

Minutes
Town of Waldoboro
Planning Board Meeting
February 10, 2016

Contents

1. Minutes of January 27, 2016 - Tabled
2. Planning Board Google Drive Site
3. Chairman's Report
4. Planning and Development Director's Report
5. Introduction of New Planning Board Members Dupuis and Rhinelander
6. Old Business – Sign Ordinance
7. New Business - none
8. Next Meetings: February 17, 7 p.m.; February 23, 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Seth Hall at 7:44 p.m. in the meeting room at the Municipal Building. Other members present were Joyce Dupuis, Maggy Rhinelander and Ted Wooster. Planning and Development Director Emily Reinholt was present. Scott Simpson and Selectmen Ron Miller and Abden Simmons were in the audience. A quorum was present throughout.

1. Minutes of January 27, 2016 - Tabled

On motion of Wooster/Dupuis, Planning Board members voted unanimously to table review of the January 27 minutes until the February 17 meeting, because of some last-minute text changes which Planning Board members did not have time to review before tonight's meeting.

2. Planning Board Google Drive Site

Reinholt will be happy to show individual Planning Board members how to access the Planning Board's Google site. There is a link on the Town's web site. Planning Board members can post material for review and discussion, and can sign up to be notified whenever material is added. The site can also be accessed by members of the public. Reinholt will add new PB members to the authorized list of contributors shortly after they are appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

3. Chairman's Report

In answer to an inquiry from Chairman Hall about application activity, Reinholt mentioned that a site plan review application for an activity center is expected to be received by the end of this week, for review at the next regular Planning Board meeting. The applicant runs a dance studio, and has plans for a large new building to accommodate her classes and those of other teachers. Hall asked whether the applicant might be interested in re-use of the vacant A.D. Gray School. Wooster asked whether the applicant might use the Taction building, which has an elevator. Reinholt said that the applicant wants a new building.

4. Planning and Development Director's Report

A young man who attended a recent business focus group meeting is interested in joining the Planning Board, which is still one person short of having seven regular members.

A series of focus group meetings was held in the past several weeks as a start toward revising the Comprehensive Plan. Participants sought to determine whether the visioning process done in 2010 is still accurate, and what needs to be added or modified. Individual focus groups, limited to 12 participants each,

were held with people representing the arts, education, rural landowners, and two business groups. Videos of the meetings are available posted on Lincoln County TV. Reinholt will send Planning Board members a link to view the videos. Reinholt reported that business focus group participants said that the Planning Board is hard on businesses; she added that the Town has a reputation for not being business-friendly. This charge has been denied by the current Planning Board members, but Reinholt claims the impression persists. She reiterated her view that Board members should view the two business group videos.

Larger public meetings on the Comprehensive Plan will be held this spring.

5. Introduction of New Planning Board Members Dupuis and Rhinelander

Joyce Dupuis has lived in Waldoboro for 28 years. She retired several years ago and is looking for ways she can contribute to the community.

Maggy Rhinelander has just been appointed to the Planning Board. She lives on Dutch Neck and has been a full-time resident for eight years.

6. Old Business – Sign Ordinance

Since the last Planning Board meeting, Reinholt has done a very extensive review of various sign ordinances across the country. There is much variability. There are general guidelines for techniques used in sign ordinances, such as making sign size proportional to building size or façade size, to avoid having too-small signs on big buildings and huge signs on small buildings. She has not been able to find any examples of increasing sign size based on increased setback distance from the road, a suggestion made at the last Planning Board meeting. She recommends that we not try to do that in Waldoboro.

There is general agreement that the Sign Ordinance needs some adjustment, especially regarding size and location of signs in the Route 1 Commercial A and B land use districts. The Planning Board is considering recommending increasing the maximum sign size in Commercial A and B to 80 - 120 s.f., which is three or four times larger than the current maximum sign size, 32 s.f. There should be a more uniform setback distance from the road for pole signs. The Ordinance could require that pole signs be kept to 4' or 5' from the curb, or 5' - 10' from the pavement. Size of wall signs could be proportional to the size of the façade of the building, up to some maximum size limit. Reinholt read from her handout "General Standards and Sizes" given out at tonight's meeting. For Route 1 Commercial A and B, she recommends limiting wall signs to a maximum of 10% of the area of the building front to which the sign is affixed, not to exceed 120 s.f., with a maximum width of 60% of the building front wall (horizontal measurement), except that where the horizontal measurement is 20 feet or less, the maximum wall sign width may be 75% of the horizontal measurement.

