

**TOWN OF SKOWHEGAN
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

July 2, 2019

7:00 P.M.

Council Room, Municipal Building

PRESENT:

Steve Conley, Chairman
Todd Smith, Vice Chairman
Stephen Gould, Secretary
Harvey Austin
Steve St. Pierre (arrived at 7:16 pm)
Joel Greenwood, Planner
Cynthia Kirk, Recording Secretary

ABSENT

PUBLIC PRESENT:

Verne & Irene Daigle	Howard Tripp
Page Cary	Tony Alves
Clifton Bigoney	Rick & Waltraud Heinze
Saif Amini	Jason Gayne- Chamber of Commerce

1) QUORUM:

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

The Board shall organize at its first regular meeting after the annual Town Meeting, a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary each shall be elected by a majority vote, who shall serve until the next annual meeting.

Steve Conley opened the discussion on the nominations.

Todd Smith nominated Steve Conley for Planning Board Chairman, seconded by Stephen Gould. Motion passed 3-0.

Stephen Gould nominated Todd Smith as Planning Board Vice-Chairman, seconded by Harvey Austin. Motion passed 3-0.

Harvey Austin nominated Stephen Gould as Secretary, seconded by Todd Smith. Motion passed 3-0.

2) MINUTES OF THE May 21, 2019 PLANNING BOARD MEETING TO BE APPROVED:

Motion by Todd Smith to approve the May 21, 2019 Planning Board meeting minutes, with a correction to section #9 regarding the spelling of Todd Smith's name. Seconded by Stephen Gould. Motion passed 3-0.

3) SITE PLAN

None

4) ITEMS BY THE PUBLIC:

Steve Conley opened the floor to hear from the public and address their concerns. Irene Daigle said she had spoken with Randy Gray about a month ago and he had told her there really isn't anything that can be done but they were welcome to come to the Planning Board meeting and voice their concerns. She said her concern is regarding the new business that has moved in right across from her home on Free Street. The new business is Central Maine Septic. She stated that her concerns do not have anything to do with the owners of the business which she has never met but is in regards to the nature of this business. The view from her house now consists of about 250 portable toilets since the land has been cleared of the trees. Mrs. Daigle also said that the neighborhood is concerned if there will be an odor coming from this business especially in the middle of summer. She feels that this type of business does not belong in this type of neighborhood. They seem to run this business 24 hours a day and they constantly hear the back-up alarms on the bobcat and other machinery sometimes very early in the mornings.

Harvey Austin stated that he used to own that business before Rick & Wendy Turner purchased it from him about 5 years ago. He stated that he knows that the previous owner of that lot had been chasing the Turners to buy it from him for several years. Harvey said he doesn't have anything to do with the business now but he can tell them what they can expect from it if they would like him to.

Steve Conley asked if everyone here tonight feels the same way. Everyone stated yes. Steve Conley said he can understand where they all are coming from because he wouldn't probably not like having that business by his house either. He said however the problem that we have in Skowhegan is that over the course of many years and several attempts the townspeople have voted against having town wide zoning. He explained to stop this type of issue from happening in the future the town would have to adopt a Zoning Ordinance. Cliff Bigoney said that he has never lived in a town before that does not have some sort of zoning laws. He stated he has lived on Free Street for about 11 years now. Harvey said that even if there was zoning here in town, that area that they all live in would in fact be zoned as commercial. Mr. Bigoney said he understands that but it could at least regulate what type of businesses would be allowed in certain areas.

Waltraud Heinze said they bought their house at 14 Free Street about 14 years ago and had planned on retiring there. They are located right next door to this business. She said they are very upset that whenever they look out there windows now all they see is portable toilets. She stated they have a grandchild that lives there with them who is getting woken up in the morning when the business starts running their equipment.

Steve Conley said he understands that they are all upset about this issue however there is a process that would need to happen before any town zoning could take effect. It would need to be voted on at the annual town meeting. He asked Joel Greenwood if there is anything, they can do right now to help these residents in any way. Joel said the only thing he could check on is if there are any State statutes that they could use as far as the noise and/or visual effect of the business. He said he could look into it for them.

Verne Daigle said he has a couple questions. He asked if any other lots in town have any restrictions of being zoned commercial or residential. Steve Conley said there is no zoning

throughout the town. Stephen Gould said there is zoning in town but it is just for either flood hazard or shoreland zoning. Verne said he has been reading the Site Plan Ordinance and shouldn't this business would have needed to come before the Planning Board for a Site Plan review before they moved in. Joel explained there are certain thresholds that they would have needed to meet for new structures or new impervious services in order for them to be required to come before the Planning Board for Site Plan review. Harvey said that this site was mostly impervious already with the previous owner and his business so they haven't really created much more impervious surface.

