

**WEST NEWBURY PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 19, 2016**

Pursuant to a meeting notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the West Newbury Planning Board was held on January 19, 2016 in Planning Board Office at the West Newbury Town Offices, 381 Main Street. Board Members Ann Bardeen, Rick Bridges, Raymond Cook and Brian Murphey were present. Board Member John Todd Sarkis was not in attendance. Planning Administrator Leah Zambenardi and Associate Member Dennis Lucey were also present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Subdivision Approval Not Required Plans (SANR's)

No SANR's were submitted.

Discussion of Policies and Procedures

- Pre-Application Conferences: Cook asked the Board members how they felt about limiting the number of pre-application conferences per project. Bardeen stated there is merit to having no limit. Murphey stated he did not want to limit the number as a policy, noting that the Board can decide from project to project.
- Chairmanship: Cook stated Zambenardi asked him how the Board felt about designating a Chairman for the entirety of a project. He can see positives and negatives. Bardeen stated it has never seemed to cause a problem to her. Murphey stated that there were 3 Chairs with Cottages and that it worked out. Bardeen thought having a Chairmanship linked to a time was more effective. Cook stated that the plan might be that he would stay on until the Daley property is done, however he might not be re-elected. Lucey pointed out that there could be multiple projects going on with different Chairs. The Board did not see a compelling reason to adopt this policy.

Continued Discussion on Projects and Priorities

- Open Space Preservation Development (OSPD) – Cook asked what parts of the OSPD the Board had thought about revising. Zambenardi stated that the Board changed the OSPD recently to limit the by-right density. At the time, Members noted that increased density should be incentivized and the Board planned to revisit the density bonus section of the Bylaw at a later date to see if more incentives or density bonuses should be added. The Board would like Sarkis' input on this. Murphey would like to hear from Zambenardi on this. Cook asked Zambenardi to pin down Sarkis' schedule and tentatively schedule this on the agenda for February 16, 2016.
- Inclusionary Zoning – Cook stated he is not sure what the Board's action should be on this. He suggested the Board schedule this for the second meeting in March for further discussion.
- Signs – Bridges stated some progress has been made but they have not yet finalized the by-district and sign sizes. There is more work to do on this. Cook stated this should be on the February 16, 2016 agenda. He suggested the Board think about this prior to the meeting. Bridges agreed to take the lead on this. Zambenardi offered to help.

West Newbury Planning Board, Minutes, January 19, 2016. Approved February 2, 2016.

- Downtown Economic Development – Zambenardi stated the grant award is scheduled to be announced on January 29, 2016. Cook stated that if the grant does not come through, the Board should think about putting an article on the Town Meeting warrant to fund the study. Cook stated we would need Selectmen support to do that. Cook asked if there is anything the Board could do with Zoning to accommodate businesses at this time. Bridges stated that mixed use is allowed by special permit. Murphey stated that the Board shouldn't look at the District until we know what the demand is and what kind of changes should be made. Murphey stated that if the Board does not get the grant, perhaps it should invite business owners in to discuss their needs and wants from the Town to help them succeed. Bridges stated the Board should have them in whether or not we get the grant. Zambenardi stated she has a meeting scheduled soon with the NE Regional Director of the Mass Office for Business Development to learn about the resources they offer and to tell her about our planning efforts and the grant application for the downtown. Members suggested that perhaps she could come in to talk to the Board.

General Business:

- Cottages at River Hill – Zambenardi stated that Charlie Wear from Meridian indicated the interceptor trench would be installed soon. Murphey asked about dust. Zambenardi stated that Health Agent Paul Sevigny is still monitoring them on this and recently had them in to a meeting of the Board of Health to remind Cottages of their responsibilities to control dust. Bridges stated there were cars parked on both sides of the road recently, and he thought it would be difficult for emergency vehicles to get through in that scenario. The Board took note of this in thinking about design of future projects.
- Sullivans Court Extension – Zambenardi stated that construction is well under way on Neve's house. Cook stated he heard that the parking signs have changed, but the parking habits have not.
- Daley Property, 365 Main – Cook noted that the Cottages has backed out of the deal to purchase the property. Cook stated the property is still under a timeframe in terms of the zoning freeze. Zambenardi stated that the owner needs to file a definitive plan within 7 months of filing the preliminary plan. Cook stated that if no one files a definitive plan by that date, they lose the zoning protection.
- Minutes: December 15, 2015 – Zambenardi stated the minutes are not quite ready for review.
- Vouchers: Zambenardi handed out vouchers for payment of invoices to Meridian and payroll for signature.
- Correspondence: No new correspondence is submitted.
- Right of First Refusal (RoFR) Update: Cook stated the Selectmen approved the draft RoFR with some tweaks. He stated that he met with Joe Anderson, Patricia Reeser and another woman the previous night. They added some language to the introduction by giving an overview of what Selectmen should consider when taking up a RoFR. Anderson was going to add some text about the 3 different actions that could be taken by the Selectmen. Cook stated that an important point of clarification they made was that if the Town decided not to exercise its RoFR, it should specify in the determination that the decision not to exercise is upon the proposal being considered, and that the Town reserves the right to exercise the RoFR on any future proposals. They also clarified that the Town wants appraisals for both change in use and for bonafide purchase and sale. Anderson noted that the Selectmen have enough money in their consultant line to easily pay for such appraisals. Anderson will submit the modified RoFR to the Board of Selectmen for approval.

