

Meeting Minutes Town of North Hampton Zoning Board of Adjustment Tuesday, August 28, 2012, at 6:30pm Town Hall, 201 Atlantic Avenue North Hampton, New Hampshire ("Meeting")

These Minutes were prepared as a reasonable summary of the essential content of the Meeting, not as a transcription. All exhibits mentioned in these Minutes are a part of the Town Record.

Attendance:

Members present: Robert B. Field, Jr., Chair; David Buber, Vice Chair; George Lagassa, Phelps Fullerton, and Robert Landman. (5)

Members absent: None.

Alternates present: Dennis Williams, Jonathan Pinette and Lisa Wilson. (3)

Administrative Staff present: Wendy Chase, Recording Secretary, and Kevin Kelley, Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer, who retired from the Meeting at 8:30 pm.

Preliminary Matters; Procedure; Swearing in of Witnesses (RSA 673:14 and 15); Recording Secretary Report

Chair Field welcomed Kevin Kelley, the newly hired Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Office, who was present for part of the Meeting.

Mr. Kelley introduced himself to the Members and Audience and said that he was looking forward to working with the different Boards in Town and invited the Board to contact him anytime, and that he was good about getting back to people. He said that he is already dealing with Code Enforcement issues in the short time that he's been here.

Chair Field commented on the importance of Code Enforcement and mentioned the new Section of the Zoning Ordinance that recently passed at the May Town Meeting regarding Enforcement.

Chair Field Called the Meeting to Order at 6:32 p.m.

<u>Pledge of Allegiance</u> -Chair Field invited the Board Members and those in attendance to rise for a Pledge of Allegiance and noted that reciting the Pledge of Allegiance is solely for those who choose to do so and failure, neglect or inability to do so will have no bearing on the decision making of the Board or the rights of an individual to appear before, and request relief from, the Board.

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44 <u>Introduction of Members and Alternates - Chair Field introduced Members of the Board and the</u> 45 Alternates who were present (as identified above).

<u>Recording Secretary Report - Ms.</u> Chase reported that the August 28, 2012, Meeting <u>Agenda</u> was properly published in the August 10, 2012 edition of the <u>Portsmouth Herald</u>, and, posted at the Library, Town Clerk's Office, Town Office and on the Town's website.

Chair Field then briefly explained the Board's operating Rules and Procedures to those present.

<u>Swearing In Of Witnesses –</u> Pursuant to <u>RSA 673: 14 and 15</u>, Chair Field swore in all those who were present and who intended to act as witnesses and/or offer evidence to the Board in connection with any Case or matter to be heard at the Meeting.

Chair Field explained that the July 26, 2012, Meeting was cancelled due to the absence of material for pending Cases and that there were no "new" cases before the Board for consideration.

Mr. Fullerton stated that he was absent for the June 26, 2012 Meeting and Alternate Member Dennis Williams had been seated in his stead. He deferred to the Chair and Mr. Williams regarding Mr. William's sitting for him on the Martin Case (#2012:03) because Mr. Williams was present at both the May 22, 2012 and June 26, 2012 Meetings when Mr. Martin's case was heard by the Board, unless there was an objection from Mr. Martin.

Chair Field then inquired of Mr. Martin as to his reaction, and Mr. Martin responded that he had no objections to Alternate Williams being seated for Member Fullerton regarding his Case.

Chair Field seated Alternate Williams for Mr. Fullerton for <u>Case #2012:03</u>, and the approval of Minutes.

Approval of Minutes:

1. <u>June 26, 2012, Regular Meeting Minutes – Minor typographical errors were corrected.</u> Mr. Lagassa made the following change to Line 333, "Mr. Lagassa concurred with Mr. Landman and said that additional drainage that flows from impervious surfaces on neighboring properties is the responsibility of the people who own the neighboring property and what flows onto the property from surrounding properties is out of the control of the Applicant."

Mr. Landman Moved, and Mr. Lagassa Seconded, the Motion to accept the amendment made by Mr. Lagassa.

81 The Vote was unanimous in Favor of the Motion (5-0).

Chair Field proposed the following change between Lines <u>619 and 623</u>, "The Board analyzed the Supreme Court of <u>Henry and Murphy</u> v. <u>Town of Allenstown.</u> The Board accepted the point of view that there were some issues that were "grandfathered" as reflected in its earlier decision, but, as to the entire proposal being "grandfathered", the Board rejected such interpretation."

Mr. Landman Moved, and Mr. Lagassa Seconded, the Motion to accept the amendment proposal made by Chair Field.

90 The Vote was unanimous in Favor of the Motion (5-0).

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Mr. Landman referred to <u>Line 295</u> and said that Mr. Farrell's comments came after the Chair requested comment from those in "favor" of the proposal, and he did not believe Mr. Farrell was in "favor" of the proposal.

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Chair Field suggested correcting the potential problem by adding to the beginning of the sentence, "Although not technically in favor of the proposal...". The Board agreed with the Chair's suggested amendment.

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- Mr. Landman then Moved, and Mr. Buber Seconded, the Motion, to approve the June 26, 2012 Meeting Minutes as amended.
- 102 The Vote was unanimous in favor of the Motion (5-0).

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- 2. August 3, 2012, "Special" Meeting Minutes (Public Session) Mr. Landman Moved, and Mr. Buber Seconded, the Motion to approve the August 3, 2012 "Special" Meeting Minutes (Public Session) as written and presented.
- The Vote was unanimous in Favor of the Motion (3 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 abstentions). Mr. Lagassa and Mr. Williams abstained for reasons of non-attendance at the "Special" Meeting.

