ROW and once it was removed it was no longer grandfathered and therefore could be applied to other businesses on Main Street. Burke York suggested that the ordinance be changed to require within 6 months of a business closing, the sign be white washed and kept tidy. Wayne will do some research on this issue.

Old Business:

Gravel Pits: Michelle brought to the board's attention that she had attended a Gravel Tax training recently and there was discussion with the Department of Revenue regarding the Town not addressing Gravel Pits in their ordinance. Town Manager Frost felt that the board currently adopted RSA 155E which covers this issue. Michelle will do some additional research.

North Country Council: Tara Bamford of NCC has informed Chairman Guay that there is no more grant money available to allow Tara to continue to work on the Zoning Ordinance. The dues the Town pays currently pays for questions that are easily answered but would not be for rewriting of the zoning ordinance or things specific to the Town of Gorham. Barney made a motion to add \$4000 to the 2014 Planning Board budget to allow for Tara to continue working with the board for the next 12 months. The motion received a second from Wayne Flynn. All members voted in favor.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2013. Tara Bamford should be added to the next agenda to review the changes she has completed thus far.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by Barney and received a second from Wayne. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned @ 8:50 p.m.