

Moultonborough Planning Board
P.O. Box 548
Moultonborough, NH 03254

Work Session Minutes

December 15, 2009

Present: Members: Judy Ryerson, Natt King, Jane Fairchild, Joanne Coppinger (arrived at 5:10);
Ed Charest (Selectmen's Representative) Alternates: Peter Jensen, Keith Nelson
Excused: Members: Jim Bakas, Eric Taussig; Town Planner, Dan Merhalski

Ms. Ryerson convened the meeting at 5:05 and appointed Keith Nelson and Peter Jensen to sit in place of Jim Bakas and Eric Taussig.

Ms. Fairchild and Mr. Charest stated that they needed to leave at 6. With Ms. Fairchild's interest mostly now in the possible amendments to the Sign Article, the Board took up that issue first.

A brief discussion followed about what our broad objective was and the consensus was that they would attempt to make a few small changes to the Sign Article (V) as it currently exists, ask Land Use staff to develop a table displaying the particulars of the chapter, which should not be part of the amendment that goes onto the 2010 ballot, and to work on a full re-write for 2011 beginning early enough in the year so that the Board can get it finished in an orderly fashion.

The changes proposed for this year, and agreed to by the sitting members by consensus were:

p. 12, V, E, last line. To "No sign may advertise a business off site" add ", with the exception of directional signs as per Section H.

p. 13, Section H, Directional signs, to be re-written:

H. Directional signs on town roads, no greater in size than 4 sq feet for business identification and direction only, may be allowed by permit for businesses off site at the discretion of the Selectboard if it is deemed necessary by the Board for traffic and safety reasons.

Eliminate the subsections. The reasoning here is that businesses can apply to the state for directions signs (about 4 sq. ft) on state roads. Similar signs on town roads should mirror that and should be so limited in size that they are truly directional. The Board also discussed perhaps specifying a number, but didn't come to a conclusion on that.

P. 13, Temporary signs G, line 3, after "(15) consecutive days" add ", not more than once in any 90 day period,"

Ms. Fairchild would like to have wording in the section saying that internally illuminated signs are not allowed in the Village Zone. Majority of the Board expressed doubts about this suggestion.

If these proposed changes are approved by the voters staff can then prepare a table similar to the one proposed by Ms. Fairchild.

There was some discussion about "Dark Skies" ordinance and speculation about what more the Board could put in it since they already have full cut off, and cut off provisions and they seem to be working well. One additional aspect could still be limiting lighting to one hour after the close of a business. Board members all acknowledged the need to work with Planner on this.

After Ms. Fairchild and Mr. Charest left the Board took up the Route 25 amendment, acknowledging that that amendment had already been forwarded to Town Counsel for his comments, but reporting that based on what he had reviewed, he saw no problems with the amendment as written and that any changes the Board was discussing did not substantially change the amendment.

The few items that the remaining board had concerns about were:

In (2) a. a requirement for “undisturbed natural” vegetation is a concern for several members, and it appeared to be internally contradictory with the phrase in the next sentence “natural vegetation or landscaping” and further complicated by “Wherever feasible, the natural undisturbed vegetation shall be maintained...” The thought being that the developer will say it isn’t feasible and clear it. Board members went back and forth on this with additional concerns about trees being evenly spaced, perhaps better to have them unevenly spaced for a more natural appearance. There was a general discussion about this amendment being tough on retail business which needs visibility to thrive, and discussion about aesthetics of natural vs. landscaped. Board members felt that this will require further discussion.

Mr. Nelson noted his concerns about the sentence in 2, a, “Where existing sites being proposed for *redevelopment* do not allow sufficient space...” He, and others, thought the need of a clear definition of redevelopment, or another word if it defines the situation better. If a site is to be cleared or substantially physically changed, perhaps this is ok, but if it is a change of use or minor alternation, not so much.

Lastly, Mr. Nelson felt that the wording on parking availability off site needs additional work, pointing out that the additional language “if the applicant can prove...and shall not reduce the availability of parking for another business” needs to be improved or eliminated, as any additional parking will necessarily “reduce the availability of parking for another business.” The sitting members felt that the sentence should end at “waived,” as it does currently.

Ms. Ryerson suggested to the board that in order to get the first Public Hearing scheduled for January 11, and allowing time for a second hearing if necessary, they should finalize their work at their meeting of 12/21 as the notice needs to be in the paper on December 23. Noting additional refinements can be made later, but the Board should vote on the amendments they will be forwarding and have a pretty firm idea of what will be in them.

Ms. Ryerson closed the work session at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bonnie L. Whitney
Administrative Assistant