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- 3. August 3, 2012, "Special" Meeting Minutes (Non-Public Session) Mr. Landman Moved, and Mr. Buber Seconded, the Motion to approve the August 3, 2012 "Special" Meeting Minutes (Non-Public
- 112 Session) as written and presented.
- 113 The Vote was unanimous in Favor of the Motion (3 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 abstentions). Mr.
- Lagassa and Mr. Williams abstained for reasons of non-attendance at the "Non-Public" "Special"

115 **Meeting.**

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Unfinished Business:

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- 1. (Continued) #2012:03 Property Owner: Glenn Martin, 11 Evergreen Drive, North Hampton, NH
 03862. Applicant: Same as Owner; Property location: 9 Hampshire Drive, North Hampton, NH 03862;
- 121 **M/L 007-136-000; Zoning District: R-1.** The Applicant requests the following Variances: (1) Article IV,
- 122 Section 409.8.a relief for a septic system setback of 70.5-feet where 75-feet is required, and (2) Article
- 123 IV, Section 409.9.A.2 relief for a structure 21.4-feet from poorly drained soils where 50-feet is required.
- 124 This Case is <u>continued</u> from the June 26, 2012 ZBA Meeting, additional independent technical review by third (3rd) party was requested by the Board.

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- In attendance for this Application:
- 128 Glenn Martin, Owner/Applicant

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- 130 Chair Field gave a brief chronological history on what has transpired with Mr. Martin's Case #2012:03:
 - The Chair, as directed and authorized by the Board, wrote to Dr. Leonard Lord of the Rockingham County Conservation District ("RCCD") requesting that the RCCD to review the sense of the Board regarding the granting of the two (2) additional Variances requested, <u>subject</u> to the technical review and endorsement by an independent third (3rd) party expert reviewer.
 - RCCD responded that they would and could perform the technical review and gave an estimate of the requested analysis in the amount of \$2,985.00. RSA 676: V (a) provides that the Board has the opportunity to conduct technical reviews at the expense of the Applicant unless a

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planning board has requested and received a report on substantially the same subject matter. The Conservation Commission did address related elements of this Case back in April or May, and a communication received by the Board from the Conservation Commission, dated May 29, 2012, indicated that the RCCD had advised that it had "insufficient information" to make an informed judgment and they did not come up with an analysis.

- Communication between the Administrative Assistant and Applicant's counsel occurred during
 the summer, but Chair Field responded that the Board had **not** received a written response from
 the Applicant stating that they would bear the <u>RSA 676: V (a)</u> cost.
- A communication from Applicant was received on August 14, 2012 advising the Board that the
 Applicant was willing to pay up to 50% of the total cost and have the Conservation Commission
 pay the other 50%. The Chair opined that the Board does not have jurisdiction over the internal
 affairs of the Conservation Commission.
- Absent third (3rd) party review, the Board does not yet have all of the information requested on the "septic system" and "drainage analysis" in order to make an informed "final" decision.
- Chair Field recently communicated with the Conservation Commission, to confirm the Conservation Commission Chair's recollection of events, and the Conservation Commission Chair ratified the sequence of events as recalled by the Chair.
- The information/plans received by the Board had changed from May to June, and the Conservation Commission and Zoning Board were, therefore, not dealing with the same information or issues.

Chair Field asked Mr. Martin where he stood with the Application and the payment of "technical review" fees. He stated that the Board has adopted an informal policy of checking with applicants as a courtesy BEFORE unilaterally engaging review professionals at an applicant's expense.

Mr. Martin explained that he received a copy of a response from the RCCD to the Conservation Commission, dated May 17, 2012, and that several of his proposals made to the Board reflected such comments.

Chair Field read into the record the last paragraph of the RCCD "response" to which Mr. Martin referred, "Based on the information provided for this review, this application is substantially incomplete. I recommend the application be continued to allow the applicant to provide adequate information on which to judge the proposal. If the applicant is unwilling to provide the additional information requested in a timely manner, the application should be denied." The letter was signed by Michael Cuomo, NH Certified Soil Scientist.

Chair Field explained that what was submitted to RCCD, on behalf of the Conservation Commission, has no bearing to this Board and to Mr. Martin's Application; the two (2) issues the ZBA asked for technical advice on from the RCCD were (1) the septic system design to be signed off by the RCCD as the review Board, and (2) concern about the drainage pattern over the subject lot, and whether or not there was a threat to the Little River system as a result of the drainage pattern.

Mr. Martin read item number six (6) from the RCCD report into the record, "The wastewater disposal system is shown 70.5 feet from the wetland edge on the preliminary plan, where normally 75 feet is required (Zoning 409.8). The impact of the wastewater disposal system on the wetland should be negligible as an advanced pretreatment unit is specified on the preliminary plan. The pretreatment unit cleans the wastewater very well before the effluent is released into the soil for final disposal. A high percentage of the nitrogen and phosphorus is removed from the wastewater; these are nutrients that

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negatively alter wetland ecology when present in excess. Bacteria and pathogens are also removed by pretreatment." Mr. Martin explained that the septic plan they intend to submit is the same plan Mr. Cuomo referred to in his review (number 6).

Mr. Martin referred to the estimate from RCCD, dated July 16, 2012, estimate #9200, in the amount of \$2,985.00, and said that he will pay the bill that RCCD submits to the Town for their review, but reserves the right for "application of hardship"; he said that he was told the Town offers that option.

Chair Field interjected and said that he has no knowledge of an "application of hardship" procedure, and the ZBA has no jurisdiction to get involved in a Town fiscal matter; but, if Mr. Martin wishes to seek such relief from the Town it was entirely up to him to do so, and suggested he speak to whomever is taking over the responsibilities of the departing Town Administrator, Steve Fournier.

Upon inquiry of the Board by the Chair, it continued to be the consensus that they would like to obtain the advice and counsel from RCCD on Mr. Martin's Application, Case #2012:03. The following was discussed at the June 26, 2012 Meeting: Chair Field declared that a Sense of the Meeting is that the Applicant has materially addressed the concerns that were raised at the last Meeting. There are still the septic and drainage issues and the Decision Letter, but it is the sense of the Board that it is inclined to grant the final two (2) Variances, meaning all four (4) will have been granted because of the "grandfathering" principle, and because the Applicant has met the standards under the five (5) standards, and hopefully the Board will have an answer for the Applicant at the next Meeting. Chair Field said the Decision Letter must be written precisely. He said the Board could assign the matter to one of the Members to craft the Decision Letter and bring back to the Board next month for approval. He said the three (3) issues are drainage, septic, and the content of the Decision Letter.

