

PLANNING BOARD

Dec 21, 2023

MEMORIAL BUILDING

7:00 P.M.

Board Members Present: Tim Bray (chair), Jen Roberts, Ken Jacques, Mike Howard, Darrin Patten, Dan Saulnier, Poul Heilmann and John Trachy (alternate).

Also present: Tim Josephson (UVLSPC), Tim Hayes (Springfield Road Agent), Gene Hayes, and Justin Hastings.

Gene Hayes received approval for a Lot Line Adjustment in November 2023 but with a spelling error. Clayton Platt fixed the error, and Mr. Hayes obtained a revised and signed mylar. Mr. Hayes's mortgage company requested a Planning Board member's signature and Chairman Tim Bray signed the original form. Mr. Hayes received a signed copy for his mortgage company.

Harry Lidsky submitted a merger involving two lots. Mr. Lidsky confirmed to Tamara Butcher that there are no mortgages on either lot. John Trachy queried the map's suitability for the Registry; Ms. Butcher clarified the Registry never requested a merger map. The Board found no problems, unanimously approved the request, and Tim Bray signed the application.

The Nov 16th minutes were reviewed and found to require no changes. Poul Heilmann motioned to accept them as written, seconded by Darrin. The Board approved, with Ken Jacques and Mike Howard abstaining as they were absent from the meeting.

The revised Annexation form now includes a second page for a Planning Board member's approval. It also incorporates tracking information deemed useful for future applications

Chairman Bray outlined the approval process for driveways. Initially, the Planning Board delegates authority and enforcement responsibility to the Select Board, which further delegates it to the Road Agent due to their expertise. Seeking insight, Chairman Bray asked Tim Hayes to describe his procedure. Mr. Hayes explained that upon receiving an application, he is notified by Tamara Butcher. Subsequently, Mr. Hayes conducts a preliminary site visit to assess the property, preferring direct communication with the property owner to understand their intentions. Specific criteria outlined in the Driveway Access Regulations must be met, such as ensuring a 200-foot line of sight in both directions and maintaining a maximum 4% grade within the initial 25 feet from the road. Mr. Hayes also examines potential drainage issues post-construction, aiming to specify the appropriate culvert size for managing runoff. He proposed adding a final inspection requirement to ensure compliance. Non-compliance would prompt Mr. Hayes to report to the Select Board for enforcement action.

Discussion regarding the extent of the Town's jurisdiction over driveway length, especially concerning wetlands within the property, was held. Chairman Bray has access to the 2016 Wetlands Mapping tool, which proves beneficial in such scenarios. Tim Hayes and Chairman Bray both suggested visiting properties with pending driveway applications. Poul Heilmann supported the idea of involving the Zoning Coordinator and Road Agent during the visit, ideally within one or two days of the application submission. Tim Josephson, UVLSPC representative, endorsed the Zoning Coordinator's visit, noting that typically, after a driveway application,

construction (such as a house or garage) follows, prompting involvement from the Zoning Coordinator.

Ken Jacques raised concerns about the number of driveways permitted for a property. He observed a non-conforming lot with an existing house and driveway near his location, which added a second curb cut for a garage. A former Road Agent approved this second cut. However, Ken Jacques questioned this approval due to restricted visibility. Upon studying the Driveway Access Regulations and zoning ordinance, it was discovered that a property must have 500 feet of frontage to have two or more driveways.

The conversation shifted towards involving other parties like the police and fire departments in driveway access review. If Chairman Bray and Tim Hayes agree on needing further input, they would contact the police or fire department. Factors such as the driveway's length and width for emergency vehicle passage or maneuvering would be considered.

The Town Attorney clarified that driveway curb cuts on State roads are beyond the Town's jurisdiction. Concerns arise regarding wetlands situated outside the State right-of-way. Is the Town empowered to intervene in such scenarios? A significant issue is the Town being notified about a driveway curb cut on a State road only after its completion.

Poul Heilmann proposed structuring the application with bullet points outlining necessary items for driveway construction. Tim Hayes suggested incorporating procedures for addressing culvert failures into the application form. Additionally, a Board member asked whether a driveway plan should accompany the application.

There was discussion comparing the Driveway Access Regulations with the Zoning Ordinance, and the need to align both to avoid future misunderstandings. The Board should determine if altering the Driveway Access Regulations necessitates Town Meeting approval or if it is only required for changes to the Zoning Ordinance. There is uncertainty about the inception of the Driveway Regulations; one Board member recalls their establishment around 2010, voted on solely by the Board. Communicating changes effectively at Town Meeting demands clear, concise education and communication to ensure everyone comprehends the purpose and significance behind the modifications. John Trachy will update the Driveway Application and the Board will review it in January.

Ken Jacques briefed the Board on the fall activities of the Capital Improvement Committee. Meetings were held on Oct 23rd, Nov 2nd, and Nov 29th, resulting in an updated Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), now available on the website along with meeting minutes. The Buildings and Grounds Committee provided insights on the condition of Town buildings and offered suggestions for necessary updates and improvements.

The meeting concluded at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamara Butcher