

TOWN OF BENNINGTON
PLANNING BOARD
Minutes of the Meeting- March 9, 2009

Present Jeffrey Rose, Chairman
 Barry White, Vice Chairman
 Melissa Stewart
 Joseph Cuddemi, Ex Officio
 Mark Mackesy

Guests Carol McKinney
 Shelagh Clough

Chairman Rose called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

The meeting for the proposed driveway regulations was re-scheduled for the March 23, 2009 work session. A note was received from the Administrator requesting the proposed amendments to the driveway regulations before March 12, 2009 to be available for the public. The Board is looking to take the existing regulations and incorporate the new and changed regulations. The Board is looking for feedback from the public and has not formally developed proposed amendments. A representative from the Fire Department, Highway Department and the Code Enforcement Officer will be invited to the next meeting. The Board is hoping to review Francestown and Antrim driveway regulations to help develop amendments for the Town of Bennington.

Chairman Rose presented the Rules of Procedure noting they have been approved as a document and need to be approved as a hard copy. Barry White made a motion to accept the Rules of Procedure. All were in favor and they will be dated March 9, 2009 as adopted by the Planning Board. Copies will be made for the public.

An update was given on the Harris Gravel Pit. Mr. Harris is waiting for State approval. Melissa Stewart moved that the Harris case be continued until April 13, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. All were in favor.

The minutes of the January 5, 2009 meeting were reviewed and accepted with the following change, page 2, paragraph 1 change "A new fee is not needed to include membrane structures as a membrane structure is considered a building and is subject to the same guidelines as other buildings." to "A new fee would not need to be included as a membrane building would be considered a building structure."

The minutes of the February 9, 2009 meeting were reviewed and accepted with the following correction add "Mark Mackesy" to the list of members present.

The minutes of the February 23, 2009 work session were reviewed and accepted with the following change, page 1, paragraph 4, add “Barry White later realized an error in the date of the site walk. The correct date is March 7, 2009”

Carol McKinney approached the Board to ask why the Town would need municipal parking at this time. It was explained that an opportunity had arisen to obtain an area for parking in town and it was felt that the townspeople’s opinion should be obtained. Mrs. McKinney asked if Bennington needed more parking as parking is available at the Catholic Church. It was explained that the town does not own the church parking lot.

Chairman Rose introduced Shelagh Clough, an Acre Street resident who asked to speak to the Board concerning multi-family housing in the center of town. The State has mandated that each town must have multi-family housing consisting of five or more dwelling units in at least one district of town. Adequate workforce housing is also required. Though Bennington has many rentals, workforce housing must be affordable, not to exceed 30% of total income. According to contacts at the State, it is believed that there are no municipalities in the region that currently meet the requirements of workforce housing. Mrs. Clough asked if a fair share assessment had been done. The Board has looked at the current rental units in town and feels the town falls short of the requirements based on the number of bedrooms in each unit. Mrs. Clough stated that she lives on the Acre and there are currently many rental units in that area She would like to see the rental units in another area of town. Mrs. Clough stated that the Historical District is being brought to a National level and could lobby for stricter regulations. The Planning Board was invited to be included in the meeting with the State Historical Resources. Mrs. Clough will call Chairman Rose to confirm the meeting. Chairman Rose will ask Town Council if it is possible to place a cap on density in the downtown area.

The Public Hearing for the Stewart home occupation was opened. Melissa Stewart recused herself, as she is the applicant. The Board reviewed the site checklist. All applicable requirements have been met. Barry White moved to accept the application. All were in favor. The floor was opened for debate. No objections were heard. A site walk was scheduled for March 10, 2009 at 1 p.m. The hours of operation shall be Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Melissa could be licensed for six children,(two of which are her own) and three children after school. A motion was made to continue the hearing to March 23, 2009 at 9 p.m. All were in favor.

Chairman Rose handed out information from a lecture he attended on Public Meetings.

Joseph Cuddemi made a motion to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Debra Belcher
Planning Board Recording Secretary