Chair Field said that he, as well as the other Board Members, received a communication signed by several members of the community, and from Alternate Lisa Wilson, expressing concerns relating to the ZBA proposed actions. Ms. Chase did not receive a copy of Mrs. Wilson's communication for the permanent record. Secretary's note: Chair Field forwarded Mrs. Wilson's communication, dated July 7, 2012 to Ms. Chase on August 29, 2012, and she forwarded a copy to Mr. Martin per his request.

Chair Field explained to Mr. Martin that the Board has adopted, over the past few months, an informal position, where the Board, as a matter of courtesy, gives the Applicant the opportunity to decide whether or not to go forward after receiving the estimate; the Board needs the information and does not have the independent funds to pay for reviews; and, therefore, the Applicant becomes directly responsible for it.

Mr. Martin voiced his concerns over the review from the RCCD and questioned whether or not he will be billed for certain review items that the RCCD already performed for, and billed to, the Conservation Commission. He gave an example of item #4 – "Field Review" - \$380.00. He said that Mr. Cuomo already did a "Field Review" requested by the Conservation Commission.

Chair Field said that the Board received an estimate that they are relying on its accuracy and, if Mr. Martin has a question or issue with it, he may take up the matter with the Town.

Mr. Lagassa asked if the Applicant could participate in negotiations with the RCCD regarding Mr. Martins' concerns with the review.

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Chair Field said that the ZBA is requesting an <u>independent</u> analysis from RCCD, and Applicant participation may compromise such independence.

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Mr. Buber said that Mr. Martin has a valid point and agrees that his concerns about being double billed on a particular line item should be resolved before he signs off on a "carte blanche cheque".

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Chair Field, indicated that this is a case of first impression, but that he thought Mr. Martin would most likely have to speak with the person in Town fulfilling the Town Administrator's responsibilities. Chair Field said that the Board is asking an independent group of professionals to advise the Board on technical matters; the Board does not know how many people will be assigned to the review or what their process will be. The Board is looking for a letter from RCCD that the Applicant's proposed solutions are sound from an engineering perspective, and then the Board will review it and come to a "final" decision.

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Chair Field said that the Board, by State statute, has jurisdiction to request technical review, paid for by the Applicant; how the review is done and how the professionals act or how the Town deals with a payment on it from Mr. Martin is not, in his opinion, within the ZBA's jurisdiction.

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Mr. Martin asked the Board what he needed to supply to the Board to get approval.

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Chair Field said that when the Board gets material back from the RCCD, it is the Chair's intention that there will be, if the Board concurs, a "final public hearing" to deal with the review and to deal with the "technical review", and, the objections made by the Abutters and by Ms. Wilson, and at that time Mr. Martin, and/or his counsel, will have the opportunity to rebut such information.

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At the conclusion of the dialog, the Board took a formal Vote to continue Mr. Martin's Case #2012:03 to the September 25, 2012, Meeting.

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Mr. Buber Moved, and Mr. Landman Seconded, the Motion to continue Case #2012:03 – Glenn Martin to the September 25, 2012 Meeting.

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The Vote was unanimous in Favor of the Motion (5-0).

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New Business:

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#2012:06 – Property Owner: Golden K's LLC, 63 Atlantic Avenue, North Hampton, NH 03862.
 Applicant: Same as Owner; Property location 63 Atlantic Avenue; M/L 005-038-000; Zoning District:
 R-2. The Applicant submits an Appeal of an Administrative Officer. An Appeal from the June 5, 2012
 Planning Board Decision that ZBA relief is needed to subdivide a 7+/- acre parcel, of which 3 +/- acres is used commercially into one (1) commercial 3 +/- acre lot and two (2) 2+/- acre residential lots.

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In attendance for this application:

- 275 Attorney Timothy Phoenix, Applicant's Counsel
- 276 Guy Marshall, Owner/Applicant
- 277 Eric Weinrieb, Altus Engineering
- 278 James Verra, LS, Verra & Associates

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Chair Field asked the Applicant whether or not he was aware that there have been a number of administrative matters relating to the subject premises, and related premises, before the Board and Planning Board in the past. He referred to a previous ZBA ruling limiting the number of employees and asked the Applicant if he was in conformance with all conditions of the relief that has been granted by the Board in the past. He referred to the July 7, 1997, Planning Board Minutes and quoted from them, "Got a variance from the ZBA for non-conforming lot. Parking across street for 16 and out back for 8. Plan for 9 full time office people (now 6). BI said the septic system is in question as to location and size." Chair Field asked the Applicant where the employees once located across the street and in Portsmouth are now located?

Chair Field was then alerted to the fact that Member Fullerton should be reseated. Chair Field, thanked and dismissed Alternate Williams, and reseated Mr. Fullerton.

Chair Field referred to <u>Section 6.B.3</u> of the Board's <u>Rules of Procedure</u> and quoted, "All prior actions by the Board shall be cited and copies of decisions or orders attached. Relief cannot be granted by the Board unless specifically requested. Except for good cause shown, the Board will not normally grant relief unless the Applicant is in substantial compliance with all prior grants of relief, and/or conditions attached thereto, affecting the subject parcel; and, further, demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Board that all taxes assessments or fees due or owing to the Town have been timely paid."

Attorney Phoenix said that to the best of his knowledge, the Applicant is in compliance with all prior relief granted by the Boards. He said he doesn't know how to prove the negative.

Discussion ensued on whether or not the Applicant was in "substantial" compliance with prior Board relief. Chair Field said that Lamprey Brothers has run an excellent business for years. The Business is located in a Residential zone, but the business once had a lot of space around it and it is now condensed into a smaller lot and the Applicant is proposing to create two (2) house lots which appears, on the surface, to make the non-conforming use more conforming. Chair Field asked if the Board should be considering the Case if there is a question of whether or not the business is in conformance, or should the Board consider granting the Applicant a waiver to the Rule and allow them to present the Case.

