

**Ashland Planning Board
Draft Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 7, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER: Mardean Badger, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mardean Badger, Chris Janosa, Kendall Hughes, Paula Hancock, Tricia Farris, Linda Barnes (alternate)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Alternate ex officio Andy Fitch, Alternate Bethany Franz

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes of their July 24, 2024 meeting. Paula Hancock made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Tricia Farris seconded the motion. The motion passed on a 3 yes votes (Badger, Farris, Hancock), 0 no votes, 2 abstentions (Janosa, Hughes) on a roll call vote.

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS UPDATE

- Tricia Farris requested a further explanation of the recommendations from the town attorney relative to the Subdivision Regulations.
- The meeting today is a discussion about the board review of the Design Review without the applicant present
- Mardean will check with our legal counsel. Mardean will check the agenda

DESIGN REVIEW FOR MILL POND PROJECT

- Tricia has requested access to the Planning Board email address. Mardean stated that she will work with Sue to grant the board access.
- The email from Kevin Leonard received by the Planning Board was read to the board members
- Tricia wanted to know if the Planning Board had responded to the questions from Kevin Leonard before the August 7 meeting. Mardeen confirmed that the Board had not responded to Kevin's questions.
- The final application that is submitted will have more detail of the design considerations
- Written comments concerning the traffic study should be distributed to the board in advance of the Planning Board meeting.
- Kevin Leonard inquired are there any comments from all the department heads, are their comments part of the Design Review. Mardean will check with all department heads about their involvement in the Design Review process and notify board members.
- The Board requested ample time to review information provided before the meeting – more than one business day.
- The town attorney advised via email that the Design Review process is a discussion between the Planning Board and the applicant. The attorney would be uncomfortable if there were a Design Review discussion without the applicant being present
- There is no Public Hearing since there is no application for the board to review
- The Planning Board identifies issues that will arise in the final application process
- A Public Hearing is scheduled after the application has been received by the board. A Public Hearing and a Design Review uses facts, processes, State statutes and ordinances.
- The information sent to the Board relative to the school and to taxes is good information for the board to have but this information is not part of the Design Review process
- The Planning Board looks at Subdivision Regulations because these regulations are part of the project.

- The Design Review process also includes traffic study, natural resources, and slope of the land.
- Meghan Carrier, attorney for the project pointed out that the Design Review process allows the board to ask questions of the applicant. The applicant does have to provide answers at this time. The applicant is under a timeline for this project with their funders and requested that the Design Review process be wrapped up tonight.

The Planning Board will close the Design Review for this meeting.

Tricia Farris noted that a portion of the information subject to discussion at the meeting was sent throughout the day, prior to the meeting, and that as a result it was not reasonable to expect the board members to have been able to review the information and documents in order to be able to have a productive discussion. Kendall Hughes mirrored this concern.

Mardean recommended that each board member review all materials received to date on this project. Each board member can send their questions, comments and concerns to Susan MacLeod, Land Use Assistant. Susan will compile the questions, issues and concerns and distribute them to the applicant and to the board members. All the materials will be reviewed by the board at their Wednesday, August 28, 2024 scheduled meeting. Send all comments, questions, issues to the Land Use Assistant email address.

Mardean pointed out that the current Site Plan Review Regulations, the current Subdivision Regulations and the current Zoning Ordinances and all current checklists can be found on the town website. The Site Plan Review Application has a checklist with it. The current development is in both the Rural Residential and Commercial Zones. Our Zoning Ordinance allows for residences in a commercial zone

PROPOSAL: All members of the board will review all materials pertaining to this project that have been received to date; review the Site Plan Review, Subdivision Regulations, and Zoning Ordinances. Board can send questions to the Land Use email. Susan will any compile questions, comments and concerns and send out to the board as well as the applicant before Wednesday, August 28, 2024 meeting.

Mardean pointed out that standard traffic issues, water, sewer, electric, as well as town roads and private roads specs are in our regulations. If a road is accepted as a public road we need to go to the Selectboard to make any changes in the regulations. Cleanup is a standard part of the process.

The applicant will have questions about the project. Some questions should be addressed by the Selectboard.

The Design Review process will be continued to the Wednesday, August 28, 2024 Planning Board meeting at 6:30 at 6 Collins Street.

AGENDA PROCESS UPDATE

Tricia Farris would like to update the current agenda process as follows:

- Tricia Farris would like the agenda for each meeting created in advance. The board will take time at the conclusion of each meeting to develop the agenda for the next meeting.
- At the end of each meeting the board will discuss topics for the next meeting.
- The board members would like the agenda to go out the Friday afternoon before the scheduled meeting.
- The board will send an email to the Land Use Assistant for the agenda for the next meeting. The board realizes that agenda topics and issues can change.
- Formal applications are due during the third week of the month. The application submission may or may not come on agenda.
- When the board receives applications, the board must meet the timeline to review the application and a timeline for a decision to be made on that application.
- The agenda for all meetings is posted on the town website, the bulletin board at the Town Office and at the Post Office.

A Public Hearing is noticed in the Laconia Daily Sun. Notices need to be sent to all abutters. Susan MacLeod does this. When an application comes in and is processed the application is sent to all board members as an attachment. The Planning Board folders are outside the Land Use office on the second floor of the Town Office.

Use of emails: any discussion or comments made outside a public meeting among board members is considered discussion. If the State challenges this discussion among board members all emails of all board members are open for investigation by the State.

REORGANIZATION OF PLANNING BOARD

The Board reorganized the Planning Board at this meeting. As part of the reorganization process the Chair and Vice Chair are elected for the next 12 months.

A motion was made to nominate Kendall Hughes as Chair of the Board by Tricia Farris. Chris Janosa seconded the motion.

A motion was made to nominate Tricia Farris as Vice Chair by Kendall Hughes. Chris Janosa seconded the motion. At this meeting the following members were elected on a 3 yes 2 no roll call vote.

- Chair – Kendall Hughes
- Vice Chair – Tricia Farris

Discussion ensued during which time Linda Barnes called into question Ms. Farris' ability to serve as co-chair citing child rearing responsibilities and corresponding inability to provide requisite time commitment. Tricia Farris disputed Barnes statements and confirmed ability to serve as co-chair. Farris noted her child rearing responsibilities and or personal life was not an appropriate topic for discussion. Barnes requested her apology be noted for the record.

Linda Barnes expressed concern that the town could be subject to a lawsuit without Mardeen as Chair and under the proposed new leadership.

Tricia Farris requested that the information provided by the town attorney to Mardeen Badger via telephone call relative to her recommendations/changes to the Subdivision Regulations be restated in an email for the board to review. Tricia also requested that any future conversations with the town attorney either be documented via email or had with all board members present.

Kendall would like to adopt developers impact fees. The adoption of these developers impact fees needs to be adopted by the Ashland voters.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM. The next meeting of the Planning Board will be Wednesday, August 28, 2024 at 6:30 PM at 6 Collins Street.

A joint meeting will be held with the ZBA for a Special Exception and a Site Plan Review relative to the Dew Drop In food truck on property owned by Lisa Cross at 3 Cross Road on Thursday, August 8, 2024 at 6:30 PM at 6 Collins Street.

Minutes submitted by Paula Hancock