

SEEKONK PLANNING BOARD
Regular Meeting

MINUTES
May 24, 2011

Present: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, S. Foulkes, R. Bennett, R. Horsman and L. Dunn
J. Hansen, Town Planner

Absent: T. Clancy (with cause), M. Bourque (with cause)

7:20 pm Ch. Abelson called the meeting to order.

Pine Meadows – Bond Enforcement

J. Hansen Developer is out of town and asked the board to continue until he can be present. I will talk to him when he is back in town and schedule for either the first or second meeting in June.

Housing Partnership

J. Hansen This board drafted the housing production plan last year, among initiatives listed was the assisted living bylaw and the habitat for humanity project on Taunton Ave. In addition there was the idea of developing a housing partnership/housing committee to take the lead on these initiatives. This board has taken on the first two items but there is a line of thinking that there should be a separate committee that could take the lead on these things in order to take some of the pressure off this board.

In my research I have found other towns target citizens with certain backgrounds to join committees like this so it is not a group of volunteers that have with no experience with affordable housing. Example: development, real-estate, finance. They do this so the outcome provides productive meetings and strategies. That is my proposal to develop such a partnership committee.

L. Dunn Do we have to make a motion?

J. Hansen This board can't form a committee unless it is a sub-committee of its own membership. The BOS is the only group that can do such a thing. There was such a committee about nine years ago but it was not successful. I think if there is an interest we need to target the right people to be part of it.

- R. Bennett Shouldn't this be the responsibility of the Housing Authority to get involved?
- J. Hansen I would certainly say the director should be involved on a committee like this. They have not shown interest in taking the lead they have funding issues like everyone else.
If this board has interest we could talk to the BOS and start the process.
- N. Abelson Should we send them a letter?
- J. Hansen I would say send a letter and follow up with attending one of the BOS meetings to answer any questions would be appropriate.
- R. Horsman I'm looking at your ideas and as far as guidance on proposing things it is fantastic, but as far as lead negotiator for anything it is probably not something a lower committee should be dealing with. I see it as a vehicle for ideas and proposals to be presented to our board or BOS.
- J. Hansen Ultimately the approval for the project is up to the zoning board of appeals. They want to know what boards support the project. I will revise the language to make it more advisory in nature.
- S. Foulkes We should have a defined set of parameters in place that should be met for whoever is going to be on the committee.
- L. Dunn I don't think we want to limit ourselves.
- S. Foulkes We need diversity to make the best committee.
- Ch. Abelson I would like to see diversity.
- J. Hansen I will fine tune it and bring it back to the board for review.

Assisted Living Facility Bylaw

- J. Hansen Just to let you know that even though we made a presentation to the BOS in March 2011 at the 5/4/11 BOS meeting a 4-1 vote was taken to not recommend approval of the Proposed Assisted Living Facility Bylaw.
- S. Foulkes Did they say why?
- J. Hansen They didn't understand it.
- S. Foulkes We need to find out why.

- Ch. Abelson If they didn't understand it then why didn't they just say "no recommendation" rather than vote not to recommend?
- R. Horsman I think we need to send a letter to the BOS asking why so we know before the town meeting.
- Ch. Abelson I think we need to send a memo with a response back from BOS. We need to know how to respond to any questions at town meeting.
- J. Hansen I will write a memo and ask for their response by June 2.
- R. Horsman After lessons learned from the situation on Colfall St. would it be wise to add an amendment to the assisted living bylaw at town meeting? Add, as part of the bylaw, some manner of buffer between the zone and any residential zoned abutter. Thus avoiding a situation like the one realized on Colfall that you can bring a parking lot to the edge of the property.
- J. Hansen It states in the Assisted Living bylaw that they have to go through a site plan review and that does require a 10 ft landscaped buffer around the entire site.
- R. Horsman It got through on the last one and it upset an entire neighborhood. We could be proactive here and avoid that whole thing. It may give us some support at town meeting because these people are upset they will be at town meeting.
- J. Hansen I will come up with the language for the amendment and we can discuss it at the next meeting.
- Ch. Abelson I think we could have a short press release as a handout about the assisted living bylaw at town meeting.

Approval of minutes

R. Bennett made a motion to approve minutes from 4/12/11 with amendments indicated seconded by R. Horsman and so voted by: Ch. Abelson, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, R. Bennett; S. Foulkes abstained

VOTE: (4-0-1)

Ch. Abelson asked for a motion to approve minutes from 4/26/11

- S. Foulkes I have a question on page 2, Planning Dept. hours, there is nothing in the minutes about are we going to, as a board, be informed when John is going to be out of the office. I said it but I said it softly. I guess it didn't get picked up so I guess the question is, do we ask John if he is going to tell the board when he is going to be out and if so do we need to make another motion? Does he tell you Neal?

- Ch. Abelson I used to sign all time sheets. I know he works for the board but sometimes there just isn't time for all that.
- S. Foulkes I'm just saying as a courtesy he could email us and say he is out on a conference or out for the day. We are not asking what time you come in or leave. It's a communication issue. I think he should let us know as a courtesy to the board.
- L. Dunn Is that onerous John?
- S. Foulkes If he is going to be out why not just notify us?
- J. Hansen It was never a policy of this office to be closed on a Friday when there was a Monday holiday that is just a rumor. There is nothing in this office that is a today type of decision to be made, we have long timelines. In terms of notifying the board when I'm out for different reasons, to answer you Lee yes, I do have a problem with it. I think notifying the chairman has been the process for years and I am fine with continuing that.
- R. Bennett Personally I think that to say "you got to do this you got to do that" I think life is too busy to think from John's perspective I've got to check or email Neal before I go to this conference or do this or take vacation. I'm sure it is on a calendar if John's going to be missing for several days then I'm sure it is documented and he tells us at meetings. If he is gone one morning or one day he's going to be back the next day. What is that pressing that you have to have that information right away? I know from my perspective I'm busy during the day to have one more thing on my plate just doesn't make sense. And I don't feel John should be in the position that he has to feel like he has to report into somebody if he has to go here and there during the week.
- S. Foulkes I'm just saying he working for the board and as a courtesy to say, I'm going to be gone, that's fine. Does he have to tell us he is going on a site visit? No, I'm not asking that and he's not going on a conference every week, but when he goes I think as a courtesy he should tell us he is out on a conference. I guess we agree to disagree.

S. Foulkes made a motion that if John feels the need to notify the chairman that he is going to be out for the day the Chairman will contact the other board members seconded by L. Dunn and so voted Aye: S. Foulkes, R. Horsman; Nay: Ch. Abelson, R. Bennett; Abstain: L. Dunn

VOTE: (2-2-1) Motion fails

R. Horsman made a motion to approve minutes from 4/26/11 with amendments seconded by L. Dunn and so voted by: S. Foulkes, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, Ch. Abelson; R. Bennett abstained – not at that meeting.

VOTE: Approved (4-0-1)

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Adjournment:

R. Horsman made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by R. Bennett and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, R. Bennett

VOTE: (5-0) approved

The meeting adjourned at 9:05pm

Respectfully Submitted by:

Florice Craig, Secretary