Mr. Marshall said that Lamprey Brothers business was once twice the size as it is today. Chair Field made the comment that, if such was the case, the business must have been in violation at that time.

Mr. Marshall said that nothing has changed since the last relief was granted in 2002 allowing the construction of a very large truck garage across the street. Mr. Marshall said that he has 21 employees and only 11 of the 21 report to the Office (inside employees).

Mr. Buber quoted a section from the ZBA meeting minutes dated June 11, 1997 regarding Case #97:18 – Lamprey Brothers, "There are 7 employees now and could expand to 10." The Chair, Mike Iafolla, wrote the Decision letter, "a permit be issued for interior work and that the employees be capped at 13". There was no mention of "inside" or "outside" employees. Mr. Buber, who advised that he resided in the general neighborhood, said that he has personally witnessed a tremendous expansion over the years.

Mr. Marshall explained that Lamprey Brothers had two operations and in 1997 they closed the Portsmouth Office and moved everything to the North Hampton Office. He stated that there have never been more than 13 employees that report to that office and he currently has 11 employees. The

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technicians and drivers do not report to the office; they have 7 trucks and 5 drivers; many "parts" are delivered right to the job site.

Mr. Fullerton referred to the July 7, 1997 Planning Board Minutes and said there was a contradiction in the number of employees between the Planning Board and the Zoning Board. The ZBA's decision letter states the employees capped at 13 and doesn't provide whether or not it's "inside" employees, but the Planning Board minutes state that "Plan for 9 full time office people (now 6)".

Mr. Lagassa said something to the effect that he did not understand why the Board was treating the Applicant in such a manner and further suggested that somehow the Board is holding a hearing to enforce past zoning decisions. The Applicant is before the Board requesting a zoning variance. He suggested that the Board let the Applicant present the Case he has applied for.

Mr. Lagassa made a Motion to move forward with the Hearing and stop all the "bickering" about whether or not they're in violation of their current permits and zoning variances, and allow them to make their presentation.

Chair Field commented regarding Mr. Lagassa's Motion, that he assumed Mr. Lagassa was willing to overlook, and/or accept, as a procedural matter what might present an obstacle under the Board's <u>Rules of Procedure</u>. He stated that, pursuant to the Rule, the Board is not supposed to hear the case unless an Applicant is in compliance. He asked if Mr. Lagassa wanted to waive that particular <u>Rule</u>.

Mr. Lagassa asked the Chair not to make any assumptions, and did not want to waive the Rule. Mr. Lagassa said that the Chair is making the assumption that the Applicant is out of compliance, and asked if the Board has received any evidence or complaints suggesting that the Applicant is not in compliance.

It was determined that the Board had not receive any outside evidence or a complaint suggesting the Applicant was not in compliance with prior Board Actions; however, Members of the Board as a consequence of personal observation and knowledge of prior administrative decisions/relief, believed that the possibility existed.

Chair Field said that the issue is whether or not the Applicant has conformed with the terms and conditions of the Zoning relief which has been previously granted.

Mr. Fullerton, again referred to the July 7, 1997 Planning Board minutes and said that they were approved for virtually what they currently have; number of employees working inside.

There was no Second to the Motion. The Motion failed.

Chair Field said that, included with the Application, was a history of Zoning and Planning approvals; it has been observed that there are inconsistent numbers between the two (2) Boards. Chair Field asked the Applicant if he was in conformance with the number of employees that meet the past variance approvals.

Mr. Marshall said that he believed that they are in conformance.

Chair Field said his concern is that at least four (4) sites have been consolidated onto the site the business is operating on now. He said there has been no evidence presented, other than that gleaned

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through the Application process, that the Applicant is not in conformance, but, until a moment before, there has not been an affirmative representation made that the Applicant is in conformance.

Mr. Buber addressed Mr. Lagassa's concerns. He said that there is a "hurdle" the Board has to get over and that there may be the potential that the current <u>Lamprey Energy</u> operation was noncompliant with the prior variance, and pursuant to the Board's <u>Rules of Procedure</u>, the Board has to "clear" that "hurdle". He said that he did not receive any complaint, it's just observations based on the volume of traffic coming in and out, and the question on the amount of employees there are. He said that a single word could have been omitted in the past Variance approval, such as "office" in front of the word employees capped at 13.

Mr. Don Lamprey said that he applied for the variance the Board is referring to back in 1997 and said that the "13 employees" were "office" employees; the number was determined because of the concerns of the size of the septic system. He said there was never anyone working across the street; the consolidation of the Portsmouth operation and the North Hampton operation did not increase the amount of "office" employees.

Mr. Marshall said that there are eleven (11) employees that include one part-time employee and a salesman that is not there very often.

Chair Field, granting as favorable an interpretation to the evidence and testimony as possible, then declared that the Applicant minimally satisfied the predicate of the <u>Board's Rule</u>. However, in general and in the future, applicants must be informed that predicate Rules will apply on cases that have received prior Board approvals and/or relief

Attorney Phoenix explained that the Applicant applied to the Planning Board for a subdivision of his property to convert the seven (7) acres located on 63 Atlantic Avenue into three (3) lots; three (3) acres will house the Marshall homestead and Lamprey Energy Business and the back four (4) acres, fronting Chapel Road will be subdivided into two (2) acre residential lots. The Applicant is before the ZBA as a result of the Planning Board's decision that subdividing the two (2) residential lots from the overall seven (7) acres constitutes a change of "use" requiring relief from Section 501.2 of the Zoning Ordinances.

<u>Article V, Section 501.2</u> (effective 3/1968). A nonconforming use may be continued but may not be extended, expanded or changed unless to a conforming use, except as permitted by the Board of Adjustment in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.

Attorney Phoenix explained that his Client feels that relief from the ZBA is not required because the business "use" is not extended, expanded or changed and will remain upon three (3) acres that is 150% of the required two (2) acres and the remaining four (4) acres are not "used" for the business and will become conforming, single-family residential lots.

