

Town of Wolfeboro
Planning Board Minutes
Great Hall at Wolfeboro Town Hall - 84 South Main Street
Tuesday, April 04, 2023
7:00 PM

I. Chairman Barnard called meeting to Order 7:00 PM

II. Members Present: Chairman Kathy Barnard, Roger Murray, Vaune Dugan, John Thurston, Doug Breskin, Brad Harriman Selectmen's Representative, Julie Jacobs, Alternate

Absent: Peter Goodwin

Staff Present: Tavis Austin, Director of Planning and Development

III. Public Hearings: NONE.

IV. Discussion Items:

K. Barnard asked J. Jacobs to be a voting member in the absence of P. Goodwin. J. Jacobs accepted.

(a) Alternates

K. Barnard introduced two individuals interested in becoming alternates to the Planning Board. She asked both to introduce themselves.

Stephen Webster provided some background on his life and career and his interest in working with the Planning Board.

J. Thurston asked what S. Webster believed to be his greatest asset to offer the Board.

S. Webster believed his organizational skills and methodical approach to problem solving will be an asset to the Board.

J. Thurston asked if S. Webster's communications with residents had suggested a 'disconnect' between the Board and the residents.

S. Webster wasn't aware of a disconnect but suggested the Board should consider using layperson language when communicating with residents.

D. Breskin made a motion to appoint S. Webster to a 3-year term as an alternate to the Planning Board. J. Jacobs seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Jane Nielsen introduced herself to the Board as an interested alternate. As a lifetime resident of Wolfeboro with parents who worked and served in the community, she is interested in working to maintain the historic character of town while making those changes needed for growth.

J. Thurston asked what J. Nielsen believed to be her greatest asset to offer the Board.

J. Nielsen noted a founded ability to state, “we didn’t do it that way,” but also ability to offer a fresh set of eyes to challenges and needs.

D. Breskin inquired about Nielsen’s experience with Planning Board type issues.

J. Nielsen noted no direct experience but having an awareness of the challenges, the overall vision of the Town and needing to make changes as required.

R. Murray motioned appointing J. Nielsen to a two-year term as alternate to the Planning Board. D. Breskin seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

K. Barnard outlined to S. Webster and J. Nielsen the process for swearing in prior to the next meeting.

(b) CIP Appointments

K. Barnard summarized the CIP appointments for 2023. There were four interested individuals.

K. Barnard motioned to appoint Charles Sumner, Tim Cronin, Suzanne Ryan, and Paul Whalen to the CIP Committee. J. Thurston seconded the motion which passed with a unanimous vote.

(c) Lake Region Planning Commission Update

K. Barnard summarized the LRPC update received by T. Austin, K. Barnard, J. Thurston, and R. Murray the previous week. She noted the 10 year housing survey and the updated ‘fair share’ analysis for each of the communities within the LRPC; this spoke to housing and workforce/affordable housing directly. She also commented on the LRPC noting conservation subdivision, non-profit workforce and elderly housing, as well as towns’ needs to consider increasing density. She recalled the need for the water/sewer study results from the Selectmen and concluded noting the similarity between the LRPC suggestions and the failed 2023 Town warrant articles.

T. Austin added the LRPC sentiment that the workforce statute may permit housing against the regulations; suggesting that Town may receive development ‘it gets’ rather than the housing it can plan for.

R. Murray noted the challenge with workforce housing to be the ‘affordable aspect.’ He suggested meeting with developers to see what regulatory changes could assist such projects in moving forward.

J. Thurston believed the largest concern to be of water and sewer; recalling the Town’s known concerns with respect to existing limits on both. He also commented on detached accessory dwelling units and concerns over enforcement.

(d) Work Plan Discussion

K. Barnard turned discussion to the workplan; looking to revisit the workplan following the March vote.

The first topic was ‘1/2 bath, ground floor of accessory building.’ J. Thurston recalled the history and this additional language to deter illegal conversions to apartments.