Reinholt has a number of diagrams to illustrate the proposed new sign limits. She will upload these to the Planning Board's Google site, perhaps by the Feb. 17 special Planning Board meeting on revising the Sign Ordinance. Hall reminded members that Planning Board member Boardman has prepared a similar set of graphics based on actual buildings in Waldoboro, and would likely re-present these at the Board's Feb. 17 meeting.

Selectman Ron Miller praised Reinholt's proposed sign standards. Her draft is based on a model from the State. She has spent a lot of time on it. Miller showed recent photographs of signs on buildings in towns between Waldoboro and Portland. He agrees with Reinholt's suggestion of increasing the permitted maximum size of pole signs to 40 s.f., from 32 s.f., and creating and enforcing a minimum setback of pole signs from the road. To avoid having a too-big wall sign on a small building, he likes the idea of using a percentage of the size of the entrance area, rather than a percentage of the size of the whole building. Reinholt also prefers for the maximum wall sign size to be a percentage rather than a set maximum square footage. She mentioned that in one town, if a store's parking lot is larger than 500 spaces, a larger sign size was permitted. Hall said we should be very careful in all aspects of our signage ordinance review, including addressing things like allowing or restricting moveable and flashing signs, for example.

Miller spoke about the problem of a monument sign (free-standing solid panel) interfering with drivers' sight lines. A monument sign should have a minimum setback from the road, and/or be elevated so that drivers can see beneath it. An example is in the lower left-hand corner of his 15-photo montage sheet giving examples of signs, passed out to Planning Board members tonight. Hall agreed, citing a potential problem with the proposed new monument sign at Hannaford in Waldoboro, which he fears might block sight lines for drivers exiting onto Route 1 north-bound, using the proposed right-turn-only exit driveway.

Reinholt suggests a larger maximum sign size limit for Route 1 Commercial A land use district, to the east and west of the existing central Route 1 corridor. She suggests that larger buildings are likely to be built in Route 1 Commercial A, requiring a larger maximum sign size.

Purpose Statement: One of the handouts for tonight's meeting is a Purpose statement drafted in April 2015, intended as a preamble or introduction to the Sign Ordinance (Article 4 N of the Land Use Ordinance as amended February 25, 2014, p. 4-12 through 4-16). Reinholt suggests replacing the third paragraph of the purpose statement with findings of fact that represent a community consensus, based on meetings during revision of the Comprehensive Plan. Hall suggested deleting the first sentence, "Taste, good or bad, cannot be ignored." He offered to edit the Purpose statement, for discussion at next week's meeting on sign ordinance revision.

Definitions: Hall noted that the Sign Ordinance in the current Land Use Ordinance does not include any definitions. He suggests that definitions be included in the proposed redraft of the Sign Ordinance. Examples of definitions from several towns including Newcastle and Camden are on the Google web site. Selectman Miller asked why definitions are needed in the Ordinance. Hall said that definitions are needed in case of a legal challenge to the Sign Ordinance. If such a case comes before Superior Court, the Court will ask for a definition of, e.g., a moving sign. Having the definitions included in the Ordinance is the simplest way to handle the matter. Wooster and Reinholt suggested placing definitions in an appendix rather than in the text of the Sign Ordinance. The definitions need to be available. They could be a separate hand-out.

Permitted Sign Categories by Land Use: One of Reinholt's handouts for tonight's meeting, titled "Permitted Sign Categories by Land Use", lists in tabular form various non-residential uses and the types of sign allowed for each use: free-standing signs, wall signs, marquee/awning signs, projecting signs, signs under a canopy, and internal way-finding signs. The handout also gives sign size maximums (area and height) for free-standing signs based on the length of road frontage of the parcel where the sign is displayed, and percentage of façade surface area for wall signs. Hall requested that in the future a citation be provided in handouts giving the source of the material, as well as an explanation of why the material was included. Reinholt suggested looking at examples of sign ordinances on the Google site.

7. New Business - none

8. Next Meetings: February 17, 7 p.m.; February 23, 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 17, 7:00 p.m., special Planning Board meeting on sign ordinance

Tuesday, Feb. 23, 5:30 p.m., workshop with Select Board on sign ordinance

Rhineland noted that the Maine Municipal Association workshop in Saco, recommended for Planning Board members, is also on Feb. 23. She can attend one or the other, but not both. Hall noted that he had distributed the MMA seminar brochure to members via email earlier in the week, and that the brochure contained the dates and locations of numerous additional scheduled Planning & Appeals Board seminars.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Certificate of Approval

I hereby certify that the above minutes were approved by vote of the Planning Board on

(date)

Seth M. Hall, Chairman
Waldoboro Planning Board

Submitted by:

Susan S. R. Alexander