Attorney Phoenix read the definition of "non-conforming use" into the record, any use or arrangement of structures or land legally existing at the time of the enactment of this ordinance or any of its amendments, which does not conform to the provisions of this ordinance. He said the actual "use" is non-conforming, and that is not changing.

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Attorney Phoenix referred to <u>Hampton v. Brust</u>, 122 N.H. 463 (1982) at 429. The key for determining whether there is an expansion of use, is whether additional space is required for the use and whether it would have a substantial effect on the neighborhood. The owner was allowed to add more machines in the same space but not move into the adjacent room.

Attorney Phoenix referred to <u>Isabelle v. Town of Newbury</u>, 114 N.H. 399 (1974). The Court ruled that changing the business-use lot size is permitted as long as the change does "not render the premises proportionally less adequate".

Attorney Phoenix summarized by saying that the subdivision proposal makes the land and its future use more conforming to the requirements of the North Hampton's Zoning Ordinance. The continued nonconformity is the business use of the front three (3) acres; the structures on the property and the nature of the business use in that area will not change. He said that the fact that the lot, where the business operates, is proposed to be smaller doesn't constitute a change or expansion of the nonconforming use, because the lot meets the dimensional requirements of the ordinance.

Attorney Phoenix submitted a letter into the record from Dr. Chaikin, whose residential property directly abuts the subject property, stating that he has no objection to the proposal from Mr. Marshall.

Attorney Phoenix submitted a letter from the North Hampton Director of Public Works, John Hubbard, regarding the driveway application. Mr. Hubbard made suggestions on how the driveways should be designed. (He commented that the driveways were more of a Planning Board issue).

Attorney Phoenix went over the plans with Board and explained the different parcels surrounding 63 Atlantic Avenue.

Chair Field said that the <u>Lamprey Brothers</u> was once a big business that encompassed a large parcel of land around, and included, the subject parcel. He said, based on the history submitted with the Application, businesses were operating on both sides of Atlantic Avenue and asked how such "uses" got converted to residential without approved variances. He said that, based on <u>Section 501.2</u> he had a hard time understanding how the existing business is in conformance with the Zoning Ordinances.

Attorney Phoenix referred to the plan and said that at one time <u>Lamprey Brothers</u> owned a lot of the surrounding land and had a truck garage across the street and harvested wood. He said in 2000 the Planning Board approved a lot line adjustment to remove five (5) of the seven (7) acres where the truck garage was located. He said the business operated there to the extent that the oil trucks were parked there. He said the lot line adjustment was granted without a variance to <u>Section 501.2</u>, and that set a precedent.

Chair Field said that a lot of the "operations" have been absorbed by the lot in question, and the Board has had "observation", Member Buber being just one individual who has brought it to the Board's attention, that in his opinion there is more business at 63 Atlantic Ave. The Chair said that making it smaller is a "change" to the business.

Attorney Phoenix said that he does not agree that it is a change to a non-conforming use as defined in the Zoning Ordinances. He said that one of the large parcels of land that was once owned by Lamprey Brothers was put into conservation land and "nobody" stopped that from happening. He said that it is

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inappropriate for this Board to go back 20 or 30 years and make sure that someone else in charge dotted every "I" and crossed every "t".

Mr. Buber said his wife grew up in the house they now live in at 4 Maple Road and said that she never remembers the land across the street from 63 Atlantic Avenue ever being used commercially by Lamprey Brothers; it currently has a conservation easement on it. He went over the colored map with Don Lamprey and what it boiled down to was that the Zoning Board had to determine if the Planning Board was correct in their interpretation of Section 501.2 and if the Board agrees then with the Planning Board then they go forward with the Applicant's Variance request.

Mr. Landman said that the significant part is in the June 5, 2012 Planning Board Minutes and read into the record the following, Mr. Wilson said that Mr. Phoenix made a good argument, but he disagrees; he said that the property was originally a farm and the Lampreys have preserved the look and feel of it as a farm partly because it sits on seven (7) acres making the business innocuous in a residential zone. He said that subdividing it will make it obvious that it's not a farm and questions whether it will meet the variance test for Spirit of the Ordinance or diminution of property value. He said that it is important to get a ZBA ruling on the matter. Mr. Landman said the question to the Board is whether or not they agree with Mr. Wilson's statement.

Chair Field said that the proposal does change the nature of the area and he personally thinks the Planning Board was correct in sending the Applicant to the Zoning Board. The back acreage serves as a "buffer" to the current business operations.

Mr. Landman said that the new houses will be abutting the business and may affect the property values of those properties, but they will be buying the lots knowing that they are abutting the business.

Attorney Phoenix said that that was Mr. Wilson's personal opinion; he has never read in any minutes that relief was granted because the proposal will still look like a "farm". He said the Board needs to determine whether or not the proposal is making it better by subdividing into two (2) additional conforming two (2) acre lots.

Chair Field opened the meeting to those in "favor" of the proposition that the Planning Board erred in sending this matter to the Zoning Board.

503 There was no public comment.

Chair Field opened the Meeting to those who wished to offer "neutral" position on the proposition. There was no public comment.

Chair Field opened the meeting to those "opposed" to the proposition.

Jake Parker, representing Alan Williams, who resides at 38 Chapel Road said that he once owned Parker Surveying and is a licensed Surveyor, Wetlands Scientist and licensed Septic Designer. Mr. Parker referred to the plan and said that there will be a change of use because the trucks will be forced to come in from Chapel road where commercial activity will be travelling down Chapel Road, because the applicant intends to stop using the "shortcut" on 46 Chapel Road. He said there is no safe site distance for the trucks, which will create a safety hazard. He said there is an expansion of use because Lamprey Brothers never sold propane and the current business does. Mr. Parker submitted photographs taken by Mrs. Williams of Chapel Road when flooded and of the adjacent lot (tax map 5, lot 39) showing the

"shortcut" the trucks take. The Chair asked Mrs. Williams to sign and date the copies of the photographs, which she did, and they were entered into the record.

<u>Alan Williams, 38 Chapel Road</u> – said he hears trucks going back and forth all day long from the back four (4) acres, the subject property, regularly.