Stephen Gould asked if any of the residents had spoken with the Turners about putting up fencing or anything else. They said no. Harvey said that quite a bit of fencing had already been put up from what he saw.

Saif Amini said he purchased his property at 18 South St about 7 years ago and if he had known that this type of business was going to be going in near him, he would have not purchased it. He said the nature of that business does not fit in there. It is an eyesore for him and his neighbors. He said he hopes somebody can help them and maybe find an exception to the rules.

Steve Conley said he understands where everyone is coming from and he can sympathize with them. However, he said things won't be able to change unless the community comes together and votes in favor of zoning at an annual town meeting. Harvey said he has seen zoning try to get passed several times and each time it goes upstairs to the town meeting it is clearly voted down. Steve Conley said if they would like to continue to try and do something about this, he would suggest they go to the Selectmen's meeting next week and further voice their concerns to them. He also suggested that maybe if they go and speak with the owners of the business about their concerns maybe they can come to some type of compromise.

Paige Carey stated that she has lived at 18 Free Street for about 11 years. She agreed that maybe some of them should try talking with their new neighbors. She also said that if Skowhegan does not have zoning then she doesn't understand why the postal service and UPS always charge her extra fees for being in a residential zone. She also said maybe they could put up some taller fencing. Another concern is the property values of their homes because with this business going in the values have definitely dropped. She also asked if they would now be able to have their homes reassessed for tax purposes because of this. Harvey said they can apply for an abatement on their taxes.

5) COMMUNICATIONS:

None

6) UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Jason Gayne asked if they had been able to look at the Victualer's Ordinance yet for some updating. Steve Conley said they have not yet. He said it would be helpful if Jason submitted his proposed changes to them and then they can get it on the agenda.

7) NEW BUSINESS:

A) Comprehensive Plan

Steve Conley mentioned that everyone now has a copy of the current Comprehensive Plan. Stephen Gould said it also might be a good idea to look at the plan from 1995 as well to be able to compare. Cindy said she thinks that it is available on the website. Steve Conley

suggested that everyone take a look at the copy and see what sort of things need to be updated.

B) Members

Motion by Todd Smith to accept the letter of resignation and to pass it onto the Selectmen for approval. Seconded by Stephen Gould.

Harvey asked if they could discuss this letter from Garrett. He is concerned about the mention of unethical behavior in the town. Steve Gould said it would be good to find out what's going on with the wording he used in the letter. Harvey said he had talked to Garrett about this situation when he came over to his garage. From what he was told by Garrett, a member of the fire department had approached him and told him he was voting the wrong way about the new Public Safety Building and that the way he votes could affect his business. Steve Conley said that everyone does have their right to free speech. Stephen Gould said he understands that but there can also be consequences for people's words. Harvey said to just send this on to the Selectmen and see what they have to say about this situation.

Amendment to the original motion made by Todd Smith by Harvey Austin to include a letter from the Planning Board voicing their concerns about this matter and asking the Selectmen to look into it and respond back to them. Motion passed 4-0.

Motion by Todd Smith to send a recommendation to the Selectmen in favor of the appointment of Brady Chapman and Kris Laney to the Planning Board. Seconded by Harvey Austin. Motion passed 4-0.

8) ITEMS BY:

a) SELECTMEN:

None

b) DEPARTMENT HEADS:

None

c) MEMBERS:

Harvey said he wanted to give credit to Steve Conley for making a really great point previously. He said the Planning Board years ago was always informed of everything that was happening in this town. The town manager used to attend their meetings all of the time. Now they can't get any department heads or Selectmen to even attend these meetings. Back then the Planning Board used to be respected and now they aren't. He said he agreed completely with Steve about coming up with ideas to help benefit and grow this town instead of just sitting idle. Harvey said they should all be thinking about ways this town could grow and help our local businesses. He said it's too bad that there are so many people passing by our town with their four-wheelers and other atv's to head north and spend their money up there. We should be able to somehow hook into these trail systems so they are stopping here instead.

Steve St. Pierre said it would be nice if they could finish one road project like North Avenue before they start digging up another one like West Front Street. He said he hopes it gets done quickly.

d) CHAIRMAN:

Steve Conley asked if they could get some information on Planning Board Training. Cindy will get that for the next meeting.

e) STAFF:

Joel said that they will be having the Staff Review Committee Meeting on Monday to review and decide on the expansion of the RFGH parking lot. This was a minor Site Plan due to the amount they are expanding. Harvey asked who the contractor is on this job. Joel said he doesn't and he believes it is still being determined.

Joel also said they should still be getting a complete application from KVCAP for the Mary Street project. He just isn't sure when.

9) ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Stephen Gould to adjourn at 8:34 p.m., Seconded by Todd Smith.

Motion passed 4-0.

Minutes approved on September 3, 2019.

Chairman