- Administrative Details – Budget FY 2017 – Cook stated there might be a shared position in Town for taking minutes. He stated there is also the case where volunteers and other Town staff have helped out in the Planning Office and there is talk about formalizing this. Cook stated he reviewed the proposed budget over a series of emails with Zambernardi and made some tweaks. He stated that Zambernardi had some questions he was not sure about so he forwarded the proposed budget to Murphey and to Bardeen as they have had more experience managing Planning Board budgets.

Murphey stated he is concerned with the proposed increase in the staffing line. Zambernardi stated the increase is due to adding a minutes taker and an administrative assistant. She has had conversations with the Finance Director about the need for this service and noted that a minutes taker was just hired by the Finance Committee. Zambernardi stated that with an increase in development activity and planning efforts, more of her time is being dedicated to technical assistance. Having some relief with the assistance of a minutes taker would be cost effective and would allow her time to be used more efficiently. She stated that currently, the Finance Department's administrative assistant helps out in the Planning Office for a few hours per week with filing, organizing and archiving. She has spoken with the Finance Director about formalizing this. Included in the budget is a new line for an Administrative Assistant. The addition in salary on this line would correspond with a reduction in the Finance Department's salary line. She stated some weeks there would be no hours worked, some weeks there would be 6 hours worked. This would be treated as a pilot to see how her time is allocated. Cook asked what type of help is offered. Zambernardi stated she has taken over filing, including making and maintaining new files and organizing and labeling closed files when she has the time. Zambernardi stated there are several Planning Board boxes in the archives that need to be looked at and organized, but it would take some time for that. Bardeen stated there is a management challenge here, in terms of who she is working for and how. She stated perhaps this is a swing person who is available to help out in all the offices. Cook asked if this is a real need and if it would be ongoing or a finite thing. Zambernardi stated there is a need in terms of filing and archiving. There is much catching up to do that will take more than a year to cover. Cook noted there are public records laws we need to adhere to as well. Zambernardi stated she likes to have these records easily accessible and well organized for when projects like Archelaus Hill Road come up. Cook asked if digitizing would be part of the project. Murphey stated that would be a greater Town initiative, not something an administrator would take on within the Planning Board Office. Cook asked about how Zambernardi's time has worked out since she has been there. Zambernardi stated it has gotten less hectic since the Finance Department's Administrative Assistant has started to help with filing. Things are more easily found. This is allowing Zambernardi to focus on the content of the files, rather than creating them and keeping them organized. Bridges asked if all of the Administrative Assistant's time is taken up for weeks at a time by the Finance Department, if that is workable for Zambernardi's schedule. Zambernardi confirmed and stated the work she assigns is not time sensitive.

Murphey noted the cost would stay in the Finance Department and he asked why bother to move the line. Cook asked if there was an advantage to moving the line into Planning. Bridges acknowledged there is a need and we should keep it in mind for the future. Bardeen agreed and noted the help would still be there even if the line isn't added to the Planning Board Office budget. Murphey stated it is up to the Finance Director to make the case to move it.

Murphey stated the Board would have a very difficult time seeking hours for two positions and making a justification, as the Daley property project has just fallen through and we don't know if we will get the downtown initiative grant yet. He noted that the Planning Administrator's position was given extra resources and was upgraded less than a year ago and he thinks it is too soon to ask for additional funding for this. Bardeen stated they did just make the case to increase the hours for the position just a year ago. She is concerned that they might not be able to demonstrate the increase in workload.

Cook asked if other departments are putting a line like this in their budget. Zambenardi stated the Finance Committee has done so and has already hired someone. She stated that a Member of the Conservation Commission does their minutes, the Board of Health and the Water Department both have administrative staff to prepare their minutes. She does not know who does the minutes for the ZBA. Bridges stated the quality of work of the person hired is also an important factor. Murphey stated that the Town has always moved very slowly and very conservatively with things like this. He could support floating a smaller amount for a minutes taker and seeing if it survives the budget process and then build on that moving forward. He stated he feels the same way about a request for a change in title. He thought it is just too soon. Zambenardi stated she understood the concern and is fine with taking things more slowly. She stated that the Finance Department's Administrative Assistant is still available to help out and she appreciated the support for a minutes taker to any extent. She reiterated that she was conservative in the amount requested for the minutes taker and there is some wiggle room there. Cook asked if would still be an asses if the amount were reduced by half. Zambenardi stated a minutes taker would be especially useful when meetings are expected to be longer. After some more discussion, Members of the Board make tweaks to the budget and vote to approve it for submission to the Finance Director.

- Two-family structures: Bridges suggested that now might be a good time to look at two-family structures and how they are dealt with in Town and if they meet the Town's needs. He stated that the Cottages is a good example of a developer manipulating the definitions to essentially connect 2, single family homes with a trellis and call it a duplex. Cook noted that it is the building code that dictates what a 2-family structure is. The Board asked Zambenardi to look in to when two-families became allowed by right in Town. The Board members also discussed the interpretation of the Board of Health that single family homes can share a septic system so long as the system is commonly owned through a condominium association. They are concerned about the implication on land development in Town in general. They ask Zambenardi to invite Health Agent Paul Sevigny in to one of the February meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Leah J. Zambenardi, AICP
Planning Administrator

West Newbury Planning Board, Minutes, January 19, 2016. Approved February 2, 2016.