Mr. Lagassa asked for clarification from Mr. Parker or Mr. Williams, he wanted to know if "use" of the back four (4) acres is used by virtue of a road or a driveway that comes from the front building to the back and joined with the "coal shed", and if the four (4) acres are subdivided off, would the trucks be precluded from using the road. He asked if the use of the back land is on that road as opposed to in the "pasture" itself. Mr. Williams said they used the road.

Discussion ensued on the 1/3 acre lot (<u>Tax Map 5 Lot 39, 46 Chapel Road</u>). Attorney Phoenix said that it is a commercial lot under a separate ownership and is not part of the seven (7) acres and should not be considered by the Board.

Mr. Marshall said that he owns the majority of the shares of 46 Chapel Road and the $54' \times 24'$ commercial building was used to store coal and wood, and the trucks currently use the "shortcut". The lot consists of 1/3 of an acre; a non-conforming lot. Mr. Marshall said that they intend to stop using the "shortcut" as an access way and have noted that on the proposed plan. Mr. Marshall said that they intend to continue using this lot as a commercial lot, but everything is subject to change.

Chair Field closed the Public Hearing, and began Board deliberations.

Mr. Landman said that the Planning Board did not make a mistake in their interpretation of the Zoning Ordinance. He said that a change in a non-conforming use will occur because they will be using the access road that connects the two properties; the subject property and the property at 46 Chapel Road.

Mr. Fullerton said that there were a lot of variables. He said that it was mentioned that because the Lamprey Energy building sits on an ample chunk of land that it lends itself more to the vernacular of the farm house, he said that if the Applicant wanted he could plant a hedge of arborvitae trees across the back of the building so he doesn't find that to be compelling. He said that he read over the package of information submitted, Section 501.2 and the Planning Board minutes and has a hard time reconciling that subdividing the two lots in the back is something that the Applicant needs to come to the ZBA to get approval for. He agreed that there are significant questions regarding the "coal shed" building but the Board is not asked to look at that; the only thing the ZBA was asked to look at was if the Board felt the Planning Board's decision to send the Applicant to the ZBA under Section 501.2 was in error.

Mr. Lagassa said it is currently a "non-conforming "use but will not be made more non-conforming by virtue of making the conclusion that the Planning Board erred. He said he agreed with Mr. Fullerton and felt the Planning Board went further than they needed to.

Mr. Buber said his issue with <u>Section 501.2</u> is that he does not think it is clear. A Non-conforming Use may be continued but may not be extended, expanded, or changed unless to a conforming use...He questioned whether that meant that a non-conforming use could be subdivided in part where one portion remains a non-conforming use and the other portion becomes a conforming use or does the entire seven (7) acres need to be changed to conforming before the subdivision is allowed. It was in his

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opinion that the intent of Section 501.2 was that the entire parcel would need to be conforming. He said the Planning Board acted correctly by directing the Applicant to go before the ZBA for a change.

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Chair Field said the Planning Board is "spot on". He said that he is of the opinion that the Planning Board did not err, and it properly referred the Case to the ZBA.

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Mr. Landman said that he agreed with Mr. Buber that the entire parcel would need to be conforming and it is not being changed to conforming.

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Mr. Lagassa said that the proposed change does not increase the non-conformity; he said that in his opinion a change per se shouldn't automatically trigger ZBA review.

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Chair Field said that he thinks the proposal is a material change; he said he finds a concentration to the detriment of other land owners in the area.

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Mr. Lagassa said that that is not what the Board is being asked. The Board is not being asked whether it's detrimental to the area landowners or whether or not it violates the Zoning Ordinance.

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- Mr. Buber Moved, and Mr. Landman Seconded, the Motion that the Planning Board's Decision to send the Applicant to the ZBA pursuant to Section 501.2 be supported.
- The Vote passed in Favor of the Motion (3 in Favor, 2 Opposed and 0 Abstentions). Mr. Lagassa and Mr. Fullerton were Opposed.

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- Chair Field called for a five (5) minute recess at 8:51 p.m.
 - Chair Field reconvened the Meeting.

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At the suggestion of Member Lagassa, Chair Field referred to the Board's Rules of Procedure and stated that the Board may not begin with a new Case after 9:30 p.m. It was 9:00 p.m. and Attorney Phoenix said that it would take him approximately ten (10) minutes to present his second, but directly related, case.

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2. 2012:07 - Property Owner: Golden K's LLC, 63 Atlantic Avenue, North Hampton, NH 03862. Applicant: Same as Owner; Property location 63 Atlantic Avenue; M/L 005-038-000; Zoning District: **R-2.** The Applicant requests a Variance from Article V., Section 501.2 – a non-conforming use may be continued but may not be extended, expanded or changed, unless to a conforming use. The Applicant seeks relief to convert a 7 +/- acre parcel, upon three (3) of which is operated by Lamprey Energy, as a prior non-conforming use, to a three (3) acre lot holding Lamprey Energy and two (2) conforming 2 +/acre residential lots.

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- In attendance for this application:
- 605 Attorney Timothy Phoenix, Applicant's Counsel
- Guy Marshall, Owner/Applicant 606
- 607 Eric Weinrieb, Altus Engineering
- 608 James Verra, LS, Verra & Associates

- 610 Attorney Phoenix made the following preliminary comments. In regards to Mr. Buber's concerns about 611 whether the entire parcel has to be conforming or not, he said that the Planning Board made that
- 612 decision by allowing past subdivisions of the Lamprey property. He posed the question: "what if it were

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three (3) acres on four thousand (4,000) acres, would the entire 4,000 acres need to be changed?" He said the Board has to "stop" at what the ordinance says; the Applicant has twice the acreage that is required.

Chair Field told Attorney Phoenix that he would be receiving a Decision Letter on the previous case and reminded him of his appeal rights.

