



Planning Board Meeting Minutes Tuesday, January 24, 2023, at 7:00 pm – Remote Participation

Members Present: Diab Jerius, Chair
I-Ching Scott
Kurt Spring
Sally Dale, Vice Chair/Clerk
Nicholas Rossettos

Also Present: Bryan Manter, Asst. Town Engineer
WinCam

Others Attending: Richard Rohan Richard Leaf Kevin Foley
Eric Sanderson Iverson Guo

A quorum being in attendance, Chair Jerius calls the Winchester Planning Board (PB) meeting to order at 7:00 pm, noting that the meeting is being recorded via WinCam and Zoom. Roll call of PB members: Dale, Rossettos, Scott, Spring, Jerius in attendance.

1. Updates, Chair Jerius:

- a. There is an informal working group on the MBTA Multi-family Housing meeting tomorrow with Jenn Goldson and others, to discuss the logistics of getting started.
- b. Shared the new mission statement for the Winchester Affordable Housing Trust: “to support and sustain an inclusive and socioeconomically diverse community consistent with the policy objectives of the most recent Winchester Housing Production Plan through investment, education, and advocacy.”
- c. There is a Master Plan Implementation Committee this Thursday. A resident has indicated interest to joining. Will add this to the next PB agenda to discuss.
- d. The Rocky Ledge project is working out the details on the peer review.
- e. The Town Clerk has requested the PB for their annual report, that in past years Mr. Szekely would write. Need assistance in drafting the report.

2. Planning Board Meeting Minutes, January 10, 2023:

PB Discussion: Ms. Dale had a minor edit.

Mr. Spring moved to approve the PB Meeting Minutes of January 10, 2023. Ms. Scott second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Rossettos, Scott, Spring, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

3. Discussion PB Schedule and Start Time:

Chair Jerius: Interested in starting the PB meetings at 7:15 or 7:30 pm.

After discussing, the PB concluded: Try beginning the PB meetings at 7:15 pm, ending at 9:30 pm. Potentially start with the February 7th meeting, pending a review of the agenda.

4. Spring Town Meeting Zoning Articles:

There are three possible articles for Spring Town Meeting.

- a. Chair Jerius: Regarding Section 3.5.5, the PB made a policy decision at the December 13, 2022 PB meeting that would maintain existing practice to allow a nonconforming property that is adding another nonconformity, to use the special permit process. He will be crafting the documentation to explain and support this change.

- b. Chair Jerius: Regarding Section 4.1.1, this appears to be a scrivener's error. In the table of regulations, for the RDA column, the minimum lot frontage is 100 feet (at the street) and the minimum lot width is 120 feet (measured from the back of the house) which creates an odd shaped (wedged like) lot. All the other zones have consistent widths for both the front and back. Recommend changing the 120 feet to 100 feet for the back of the house width. This was identified and suggested by Mr. Szekely prior to his leaving.

Discussion:

- Will Town Meeting ask why should this get changed?
- This applies to lots mostly on the west side of Winchester. A map was shown of these properties; they did not appear oddly shaped.
- Will check with Mr. Wile (Zoning Enforcement Officer) whether there have been requests to vary the width at the back lot to 100 feet instead of the 120.

Ms. Dale moved to have the PB sponsor an article for the Spring Town Meeting to correct Section 4.1.1 changing the minimum lot width from 120 feet to 100 feet, reflecting this as a scrivener's error. Ms. Scott second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Rossettos, Scott, Spring, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0.

- c. Chair Jerius: Mr. Wile had requested clarification from the PB regarding an inquiry to locate a pet grooming business in the Center Business District (CBD). Section 5.1.3 (off-Street Parking) references kennels in regard to off-street parking. Under section 10 (Definitions), there is no reference specific to kennels.

PB Discussion:

- Could expand the use table to specifically identify kennels/pet grooming.
- Would noise, barking dogs, be an issue to the neighbors?
- There are differences among a veterinary practice, kennel, and pet grooming business.
- If this is considered general services, then this function is allowed but would be limited to having up to 3 animals.
- What do other towns do?
- Want to be able to expand our commercial base.

