

PLANNING BOARD

DATE: September 26, 2013
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: Large Meeting Room
FOR: Regular Meeting
PRESENT: Jonathan Hankin, Chairman; Suzanne Fowle; Jack Musgrove; Brandee Nelson

Also Present: Chris Rembold, Town Planner

Mr. Hankin called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

FORM A'S:

There were no Form A's presented.

MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 12, 2013

Ms. Fowle made a motion to approve the minutes of September 12 as amended, Mr. Musgrove seconded, all in all favor.

SPECIAL PERMIT: 383 NORTH PLAIN ROAD

Applicants Thomas and June Lovett were present with their architect Diego Gutierrez to discuss their special permit application and site plan review application for a two-family use on a single lot.

Mr. Gutierrez said the house is located opposite the corner of North Plain Road and Main Street in Housatonic. The addition of an 875 square foot in-law apartment will consist of two bedrooms, a bathroom and kitchen and a living space. It will have a separate entrance.

Ms. Nelson asked if there would be any exterior lighting.

Mr. Lovett said over the entrance.

Mr. Musgrove read the site plan review criteria. He made a motion to approve site plan review with the condition that any exterior lighting would be downward directed and not spill onto the street, 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 on a single lot, Ms. Fowle seconded, all in favor.

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

Mr. Rembold said the Housing Needs Study had been finalized. The findings were similar to those of the Master Plan studies that show housing costs are too high and there is not enough low end affordable housing. The study determined that two-thirds of homeowners are over 70. Houses are too big and difficult to heat. Fifty five percent of renters are cost burdened by rental costs approximately 8% higher than the rest of the State.

Mr. Rembold said it is recommended that 2-family homes should be allowed by-right in zones that currently require special permits.

Mr. Musgrove agreed.

Mr. Hankin said it makes sense but it might be tough sell at the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Rembold suggested that accessory dwelling units also be allowed by-right.

Mr. Rembold said in the coming months the staff will be working on a Community Block Grant for affordable housing. He said Becket recently received a grant that benefitted 80 recipients.

Mr. Musgrove asked if it would be used for homeowners to build rental units.

Mr. Rembold said yes, there could be money for renovations and creating affordable housing. He said the money would be handled by the Housing Authority who would qualify people and disperse the money. He said it would be a small step toward creating more affordable housing.

Mr. Rembold said if the Master Plan is approved, some of the suggested zoning amendments might be put on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. Mr. Rembold said the grant application efforts might be combined with Sheffield as the State tends to look more favorably on combined applications.

Mr. Rembold said there is a Solar Grant we are going to apply for. Mr. Fick will be the Town's Solar Coach promoting the grant and making people aware of it. The Town will get a solar installer, then residents will be able to get together with the installer to use grant money if approved.

Mr. Hankin said he and Mr. Rembold had a meeting with the new Town Manager, Jennifer Tabakin to make her aware of the Planning Board discussion of medical marijuana clinics. Mr. Hankin said Ms. Tabakin suggested there could be concerns with school Superintendent Peter Dillon and the School Committee. Mr. Hankin said we were going to have a follow-up meeting with the Chief of Police and the School Committee, but Ms. Tabakin discussed it with them independently and there were no issues.

Mr. Hankin asked if Town Counsel had responded to the questions the Planning Board had.

Mr. Rembold said no.

Mr. Hankin said the major concern is around where kids congregate such as schools and playgrounds.

Ms. Nelson said she pictures this use as a doctor's office type setting.

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Mr. Hankin said there are strict regulations for a controlled environment and regulations on the look of the entity and the type of signage used. He said there is a mandatory educational component so it is possible it could be a non-profit educational use.

Mr. Rembold said there will be tax revenue generated from the facilities; he did not think they could be exempt educational uses.

Mr. Musgrove said we need to be able to make the setback less than 500 feet from the restricted areas.

Mr. Hankin said there are 52 pages of regulations.

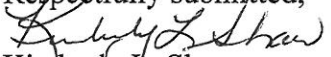
Mr. Rembold suggested it be a point of discussion at the second meeting in October.

Mr. Musgrove said yes we should discuss it then.

Mr. Hankin asked that the regulations be circulated.

Ms. Fowle said we need a response from Town Counsel.

Mr. Hankin said the next meeting will be focused on the Master Plan and the Selectmen will be attending the meeting. Without objection, Mr. Hankin adjourned the meeting at 8:04 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly L. Shaw
Planning Board Secretary

Materials distributed for the Meeting:

Draft Minutes of September 12, 2013

Town Planner's email to Planning Board, dated September 24, 2013

Special Permit application for 383 North Plain Road

BRPC final draft Housing Needs Assessment dated September 13, 2013