Attorney Phoenix, advised the Board of his written arguments included with the Filing Materials, and then proceeded to address the five (5) variance criteria:

He referred to the Court ruling in Superior Court Case Malachy Glen Associates, Inc. v. Town of Chichester. 152 N.H. 102 (2007) that the requirement that the variance not be contrary to the public interest is related to the requirement that the variance be consistent with the spirit of the ordinance. He addressed those two (2) criteria together.

1. Would granting this variance be contrary to the "Public Interest" or "Public Safety"?

2. Would granting this variance be consistent with the "Spirit of the Ordinance"?

Mr. Buber pointed out that the Variance worksheet submitted with the Application states answers in the affirmative, that the proposal <u>will be</u> contrary to the public interest and <u>will diminish values</u> of surrounding properties.

Attorney Phoenix said that the questions are usually posed in a different manner and acknowledged his mistakes. He informed the Board that he would fill out a corrected Variance Worksheet and submit it to the Board and Ms. Chase for the record. Chair Field acknowledged the inadvertent procedural misstep, and, suggested that Attorney Phoenix proceed as if the material had been "filed" correctly.

Attorney Phoenix said that it is in the public's interest and thus the spirit of the ordinance to permit a property owner the reasonable use of its own property. There is a seven (7) acre parcel, residentially zoned, that will be subdivided such that the business remains located on over three (3) acres while the remaining four (4) acres will be removed from possible future commercial use and converted to conforming residential lots. The business will operate on a remaining lot that is 150% of the required lot size and was not operated on the remaining four (4) acres to be subdivided for residential lots; and where the size and intensity of the business operations as well as the buildings in which the business is operated will not change, there is simply no harm to the health, safety or general welfare to the community. He said the Town has decided that a two (2) acre lot is sufficient for commercial use; they have three (3) acres making it in compliance with the Spirit of the Ordinance and Public Interest. He referred to *Malachy Glen Associates, Inc. v. Town of Chichester*, "the variance must unduly and in a marked degree conflict with the ordinance such that it violates the ordinance's basic zoning objectives." The applicant intends to make the back acres residential; making them in compliance with the locality, so converting the back acres into residential lots will not alter the essential character of the locality or threaten the public health, safety or welfare.

3. Would granting this variance result in "Diminution of Values" of surrounding properties?

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Attorney Phoenix said that the nearest neighbor is Dr. Chaikin and he wrote a letter to the Board stating that he had no objections to the proposal. He said that he fails to see how two (2) houses built on residentially zoned land would diminish surrounding property values.

- 4. Would literal enforcement of the provisions of the ordinance result in an "Unnecessary Hardship"?
- a. Special conditions exist which distinguish the property/project from others in the area.

Attorney Phoenix said that it is a unique lot because it is a residentially zoned lot with a commercial business on it. The lot is 350% larger than required for commercial or residential use in the whole of North Hampton. Other similarly situated lots in the area do not share these conditions.

b. No fair and substantial relationship exists between the general public purposes of the ordinance and its specific application in this instance.

Attorney Phoenix said that nothing will change with the operation of the business. There is no reason to require that all seven (7) acres to be utilized for the business because they intend to make four (4) of those acres a conforming use.

c. The proposed use is reasonable.

Attorney Phoenix said that they want to create two (2) residential lots and allow the commercial use to remain on a lot 150% times greater than what is required.

5. Would "Substantial justice" be done by granting this variance?

Attorney Phoenix said that it is substantially just to allow a property owner the reasonable use of its own property. He said converting land that could potentially be used for more business operations to residential lots is substantially just, and to not allow the current commercial business to continue to operate on a lot 150% larger than required is unjust.

Mr. Buber said that the whole area is like a "farm-like" setting. He referred to <u>Malachy Glen Associates</u>, <u>Inc v. Town of Chichester</u>, "One way to ascertain whether granting the variance would violate basic zoning objectives is to examine whether it would alter the essential character of the locality". Mr. Buber said, as a resident of that area, in his view, it would substantially alter the essential characteristics of the locality. He said that he is not denying a property owner their rights but there are other options, such as, leaving it as it exists now, or putting a conservation easement on it. Mr. Buber said that he has issues with the property at 46 Chapel Road and said that there is an illegal scrap metal business being conducted on that lot. There is a trailer parked there that has the words Berwick Iron and Metal on it. He said trucks and bucket loaders are going down the "pathway" every day. He said he is concerned with the corner lot and thinks it's being used illegally. He said that isn't what the Board is here to discuss; it is the proposed subdivision. Mr. Buber was also concerned with the fact that not one bit of expert testimony was presented that dealt with the variance criterion on diminished property values. There is no expert testimony that states that the change will not diminish surrounding property values.

Mr. Landman said that by eliminating the use of the access road it will change the use of the lot with the 1/3 of an acre. He agreed with Mr. Buber that they need more information regarding the diminution of value on surrounding properties.

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Mr. Lagassa said he lives on Maple Road and said that the pasture is a beautiful piece of property and enhances the value of the neighborhood, but two (2) new houses may enhance the value of the neighborhood too and there is no way to prejudge that. He said that he doesn't see where the proposal violates the Spirit of the Ordinance.

Mr. Lagassa asked if Mr. Marshall would consider modifying the nature of the subdivision by eliminating the 1/3 acre lot and incorporating it into the proposed subject lots.

Attorney Phoenix said that he just discussed that with his Client and Mr. Marshall said he would consider adding the 1/3 acre corner lot to the proposed lots and eliminate its commercial use.

Attorney Phoenix said that he did not have an expert witness with him to address the diminution of surrounding property values. He believed that it would not be necessary.

Chair Field opened the Meeting to those in "Favor" of the proposal. There was no public comment.

Chair Field opened the Meeting to those "Neutral" to the proposal. There was no public comment.

Chair Field opened the Meeting to those "Against" the proposal.

