

AMHERST PLANNING BOARD
Wednesday, August 19, 2009 – 7:00 PM
Town Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

PRESENT: Jonathan Shefftz, Chair; Jonathan O’Keeffe, Bruce Carson, Denise Barberet, David Webber, Stephen Schreiber, Ludmilla Pavlova-Gillham

ABSENT: Richard Roznoy

STAFF: Jonathan Tucker, Director; Sue Krzanowski, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Shefftz opened the meeting at 7:15 PM.

I. MINUTES – Meeting of August 5, 2009

Ms. Barberet said that she gave some minor corrections to Ms. Krzanowski prior to the meeting. She suggested one other correction on page 5, under Subcommittee Reports, changing the phrase “four-unrelated issue” to “four-unrelated persons”. Mr. Webber noted a correction on page 4, saying that he does not serve on the board of trustees for the Yiddish Book Center but that his firm has represented them.

Mr. O’Keeffe MOVED: to accept the Minutes of August 5, 2009 as amended. Mr. Schreiber seconded, and the Motion passed 6-0-1 (Pavlova-Gillham abstained).

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. Planning Commissioners Journal – Mr. Shefftz read excerpts from “The Nine Circles of Planning Commission Hell” on page 19, which he said he found particularly relevant and interesting.

Ms. Barberet said that there were some very interesting points in the article about libraries (p. 12, “Libraries at the Heart of Our Communities”). It’s nice to see the views of those who had supported additional funding for the library being confirmed, she said.

B. Other – None

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Master Plan Schedule – Mr. Tucker said that he strongly recommended that the Board set a schedule for completion and adoption of the final plan. Among the remaining steps, he said, is review of the final draft, getting the final set of public comments, a final joint public hearing with the Select Board, then final review and revisions by the Planning Board and adoption.

Mr. Tucker said that the schedule was getting busy with permit applications and proposed zoning amendments, and suggested that the Board schedule September 30 or October 7 for a full discussion.

Ms. Barberet said that those dates seemed late. She said that everyone should receive a copy of the minutes taken by Ms. Brestrup from the last Master Plan Subcommittee meeting and the draft land use policy map. Other members agreed and said that the master plan discussion needed to begin sooner.

Throughout the discussion, there was general agreement among the Board members that they would like to begin the discussion on September 2, 2009, even if it means a longer meeting than usual.

Mr. Tucker recommended that the entire plan be reviewed by the full Board first, to provide a foundation for further discussion of the policy issues which need to be addressed.

Ms. Barberet said that the controversial issues need to be addressed and can't be put off. The Subcommittee has not been able to reach consensus, she said. That led to a discussion about whether or not, or when, a Subcommittee meeting needed to be scheduled, and/or if a full board meeting should be scheduled instead of, or in addition to, the Subcommittee meeting.

There was general consensus that the Subcommittee needed input from the full Board and it was time for a full discussion. Mr. Tucker said that staff needs guidance about the maps which he said he would email to the Board.

Mr. Schreiber MOVED: that the Planning Board hold a special meeting on August 26 to begin the master plan discussion. Mr. O'Keeffe seconded.

All of the members present said that they could make the meeting. Mr. Webber suggested limiting the agenda for that night to accommodate the discussion. Mr. O'Keeffe suggested that it seemed reasonable to stick with the regular schedule and have the discussion on September 2 rather than hold a special meeting. There was general agreement.

Mr. Schreiber withdrew the Motion, and the Board agreed to schedule a full discussion at the September 2 meeting. Mr. Tucker suggested that the Board use the time as a working session rather than entertain public comment, in order to make the best use of the time for that night.

B. Other – None

The Chair endorsed the following:

ANR2010-00001/M2908 – 208 Snell Street, Nancy Murphy

V. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS – None

VI. UPCOMING SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS

Mr. Tucker said that Cumberland Farms has filed a Site Plan Review application to install new signs and make design modifications to existing sites, 389 College Street and 35 Belchertown Road. Friends of Hospice House has submitted a Site Plan Review application to add three bedrooms and administrative space to an existing facility, 1165 North Pleasant Street. The public hearings have been scheduled for September 2. Staff will contact Board members about setting up site visits.

VII. PLANNING BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

B. Master Plan – given above under “Old Business”

A. Zoning – Mr. O’Keeffe said that the Subcommittee focused on replacement for the Phased Growth Bylaw, Depot neighborhood rezoning, and definitions of medical offices and whether to allow them in the PRP zone. Three different levels of medical office are being considered, he said. He encouraged the rest of the Board to review the proposed articles.

Ms. Barberet said that the Subcommittee also discussed the four-unrelated persons bylaw. Mr. O’Keeffe said it was discussed but will probably not be ready for Fall.

VIII. PLANING BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission – Mr. Schreiber said that he had not been notified of any meetings.

B. Community Preservation Act Committee – No Report

C. Agricultural Commission – No Report

D. Save Our Stop Committee – No Report. Ms. Barberet asked if this would affect the rezoning effort. Ms. Pavlova-Gillham said that the Town really needs to keep the train stop, noting its proximity to the Dickinson Homestead, a popular tourist site. Ms. Barberet said that she loves trains and hopes the stop stays there.

E. Puffer’s Pond 2020 – Mr. Webber said that the Committee has not met but hopes to meet by the end of the month.

IX. REPORT OF THE CHAIR – Mr. Shefftz said he had no report other to announce that he and his wife are expecting their first child at the end of the year.

X. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – No Report

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Shefftz adjourned the meeting at 8:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Sue Krzanowski, Administrative Assistant

Approved:

Jonathan S. Shefftz, Chair

DATE: _____