

**Ashland Planning Board
Draft Minutes
June 22, 2016**

Call to Order: Susan MacLeod, Chair of the Ashland Planning Board, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

Members Present: Members present for the meeting were Cheryl Cox, Carol Fucarile, Mardean Badger, Susan MacLeod, and Normand DeWolfe.

Disposition of Minutes

The review of the minutes was deferred to the next scheduled meeting of the Board on Wednesday, July 6, 2016.

Correspondence

Susan MacLeod was in receipt of a complaint from an Ashland resident concerning the cluster of business and real estate signs near the bridge on Route 25. The complainant needs to be notified and advised that he/she needs to write a letter to the NH Department of Transportation notifying the department of his/her complaint. The NH Department of Transportation will take up to 90 days to respond to such a complaint. The Board discussed briefly the issue of signs on the island at the intersection of Main Street and Route 3. The NH Department of Transportation does not allow any directional signs for businesses. The businesses in the lower village of Ashland need to devise a method of advertising their businesses without the use of a sign. Advertising on social media or on customers smart phones was suggested.

The Board briefly discussed Design Standards for the town. The idea of convening another meeting between the Planning Board and the local businesses and residents along Main Street was tabled. It was felt that the Board needs to do more research about the Design Standards in use by other towns and how other towns have dealt with the whole issue of Design Standards. When the Planning Board feels it has more to offer the Main Street businesses in terms of Design Standards the Board will consider convening another meeting. The Board further concluded that Design Standards would be easier to administer if they became part of the Site Plan Review. As part of the Site Plan Review the standards would not have to be written as part of an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance and would not have to be put before town voters once a year at Town Meeting. For the immediate future the Design Standards will be part of the Site Plan Review.

Cheryl Cox discussed the most recent Economic Development Committee meeting with the Board. The Economic Development Committee met with the mill owners. The multiple businessmen who own the mill property discussed several issues, including business, residential and arts uses of the properties as well as the condition of the buildings. The mill property is presently zoned commercial/industrial.

Cheryl Cox went on to say that the State is creating a website showing all commercial and business properties in the state. The website is tentatively scheduled to go online sometime in August. It has been brought to the State's attention that central NH is a forgotten region in the area of business growth and economic development. Businesses looking to move to Ashland are

looking for the square footage of a potential property as well as the height of the ceilings of potential buildings. These particular businesses were interested in moving manufacturing businesses to the area. There was concern raised about letting the customers coming through town via Route 3 know that there is a thriving business district with several well established businesses in the lower village of Ashland. The Economic Development Committee discussed their concern about the lack of municipal parking in town. More discussion will be needed before the concern of town parking will be resolved. The Economic Development Committee will meet with a local businessman to specifically discuss the issue of parking in town.

The Board discussed the issue of the cluster of business signs found at the top of Winter Street. The Board did not know who owned the property on which the signs are displayed. Steve Felton was asked to look into the matter of ownership.

Cheryl Cox and Fran Newton met with Annie Paquette about the creation of a “Welcome to Ashland” sign that would greet residents, visitors and drivers moving through town. It was suggested that fundraising might be one avenue to raise the funds needed to create the sign. The Economic Development Committee members were advised that the only town committees that can raise funds are the Heritage Commission and the Conservation Commission. The sign funds might become a line item under one of these committees or commissions. The funds could then be spent for the creation of an appropriate sign.

The Planning Board discussed the need for the Selectboard to write a policy relative to the specific process all town departments must follow when expanding or building on town property. All commissions need to create and develop a Construction Plan for the project. In addition, the commissions need to create and develop a Site Plan that needs to be put on file in the Town Office. Further, any construction on town property needs to follow RSA: 674:54 as policy. The commissions need to notify the Selectboard and the Planning Board. The notification is specified by law as to the number of days the notification needs to be sent out before construction can commence. All town departments and commissions need to be made aware of the policy and process. The Planning Board is in an advisory role and reports its recommendations concerning all town projects to the Selectboard.

Normand DeWolfe made a motion to adjourn. Carol Fucarile seconded the motion. With five votes in the affirmative the meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

The next meeting of the Ashland Planning Board will be Wednesday, July 6, 2016 at 6:30 PM at the Ashland Elementary School Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Paula Hancock