Mr. Jake Parker, who had been properly introduced in the preceding Case, spoke on behalf of Alan Williams, an abutter to the subject property and said that the current commercial use acts as a buffer and to develop the back lot with residential houses will negatively affect Mr. Williams' property values; at one time the Lamprey's installed a drainage ditch onto Mr. Williams' property before Mr. Williams owned it and never got an easement. He said that it was in his opinion that if the back lots are developed it will negatively affect the drainage on Mr. Williams' property. He said the runoff is bad enough and adding two houses will add a lot of impervious surface that will increase the water runoff onto the Williams' property. He submitted copies of pictures of Chapel Road, flooded, and pictures of the Lamprey site into the record, Mrs. Williams had taken the pictures and the Chair asked that she date and sign them, which she did. Ms. Chase will make copies for the Board Members that wanted a copy.

Mr. Weinrieb said that Mr. Parker was not a licensed hydrologist and that, therefore, his testimony was suspect and should be granted limited credence.

Chair Field, challenged Mr. Weinrieb's characterization of Mr. Parker's knowledge, and pointed out that Mr. Parker is a licensed surveyor, licensed septic designer and a wetlands scientist, with many years experience, and that the merits of his testimony would be weighed by the Board.

Mr. Weinrieb said that Mr. Parker is not a licensed hydrologist. He said that he did a high intensity soil survey map (HISS Map) of the property and determined that the runoff water on Chapel Road and Mr. Williams' property is from Cotton Farm Lane where there are no detention ponds. He certified that as far as stormwater runoff is concerned adding the two proposed houses will have no impact on the surrounding properties. He said that the flooding on Chapel Road is an existing condition, and until the Town does something about it, it will remain the same. He said that it is a Planning Board issue and that they have been issued a wetlands permit on July 10, 2012. He said that the Applicant meets all the Planning Board and Zoning Board requirements and referred the Board to Sheet C2 of the Plan set.

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Attorney Phoenix said that the Board should consider that it's not what the Board thinks the proposal "looks like" it's whether issuing the variance would alter the essential character of the area. He said that it's not fair to say that two houses can't be built in a permitted area because they don't like the look of them. He said that the non-conforming use on the property is not changing at all and the back section of the lot will become conforming. He submitted that the Board use its own understanding of the site, as far a diminished value is concerned, and consider leaving the business on a site that is 150% greater than what is allowed. There being no further testimony in "opposition", Chair Field closed the Public Hearing.

Discussion ensued within the Board regarding the fact that the Applicant would be willing to incorporate the 1/3 acre corner lot, Tax Map 5, Lot 39, into the subject lot, Tax Map 5, lot 38 and eliminate the commercial use on the 1/3 acre lot. The Board considered continuing the Meeting to the next month so that the Applicant could come back to the Board with more information on valuation and to allow RCCD to review the drainage plans submitted by Mr. Weinrieb, and report back to the Board.

Mr. Buber said that he did not want it to be perceived that the ZBA was trampling on the "turf", so called, of the Planning Board, but did add that the ZBA is obligated to protect the Public's health, safety, and welfare.

Attorney Phoenix said that the ZBA is deciding whether or not the Applicant has permission to apply to the Planning Board for a subdivision. He informed the Board that his client just agreed to reduce his proposal from a three (3) lot subdivision to a two (2)-lot subdivision and to incorporate the 1/3 acre corner lot into the four (4) acres and permanently cease commercial operations on the 1/3 acre lot (<u>Tax Map 5, Lot 39</u>).

Mr. Marshall explained that there is no scrap metal business operation at the 1/3 acre lot. What Mr. Buber is hearing is that when they dispose the oil tanks they cut them in half and clean out the residuals, and once cleaned they get put in the metal bucket. He said he would move that operation to the current business at (Tax Map 5, Lot 38).

Mr. Buber said that it is still an illegal transfer station. He said that he Town recently passed a <u>Junk Yard Ordinance</u> and suggested Mr. Marshall read it.

Mr. Marshall said that the ceasing the commercial operation on the 1/3 acre lot and adding it to the proposed back lot of four (4) acres will only enhance the property. He said he would not commit to tearing down the garage that currently exists on the 1/3 acre.

Mr. Landman Moved, and Mr. Fullerton Seconded, the Motion to approve the Variance for (1.) a two (2) lot subdivision with the primary commercial lot being as it is shown on the Plan as Lot #1, 3.017 acres, and the second lot being a combination/merger of the proposed two (2) lots along Chapel Road with the 1/3 acre lot, Tax Map 5, Lot 39; (2.) the construction of just one (1) residential dwelling; and, (3.) to cease industrial/commercial/and/or the business use of, and cause the permanent termination of business/commercial/and/or industrial use on, such lot forever.

The Vote was Unanimous in Favor of the Motion (5-0).

Secretary's Note: Following the Meeting, Applicant's counsel provided the Administrative Assistant with updated descriptions of the revised two (2) lot "sub-division" configuration, for use with the preparation of the Decision Letter.

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Mr. Buber asked the Applicant to confirm that the commercial operation will cease to exist on the 1/3 acre lot as proposed. The Applicant confirmed that to be true.

Chair Field reminded all present of the Thirty (30) days appeal period. Chair Field inquired of Mr. Buber as to his availability to assist in crafting the "Decision Letter, given his familiarity with the parcel in issue. Mr. Buber stated that he would be out of Town for a few days, and wondered if such a delay would be acceptable to the Applicant. Attorney Phoenix stated that he had no objection to a "delayed" Decision Letter.

Other Business:

Chair Field reported on the <u>Barr-Moran (Beach Plum)</u> Superior Court Case which he had attended. He said the Case was continued by the Judge and will be heard September 26, 2012, to allow for Planning Board action; however, the Applicant doesn't yet have the owner's signature, which is necessary to go forward with the Planning Board Case.

Chair Field informed the Board that the Planning Board is conducting Visioning Sessions to get input for work they are doing on the Town's <u>Master Plan</u>. They will be held on September 29, 2012 and October 6, 2012 at the Town Hall from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Members and Alternates were invited to attend as they wished.

Mr. Buber Moved, and Mr. Landman Seconded, the Motion to adjourn the Meeting at 10:40 p.m. The Vote was Unanimous in Favor of the Motion (5-0).

Respectfully submitted,

829 Wendy V. Chase830 Recording Secretary

Approved September 25, 2012