



Minutes

NORTH HAMPTON PLANNING BOARD Work Session Monday, August 16, 2004

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These minutes were prepared as a reasonable summary of the essential content of this meeting, not as a transcription. An audio recording of the meeting is available in the Town Office. In the event that a question arises about verbatim comments, it can be answered by listening to the recording.

Attendance

Attendees: (1) Shep Kroner, Vice-Chairman; (2) Judy Day; (3) Craig Salomon; (4) Ron Todd; (5) Joseph Arena; (6) Jill Robinson, Circuit Rider/RPC; and (7) Krystina Deren Arrain, Planning & Zoning Administrator/Recording Secretary.

Members Absent: (1) Phillip Wilson, Chairman; (2) Jon Rineman, Selectperson Representative; (3) Beth Church, Alternate; and (4) Laurel Pohl, Alternate.

Guests: (1) Bob Gross, 148 Lafayette Road and (2) Gary Stevens, 228 Atlantic Avenue.

Mr. Kroner chaired the meeting and called it into session at 7:05 PM.

Items Considered

The Board received a letter and a "Site Specific Application (for dredging and filling)" dated August 4, 2004 from DES filed by PD Associates for 238,000 square feet of disturbed area. Mr. Kroner expressed concern about this application. Mr. Todd expressed concern that while Ms. Arrain was on vacation, the receipt of Board materials was put on hold. Mr. Kroner remarked that he would talk to Town Administrator about coverage for Ms. Arrain during vacation times. The Board was concerned whether the Town Engineer and Conservation Commission had an opportunity to review the DES application. Ms. Arrain noted that the Town Engineer is on vacation and Commission only meets once a month and it was likely that they had not reviewed the application.

Sign Ordinance [Jill Robinson]

Ms. Robinson stated that she and Mr. Wilson worked together on the updated draft sign ordinance named [*Amendments to Section 506 Signs and Billboards / Town of North Hampton Zoning Ordinance*] and updated draft site plan review regulation named [*Proposed Amendments to the Site plan Review Regulations – Section X.F. 3.c*] that would be discussed.

She reviewed elements of the zoning ordinance update in a chronological fashion by clarifying the following items contained within the document:

- 506.1 Purpose
- 506.2 Definitions

- 506.3 Signs Authorized Without a Sign Permit
- 506.4 Signs Authorized With A Permit
- 506.5 Sign Permit Requirements
- 506.6 Prohibited Signs
- 506.9 Non-conforming Signs

Ms. Robinson noted that the sign amortization feature was removed, because NH law affirmed that a sign was a structure and as such, an ordinance mandating the replacement of a sign was not legal.

Mr. Todd asked what was the “big picture” focus of the Board in rewriting the ordinance. He noted that one of the Board’s concerns was the fact that the ZBA normally issued variances for signs for specific reasons. Mr. Todd wondered whether the Planning Board was addressing that particular concern. Ms. Robinson responded that she was not aware of the ZBA issues. Her focus in developing the sign ordinance was to address aesthetics. Ms. Day agreed that she felt that an updated sign ordinance should address aesthetics. She noted that the Building Inspector stated that because there was a lack of clarity in the existing sign ordinance, as a result, there were numerous applications for variances. Ms. Robinson noted that safety was the most important reason for the development of a new sign ordinance. Further discussion ensued about the document. Dr. Arena said the purpose of a sign was to provide information.

Ms. Robinson suggested performing a sign inventory. The sign inventory would provide a historical reference for future permitting issues. Dr. Arena asked about balloons. Ms. Robinson stated she would review that issue. Mr. Todd asked about accepted standards for sign designs. In response, Ms. Robinson suggested incorporating guidelines for sign development from the sign industry in the sign ordinance update. Mr. Salomon remarked that guidelines should be associated to the individual zone districts. Ms. Robinson noted that ground signs were reduced from 40 square feet to 30 square feet and wall signs reduced from two 12 sq ft to one wall sign not to exceed 12 square feet. She commented that site plan regulations address aesthetics and/or the design of the signs.

There was discussion about the replacement of pre-existing non-conforming signs as referenced in Section X.F.3.c. Mr. Salomon noted that a zoning ordinance couldn’t authorize an abatement of property tax as an incentive for voluntarily bringing non-conforming signs into compliance. Dr. Arena protested that sandwich board or promotional signs are unattractive. Mr. Todd suggested that the Board should encourage business in the area by updating the sign ordinance to incorporate business as well as the townspeople’s preference. Ms. Robinson responded that she would review the Board’s recommendations and would edit the promotional signs section. Mr. Kroner suggested that Board members should review the updated draft documents and provide suggestions to Ms. Robinson directly or during the next work session.