D. Breskin noted no definition of either ground floor or ½ bath in the regulations.

V. Dugan noted agricultural needs in certain instances for full bath. J. Thurston noted agricultural exemptions for such cases.

T. Austin noted the Building Code not listing bathrooms as habitable space; therefore, issuance of a permit for bathroom would not constitute living space. Illegal conversions are just that, regardless of the written regulation. Enforcement is viable without the language currently in the definition of Accessory Structure.

K. Barnard stated the topic would remain on the workplan. She then turned to shorefront regulations.

K. Barnard noted the comments received from Wolfeboro Waters who will be presenting their suggestions later to the Board.

K. Barnard then moved to short term rentals recalling the Town's vote to not define the use locally.

V. Dugan noted surprise in the Chamber of Commerce's position on the warrant article as they are also looking to increasing housing to support local businesses.

R. Murray spoke about the past candidate's night where clarity of proposed changes needs to be addressed.

J. Thurston suggested enforcement is tricky. K. Barnard reminded the Board of the adopted enforcement protocols.

V. Dugan stated it's clear that new buyers are pursuing short term rental option when purchasing homes.

J. Thurston suggested the Staff report quarterly on articles related to short-term rentals to see what's happening around the state.

K. Barnard spoke to 'residential apartments on first floor'.

T. Austin noted apparent conflict in the regulations where single-family homes and residential apartments not on the first floor are both listed as permitted uses. He continued that the ZBA interpretation currently appears to preclude living space on the first floor and that said premise would negate living on the first floor of a single-family home. It appears the 'apartments not on the first floor' was intended to reference living space above commercial, rather than to mandate a commercial first floor use.

The board generally consented that the intent was not to require first floor commercial. K. Barnard suggested language would need to be addressed.

K. Barnard turned the discussion to Elderly/Affordable not-for profit housing.

T. Austin reminded the Board of statutory change to provide same density bonus considerations to all housing types.

R. Murray expressed concern with the Board moving forward with more than 4 warrant articles in 2024.

T. Austin noted that not all items on the Workplan are potential warrant articles.

K. Barnard turned to prohibition of boathouses on Winnepesaukee.

V. Dugan asked the basis of the topic. T. Austin recalled J. Thurston requesting the item be on the workplan for environmental concerns and viewshed protection.

V. Dugan stated if boathouses are precluded all boats etc. will be out in the water with greater visual impact. She commented that boathouse construction has initial, regulated impacts, but ultimately increase lake size and remove visual impacts.

J. Thurston suggested Board look at why Wentworth prohibited boathouses and see if similar logic should be used on Winnepesaukee.

R. Murray stated a willingness to consider such a restriction for Winnepesaukee.

J. Jacobs asked the Board's opinion on revisiting the 'failed articles.'

R. Murray suggested not simply moving the same articles forward without further discussion.

D. Breskin suggested the Board review each article, re-evaluate, and move forward if desired. Clearly the mechanics of the questions must remain, but clarity should be added to avoid confusion.

K. Barnard asked T. Austin to amend the workplan to reflect the night's discussion.

K. Barnard updated the Board on T. Austin working with Steve Randal, Public Works, to revise the road standards.

B. Harriman commented on the Selectmen's efforts with Stantec and S. Randall on the same.

The board generally discussed following the rules of procedure with public hearings at their first meeting of the month and work sessions on the second meeting.

J. Thurston suggested larger amendments need ample time for review.

K. Barnard asked and 7 members requested hardcopy of the zoning regulations. T. Austin stated they would be created.

(e) PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

(f) Minutes of 03/21/2023

R. Murray noted a change in the reported vote on page 3; should read (5-0-2).

K. Barnard motioned to approve the minutes as amended. D. Breskin seconded the motion which passed with a unanimous vote.

V. ADJOURN

R. Murray motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 PM. J. Thurston seconded the motion which passed with a unanimous vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:47PM.