

**TOWN OF SKOWHEGAN
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

June 2, 2020

7:00 P.M.

Council Room, Municipal Building

PRESENT:

Steve Conley, Chairman
Todd Smith, Vice Chairman
Stephen Gould, Secretary
Harvey Austin
Steve St. Pierre
Kris Laney
Joel Greenwood, Planner
Cynthia Kirk, Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Brady Chapman

PUBLIC PRESENT:

Bryan Belliveau, Code Enforcement Officer
Chief David Bucknam

1) QUORUM:

Planning Board Meeting called to order at 7:00 P.M. Quorum was present.

2) MINUTES OF THE May 5, 2020 PLANNING BOARD MEETING TO BE APPROVED:

Motion by Stephen Gould to approve the May 5, 2020 Planning Board meeting minutes, as written. Seconded by Todd Smith. Motion passed 5-0.

3) SITE PLAN

4) ITEMS BY THE PUBLIC:

5) COMMUNICATIONS:

None

6) NEW BUSINESS:

A) Discussion on the proposed Needle Exchange Program Ordinance

Chief Bucknam explained why the town needs to look into doing an ordinance. He said back in January he was contacted by a group called MAP (Maine Access Points) which is based out of Portland regarding starting a needle exchange program in Skowhegan. He said this program goes through the CDC for approval. He met with 2 people from MAP yesterday to get more information as far as their regulations and procedures. Unfortunately, their application with the CDC was supposed to take 6 months for approval and it got pushed through in about 2 weeks so they are also trying to come up with the plan as well and weren't really prepared. Chief said several aspects in their application with the CDC were skipped over such as coming and meeting with the town and having a specific location that they want to set up in. According to the people from MAP there is a high need in Skowhegan for a

needle exchange program but the Chief said his department maybe gets 5 calls a year to go pick up used needles in town so he isn't sure where they are getting their information from. Chief said they want to set up a mobile exchange unit where they would basically come into town with an unmarked mobile unit and could set up anywhere in town to exchange needles. The problem Chief Bucknam has with this type up program is we have a lot of residential areas right here in town and he said if he lived here, he wouldn't want this van pulling up in front of his house to exchange needles with drug users with his children or grandchildren playing outside. Chief stated he does support needle exchange programs because they do have several benefits to communities such as safe disposal of used needles and slowing down the transmission of diseases. The reason he is here tonight is because he feels if this program is to come into town then we need to have certain rules and requirements for them to follow such as a set location instead of moving around town and certain security measures. Chief said he has contacted the CDC to get a copy of the operation procedures for this program and his request has gone to their legal team to see if he is even able to get a copy of it. One of his main concerns is being able to run background checks on the people that will be doing the needle exchanges so that they don't have drug dealers in there handing out full syringes to addicts.

Harvey Austin asked if this is a state program. Chief Bucknam said it is not. It is a private entity and the only people that they answer to is the CDC. That is why he feels that the town need to come up with some way to regulate what they do here. Chief also said that in addition to handing out clean needles they will also be handing out clean crack pipes, snorting equipment, and starter kits for people who don't have any to exchange etc.

Steve Conley asked to what extent can they restrict this in town because unfortunately we can block them from coming into town completely. Chief said he had spoken with MMA legal and we cannot stop them from coming to town but we can create an ordinance that would set up strict guidelines for when they do come into town such as where they be located and vetted the people doing the program.

Todd Smith asked if the Police Department would have any role with this program when it comes to town such as having to supervise it at all. Chief said it is not a supervised operation and that is why he wants an ordinance so that they would have the ability to require background checks on the people running it as well as only allowing them in a specific location.

Steve St. Pierre asked if this needle exchange program is tied to some sort of recovery program to help them quit the drugs. Chief Bucknam said that they do hand out pamphlets to people that come to exchange needles. He said they also talked to them about their addictions.

Harvey said that if we have to accept this then in the ordinance that they come up with can they put in the restriction that the person handing out the needles is a medical doctor. Chief said he will have to look into that. He said he would also want to be able to license anyone that is working with this program through the police department just like they have to do with taxi drivers in this town. That would include background checks and possible some sort of badge that they would have to wear to show they have gone through the vetting process. This can all be done through the ordinance.

Joel said from an ordinance perspective they can look at limited the number mobile units coming into town, the location of them as well as the vetting process for the workers.

Steve Conley stated that if this is something that is going to be coming to town no matter what then they need to figure out a way to regulate it to best interest of this town. He said the next step would be to have Joel work on coming up with a draft to review. Joel said to get started he would like to verify a few things with them. He asked if they would like to limit the number of programs that can operate in Skowhegan. The Planning Board agreed yes and there should only be a need for one in town. Joel then asked if they want to require a

checklist of information that they need to provide to the town such and funding sustainability, background checks, etc. He asked if they want to regulate locations. Chief said he would like to take out the whole mobile aspect of these programs and only allow them in fixed locations. He said he would prefer to have allowable locations in the ordinance and he would like to be the person who determines the best locations. Joel asked who enforces these needle exchanges. Chief said if they have any complaint with these programs then they have to contact the CDC to come and investigate it. However, if they violate our ordinance then we can enforce that violation. Joel asked if they would like to have any sort of fee for them to be permitted in town. The Planning Board said yes. Joel asked if they would like to regulate days and times of operations. Chief said he feels that their operations should be during daylight hours. The Planning Board said yes. Steve Conley said they should look at regulating as much as they can of this program. Joel asked if they should require any reporting requirements on the applicant. The board said yes. Chief also said they should look at punishments for violations of the ordinance and licensing for staff and volunteers.

Todd Smith asked if this would be able to get on the warrant for this year's town meeting. Cindy said as of right now she's heard town meeting might be in September so they would have time.

7) UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

8) ITEMS BY:

a) SELECTMEN:

None

b) DEPARTMENT HEADS:

None

c) MEMBERS:

Harvey said he has heard from a lot of people that they are concerned about the fish truck that is selling seafood in the Tractor Supply parking lot. We have a seafood store in town that is paying taxes in town to be here. Then you have this mobile truck that isn't having to pay any taxes here in Skowhegan. Harvey asked Joel if there was any way for them to have get a permit and pay some money to be parked there. It isn't fair to all of the other businesses in town that have to pay taxes. Joel said he isn't aware of anything but he can look into it.

Harvey asked when the turning lane will be starting up at the Recreation Center. Stephen Gould said he thinks that when they are done with the turning lane at the lights then they are supposed to start on that. Cindy looked up the minutes from the Selectmen meeting and informed them that it stated it is supposed to be done by fall.

Harvey also asked what is happening with the new fire station. He hasn't heard a thing since they paid a bunch of money to a company to find the best location. He thinks them as a Planning Board should be getting updated and know what is happening. Steve Conley said they haven't had a Public Safety Building Committee in several months so he isn't sure what is happening with it.

Steve Gould asked Chief Bucknam how he feels about possibly opening some roads in town to access by ATV's. Chief said he has never seen that so he isn't sure how it works.

d) CHAIRMAN:

e) STAFF:

Joel said they have had a pre-application meeting with another solar array company that would be looking to put one on Eaton mountain. He will keep them updated.

9) ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Harvey Austin to adjourn at 8:40 p.m., Seconded by Todd Smith.

Motion passed 5-0.

Minutes approved on July 7, 2020.

Chairman