Gary Stevens, 228 Atlantic Avenue, remarked that multi-tenant signs that are reduced in size would prompt numerous ZBA applications. He said that multi-tenant signs for a shopping center are counter-productive.

Ms. Robinson commented that appointing a sign enforcement officer who would report to the Planning Board could enhance code enforcement. The Board's sign enforcement officer would provide reports to the Board when dealing with a site plan review or seasonal signs.

Sustainable Development Audit [Jill Robinson / RPC]

Mr. Robinson distributed the following two documents:

- RPC Sustainable Development Audit 2004, [Work Plan?] and
- RPC Sustainable Development Audit 2004 / Youth Participation in the Sustainable Development Audit

She reviewed elements contained within the documents briefly and requested that Board members review the materials independently. Ms. Robinson commented that a joint board work session must be scheduled. Ms. Arrain recommended that she review town boards schedules and submit dates for consideration. Ms. Arrain stated she would coordinate the scheduling effort. Ms. Robinson distributed and discussed the Circuit Rider contract and noted changes in the Coastal Program portion. Ms. Robinson also distributed and elaborated on:

- *"Important Deadlines For The Official Ballot Town Meeting [for SB-2 Towns]"* and
- *"New Hampshire Legislative Update -- Ben Frost" regarding:*
 - Senate Bill 414
 - House Bill 761
 - Senate Bill 359
 - House Bill 1148
 - House Bill 803
 - House Bill 713, and
 - Senate Bill 534.

Committee Update Reports

Change of Use [Craig Salomon, Chairman]

Mr. Salomon stated that he had no update to report.

Long Range Planning/LRP [Judy Day, Chairperson]

Ms. Day stated and displayed a three-ring binder containing information that the LRP subcommittee had gathered and compiled. This information is publicly available in the Heritage Room at the Town Clerk's Office. She announced that the next meeting of the committee would be August 17, 2004. Ms. Day added that Donald Gould had created a needs assessment that would be distributed to the town departments. She contacted NHMA asking how the LRP work is compared to the CIP. She reported that the NHMA said it was intertwined.

Ms. Day added that she contacted many towns asking for input on town complex development. Her inquiries resulted in the information that none had built town offices, but had built either or both police and fire station facilities. Ms. Day added that she was advised that when planning for town office space, the suggested space estimate should be doubled because the office space is filled to capacity soon after the area is occupied. Ms. Day also contacted NHMA to inquire about funding procedures for consultant fees for the subcommittee's activities. The NHMA acknowledged that the Planning Board would initiate funding requests to the Board of

Selectmen. Ms. Day applauded the subcommittee members for their commitment and activities noting that the subcommittee report summary would be completed in December 2004.

Minutes from prior meetings

Minutes of the June 21, 2004 Work Session

**Dr. Arena moved Mr. Salomon seconded the motion to approve the minutes as submitted.
*The vote was 4-0 with Ms. Day abstaining***

Minutes of the June 23, 2004 Special Meeting

**Mr. Todd moved and Ms. Day seconded the motion to approve the minutes as submitted.
*The vote was unanimous (5-0).***

Minutes of the July 19, 2004 Work Session Meeting

Because a quorum was not present of members who attended the work session, review of the minutes was postponed until the August 16, 2004 work session.

Minutes of the July 21, 2004 Special Meeting

Because a quorum was not present of members who attended the special meeting, review of the minutes was postponed until the August 16, 2004 work session.

Minutes of the August 3, 2004 Regular Meeting

**Dr. Arena moved and Ms. Day seconded the motion to approve the minutes as amended.
*The vote was 4-0 with Mr. Salomon abstaining.***

Other Business

Engineering Escrow Summary Account

Mr. Kroner briefly elaborated on the summary Engineering Escrow account. Ms. Arrain noted that interest would have to be paid to applicants on any returned funds after the completion of their application.

Adjournment

**Mr. Todd moved and Dr. Arena seconded the motion to adjourn.
*The vote was unanimous (5-0).***

The meeting adjourned at 9:53 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Krystina Deren Arrain
Recording Secretary/Planning & Zoning Administrator