

**Ashland Planning Board Meeting
Minutes
February 25, 2015**

Members Present: Susan MacLeod, Cheryl Cox, Fran Newton (BOS representative)

Members Absent: Phil Preston (BOS alternate)

Others Present: David Toth, Ellison Badger, Norm DeWolfe, Kathleen DeWolfe, George Howard

The meeting was called to order at 6:29 pm by Chairman MacLeod.

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES

- *December 3, 2014* – **A motion was made (MacLeod) and seconded (Newton) to approve the minutes of December 3, 2014, as written. The motion passed unanimously (3-0) in the affirmative.**
- *December 17, 2014* – **A motion was made (Newton) and seconded (Cox) to approve the minutes of December 17, 2014, as written. The motion passed unanimously (3-0) in the affirmative.**
- *January 7, 2015* – **A motion was made (Newton) and seconded (Cox) to approve the minutes of January 7, 2015, as written. The motion passed unanimously (3-0) in the affirmative.**
- *January 28, 2015* – **A motion was made (Cox) and seconded (MacLeod) to approve the minutes of January 28, 2015, as written. The motion passed (2-0-1) in the affirmative, with Newton abstaining because she was not at the meeting.**
- *February 4, 2015* – **A motion was made (Cox) and seconded (MacLeod) to approve the minutes of February 4, 2015, as written. The motion passed unanimously (3-0) in the affirmative.**

NEW BUSINESS

George Howard re: Ashland Properties, Inc (Scott M. Heath)

As a follow-up to his meeting with the Board of Selectmen on February 24, George Howard informally presented his proposal to the Planning Board regarding leasing a portion of the Ashland Properties (Scott Heath) building to house a startup business (with 2 partners) for storage of salvaged materials for re-sale, primarily metal non-flammable products, floor tiles, etc. He wishes to start with just basic storage, without spending much on renovation, without being held to a lot of regulatory code issues and site plan complications and then come back later to talk about expansion of the business and relevant regulations. Mr. Howard indicated that with some cooperation from the town, the building can be cleaned up and fixed up, eliminating problems of attractive nuisance, vandalism and security. He feels it first should be occupied and then work toward zoning, compliance, site plan, safety, fire, etc.

Chair MacLeod made several points about start-up of a business:

- A site plan review would be required because it is a change of use and because the building has probably never been through a site plan process previously.

- As a preexisting building, if a full engineered surveyed plan is not requested, the Planning Board still needs to see what interior and other changes are made. This would get information into the property file as to its current state.
- The Planning Board still needs to know what is going to be done with the interior of the building.
- Various inspections (fire, life safety, building inspector, etc.) would still need to be addressed.
 - Mr. Howard responded that he will be careful, will be working toward improving the building, with his goal to get to the point where the fire inspector will be satisfied, but he cannot do it overnight.
- If the use were approved by the Planning Board, there would likely be conditions. And then Mr. Howard would have to return for the next steps as the business progresses.
- This process ensures that all information is documented and that all parties know what has been agreed upon.
- The property owner (not the tenant) is responsible for any conditions imposed.
 - Mr. Howard stated he has a tentative, conditional lease agreement that provides him with a way out, i.e., if the town does not cooperate to make it possible, then he will just walk away from the lease without penalty. Mr. Howard also stated he could act as the agent for Mr. Heath. Mr. Heath has indicated that as long as he does not have to spend money, he will work with Mr. Howard.
- The review process is also for the protection (insurance, liability, safety) of the property owner and user.
- The town still has various issues relative to the property (boarding up the building, insurance, etc.) that need to be cleared up before proceeding further.

Mr. Howard was provided with a copy of the Site Plan Review Regulations and was also directed to the Town of Ashland website for the site plan application and further information.

OTHER BUSINESS

Report from Ashland Economic Development Committee Meeting, February 19

Cheryl Cox reviewed the recent AEDC meeting with Glenn Coppelman of the North Country Council. The committee discussed applying for a grant to develop an economic plan for Ashland. At further meetings the AEDC will review the application process and an example application from Littleton, discuss identification of project(s), and work with Mr. Coppelman in developing the proposal. Other issues discussed included building awareness of the work of the AEDC in the community and a brochure to promote available commercial properties in Ashland.

The AEDC will also keep in contact with Geoffrey Sewake, Field Specialist for Community and Economic Development, UNH Cooperative Extension.

The AEDC has a new email address: aedc@ashland.nh.gov.

Report from Land Use Review Meeting, February 13

Fran Newton and Susan MacLeod reviewed the recent meeting of the Land Use Review Committee. One of the issues discussed was the need for revision of the Building Permit form; the Land Use group will assist Jim VanValkenburgh with the revision. Susan MacLeod noted that the forms from Henniker (especially) and Milford might be used as examples. The Planning Board discussed the need for the Land Use Review group to clarify membership of the group and its purpose (communication, process and enforcement) and to establish a method of communicating issues to the Board of Selectmen or other appropriate parties.

The next meeting of the Land Use Review Committee is March 6.

OLD BUSINESS

Design Standards Research

Both Susan MacLeod and Cheryl Cox had reviewed the design standards document from Windham and found it to be broader (e.g., “fitting in with surrounding buildings”), rather than Milford’s plan which is very prescriptive. Chair MacLeod noted that, if Ashland were to adopt some of the language in Windham’s plan, it would require some changes in Ashland’s zoning ordinance and a public vote process. Incorporating basic design standards in our site plan review regulations would only require a public hearing for adoption. In addition, if stormwater management (for example) were established as a stand-alone ordinance it could apply to all zones, while putting it in the site plan process would address only commercial and multi-unit projects. Fran Newton suggested that we start this process piece-by-piece, very simply and slowly. The Board will attempt to get Windham’s pdf document converted to a MSWord document for further review.

Any zoning ordinance changes should be carefully thought out, with sufficient time to review changes carefully before going to a vote. Chair MacLeod noted that in many towns the zoning ordinance clearly states at the beginning that the BOS is the enforcement agent for the zoning ordinance. That statement does not appear in our zoning ordinance, although the BOS enforcement authority is clearly stated in the NH RSA’s.

Dollar General

Chair MacLeod has reminded Dollar General again that they still need to submit as-built plans to the Planning Board.

The next meeting of the Planning Board is March 4, 2015, at 7:00 pm in the Ashland Elementary School Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 pm.

Minutes submitted by Mardean Badger