Conclusion: Ms. Scott and Ms. Dale will continue exploring options.

5. Future Zoning Articles:

Chair Jerius: Mr. Wile is requesting clarification regarding Air B&B's and VRBO (Vacation Rentals By Owner), indicating he has received inquiries from residents. A dwelling unit definition allows residences to lease on a weekly, monthly or longer basis. This appears to apply to a home, not room.

Discussion:

- Two perspectives: This is a great way to get income from property allowing a family financially constrained to remain in Winchester. The other perspective is people do not want their neighborhoods turning into commercial businesses where different people come and go on a frequent basis.
- With the ADU bylaw, people have a one-week rental minimum and a 30-day minimum between rentals.
- Can we do a room rental or parts of a home? There is nothing about boarders in the bylaws.
- Should the town get a financial benefit from any rentals?
- This is one way to help people stay in town.

- Concern about commercial businesses buying houses to set up timeshares.
- Most communities dealing with this issue are places where people go to vacation, such as towns near lakes or the ocean.

Conclusion: To explore this with the Winchester community. Plan to reach out to the residents for public input sometime in May.

6. 14 Thompson Street (Karma Restaurant):

Chair Jerius: Kevin Foley, the landlord, and Iverson Guo, business owner, are present. Before the PB can proceed, need the Design Review Committee (DRC) and the Historical Commission (HC) comments.

Mr. Guo: Have not completed their review with the DRC. And have not yet met with the HC.

Mr. Foley: Will provide an overview of the design; showed and discussed the outside elevation included in the agenda packet. Using the comments from the DRC, have modified the outside elevation and floorplan. His grandfather built this building; it used to be a series of houses. Want to keep the charm of the historical town balanced with the character of the business.

PB Discussion:

- Appreciates seeing this business in town.
- Sorry to see that in this process, the façade has changed to reflect the historical character of this building, while taking away the “Asian-ness” of this business. Mr. Foley suggested adding an element to the building, attached to the facade, that would reflect the character of the business.
- The DRC review and recommendations are required because it is located in the CBD.
- Recommendation to hold a joint meeting with the DRC, HC, and PB to expedite the process.
- Suggestion to provide two (or more) design concepts that respond to the comments.
- Suggestion to have the historical character elements be maintained in the structure, or permanent aspects. And use character elements that are more ornamental and temporary, that reflect the business.

Conclusion: Continue the process with DRC and HC. Once PB receives comments, will put on the PB agenda, leaving the option to make this a joint meeting with DRC and HC, with a tentative date of February 21, 2023.

7. Hiring of the Town Planner:

Chair Jerius: Last Thursday the Personnel Board approved the job description (version from last June) and the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with PB, HC, and DRC. Human Resources Director, Michael Towne requested the MOU signed prior to posting the job description. The PB, DRC, and HC have signed it; the last is the Town Manager. The job will be posted with the Massachusetts Municipal Association, with a link to the Town’s website. Mr. Towne will also post it with several planning board associations and the Town’s Linked-in account. Expect this to happen tomorrow. The next step is to revise the performance plan, outlining the details of the position.

After discussing, PB concluded with:

- The interviews with town staff will include Engineering (Mr. Manter), Ms. Gill, the Building Commissioner (Mr. Wile), the Sustainability Director (Mr. Pruitt), the Town Clerk (Ms. Lannon), and the Town Manager (Ms. Rudolph). The PB members would also attend.

- The interviews with other boards will include the DRC, HC, Housing Partnership Board, Select Board, and Town Manager. There would be a representative from each board and the five PB members.
- Reminder to submit interview questions to Chair Jerius.

8. Adjourn:

Ms. Scott moved to adjourn the PB meeting of January 24, 2023. Ms. Dale second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Rossettos, Scott, Spring, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:34 pm.

Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary

Sally Dale, Clerk