

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

DATE: March 28, 2013
TIME: 6:00 P.M.
PLACE: Fire Station
FOR: Regular Meeting/Public Hearing
PRESENT: Jonathan Hankin, Chairman; Suzanne Fowle; Jack Musgrove; Ethan Culleton
Chris Rembold, Town Planner

Mr. Hankin called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

FORM A'S:

There were no Form A's presented.

MINUTES: MARCH 14, 2013

The Board postponed approval of the minutes to the next meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING: AMENDMENT TO 9.5.6 OF THE ZONING BYLAWS

Mr. Hankin read the public hearing notice into the record. The notice was posted in the Town Hall and advertised in the Berkshire Record on March 1, 2013 and March 8, 2013. Abutters' notices were sent to the nine towns abutting Great Barrington and BRPC.

Mr. Musgrove made a motion to open the public hearing, Ms. Fowle seconded, all in favor. The public hearing was opened at 6:02 P.M.

Mr. Hankin said the amendment to 9.5.6 of the zoning bylaws would allow the Design Advisory Committee to more easily fill the vacancy specific to a landscape architect. The change would allow the vacancy to be filled by a "design professional" allowing for more opportunity to fill the position. The amendment would also allow the boards that appoint a member to represent them on the committee to also appoint an alternate to make it easier to get a quorum.

Mr. Hankin asked if there were any comments. There were none.

Mr. Musgrove made a motion to close the public hearing, Ms. Fowle seconded, all in favor. The public hearing was closed at 6:03 P.M.

Mr. Musgrove made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the Annual Town Meeting to accept the zoning amendment, Ms. Fowle seconded, all in favor.

SPECIAL PERMIT: CONSTRUCT INC. 314 STATE ROAD

The Planning Board conducted a site visit prior to the meeting.

Cara Davis was present for Construct Inc. Ms. Davis said the application requests a two-family use at 314 State Road. Two new walls would be constructed to create the second unit. Two new doors and a new access would be created. There would be no change to the footprint, office space or lot.

Mr. Hankin said all the changes would take place under the roof.

Ms. Davis said correct.

Mr. Musgrove asked how many additional people would be accommodated by the change.

Ms. Davis said one or two only.

Two abutters were present, Mary Lorian, 310 State Road and Christine Hagen, 318 State Road.

An abutter, Ms Lorian expressed her concerns over the change impacting her property value. She said there had been a stabbing at the house and she felt Construct was sneaking this change in on her.

Mr. Hankin said the public hearing to make a decision on the application would be held by the Board of Selectmen on April 22. He said the Planning Board is a recommending Board.

Mr. Musgrove said the structure is not being changed. There really are no planning issues.

Ms. Hagen said she is concerned about the increase use on the sewer and water system.

Mr. Hankin said the impact would be very small.

Ms. Lorian said there was a discussion at a recent Selectman's meeting about the sewer system having a problem.

Mr. Rembold said the sewer system use is half of what it was designed for. The discussion was about the system getting old and needing some upgrades. Both the water and sewer system have plenty of capacity for new customers. There are no infrastructure issues.

Ms. Davis said Construct tries to screen the applicants. There is another congregate home down the road where there are no issues. She said she expected to have the same situation at this home. Ms. Davis said there was a person at the 314 State Road house that was not ready to be there. He is no longer there. The goal is a healthy living environment.

Ms. Lorian said her concerns had been addressed.

Mr. Musgrove read through the site plan review criteria. There were no issues.

Mr. Musgrove made a motion to approve site plan review, Ms. Fowle seconded, all in favor.

Mr. Musgrove made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the Board of Selectmen on the special permit application for a two-family use at 314 State Road, Ms. Fowle seconded all in favor.

MASTER PLAN LAND USE CHAPTER:

Mr. Rembold said the Land Use chapter discussed the history of land use and development trends in Great Barrington. He said there was a build out of the town showing the population could double. There is enough land available but there is a lot of land that is cut up and/or not accessible.

Mr. Musgrove asked what the capacity for infill is.

Mr. Rembold said he didn't have a good idea of that. He said he did look at the types and age of houses in the town and many could be made into two-family units. He said at some point there may be a suggestion to allow two-family homes by-right instead of requiring a special permit.

Mr. Rembold said there are many areas that could be built out. Some areas might require zoning changes to allow for more density in areas that are already served by infrastructure and have no habitat concerns.

Mr. Hankin said we need to look at the zoning in Housatonic and B-2 general business district. He said it would be nice to come up with something to fit the transition zones such as Maple Avenue. The R-2 zone goes up West Street near the hospital. He said it would also be worth looking at the areas between Main Street and River Street. It would be nice to make a seamless blend between the residential and small business.

Mr. Rembold said the Master Plan committee has discussed doing away with the B-2-A zone and rewrite the zoning to better reflect the scenic nature of the gateway districts. Stockbridge Road is a business area with residential right behind the businesses. He said it may require performance standards to reduce the conflicts between the two districts.

Mr. Rembold suggested zoning that would funnel mixed use growth into the transition area to take the pressure off the areas with environmental issues.

Mr. Hankin said any area that is within walking distance to town is getting more desirable.

Mr. Rembold said developing those areas is a focus. He said River Street is an area that could accommodate multi-family use.

Mr. Hankin agreed but said that area is more industrial than residential.

Mr. Rembold said it is a perfect area for a stronger neighborhood. Iredale has expressed interest in developing the area with mixed uses. It would be a good area for development.

Mr. Hankin said anything that intensifies housing within walking distance to town is good.

OTHER ISSUES AND CONCERNS:

Mr. Rembold said the Board will have a variance to make a recommendation on for an addition to a home on Cypress Street. He asked if the Board wanted to set a site visit.

Mr. Hankin said the addition would be within the footprint of the house. He did not think a site visit was necessary. The special permit will be on the agenda for the April 11 meeting.

Ginger Warnes was present to briefly discuss creating a second dwelling unit at 29 Avery Lane. She said the issue is that the existing structure is too close the property line. She said she would like to create a 425 square foot dwelling within an existing barn.

Mr. Rembold said it would be allowed with a special permit from the ZBA.

Mr. Musgrove said there would be no change in the footprint.

Richard Coons, the abutter, was present. The Board asked if he was present to discuss this matter. Mr. Coons said no he was present for the Master Plan meeting. He said this was the first he had heard about this proposal.


Ms. Warnes said the building is on piers and it would need a foundation.

Mr. Rembold said that even if the use were conforming it would need a special permit.

Mr. Hankin suggested working with what is there.

Without objection Mr. Hankin adjourned the meeting at 7:26 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


Kimberly L. Shaw
Planning Board Secretary