



Stratham Planning Board Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2020
Municipal Center, Meeting Room A
10 Bunker Hill Avenue, Stratham, NH
Time: 7:00 PM

Members Present: Tom House, Member
David Canada, Member
Mike Houghton, Selectmen's Representative
Robert Roseen, Member
Pamela Hollasch, Alternate Member
Joe Anderson, Alternate Member

Members Absent: Colin Laverty, Member

Staff Present: Tavis Austin, Town Planner

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mr. House called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and took roll call. He also announced that the conference line was active and available for those who chose not to attend in person; contact information is provided on the Planning Board agenda posted on the Town website. Mr. House asked Ms. Hollasch and Mr. Anderson to be voting members in the absence of Mr. Roseen and Mr. Laverty.

2. Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes: September 02, 2020

Mr. Canada made a motion to approve the September 02, 2020 meeting minutes and Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed with a 4, 1, 0 vote with Mr. Anderson abstaining. Minutes approved.

Mr. Roseen joined the meeting at 7:10PM. Mr. House stated the two alternates had been made voting members given attendance at the start of the meeting, Mr. Roseen would not be a voting member.

3. Public Meeting:

a. Route 33 Legacy Highway Ad Hoc Committee

39 Forrest Barker, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee outlined the process the committee used to
40 further the requested mandate of the Planning Board. She identified the historic nature of
41 the corridor and several of the properties with frontage along Route 33 noting that several
42 are in disrepair or are being neglected as fewer and fewer people are electing to move their
43 families to homes along the corridor. The draft materials presented to the Board this
44 evening are based on the Town Center form based model while providing incentives,
45 through increased an increased number of allowable uses, for individuals looking to invest
46 and preserve the historic properties.

47 Mr. Austin outlined how the draft regulations would allow projects to be processed
48 through the Planning Board similarly to the Gateway and Town Center districts. He noted
49 the Light Manufacturing uses in the current Gateway regulations and the suggestion of the
50 ad hoc committee to include such uses in the Route 33 corridor.

51 Alex Dardinski, a member of the Ad Hoc Committee, provided the background of his
52 personal interest in the proposed zoning changes as he was an owner of a historic property,
53 3 Chase Lane, and has struggled to be able to make the renovations and improvements to
54 his property given the limited options allowed by the current zoning regulations. He
55 believes there is great interest in property owners willing to invest in these historic
56 properties if they are able to use the properties for more than residential uses. Leasing
57 space to craft-based businesses, as one example, artist studios, and similar uses in addition
58 to the residential home on these properties could allow use of barns and other structures in
59 a manner to afford the property owners the ability to make improvements and preserve the
60 historic fabric of the Town.

61 Mr. Houghton suggested the Planning Board give urgency to the changes as drafted with
62 the intent to have the proposed language on the 2021 Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Canada
63 agreed noting that a solid public outreach campaign should be developed and would be
64 needed to ensure a positive result at next Town Meeting.

65 Mr. Houghton asked if more finalized language could be presented at the Board's October
66 workshop meeting. Mr. Austin noted that Gateway, Town Center, and Rt 33 drafts would
67 be updated based on tonight's discussion on all three in time for the October workshop.

68 Mr. Roseen suggested 'high-point' advertising with bright colors and laymen's terms be
69 generated to assist with the public outreach. Such materials could also be incorporated
70 into the Select Board Newsletter and Facebook postings.

71 Mr. Houghton agreed with Mr. Roseen suggesting that Mr. Dardinski's story itself could
72 be used to draw interest in the changes and the intent to further the Master Plan as the
73 language moves towards Town Meeting.

74 Mr. House asked all members to review the draft language, even outside the formal
75 meeting setting, prior to October and to forward any comments and questions directly to
76 staff.

77 David Moore, Town Administrator, indicated he would be working with staff on
78 establishing an effective outreach campaign and would be able to assist with the Facebook

79 and other outreach efforts such as Stratham Talks and the Stratham magazine.
80 April Mason, Ad Hoc Committee member, stated the need of the outreach materials to be
81 reader-friendly and ‘not code.’ She appreciated the idea of using Mr. Dardinski’s story as
82 a way to create a buzz prior to public hearings on warrant articles as it helps establish what
83 the corridor does and could look/feel like.

84 Mr. Houghton agreed the key to be stories like Mr. Dardinski’s; perhaps there are other
85 similar stories that can be told. Ms. Mason added that it may be helpful to identify the
86 number of properties which may benefit from the proposed changes. Ms. Hollasch
87 wondered if there were examples where this type of approach had worked in other
88 communities.

89 Mr. Houghton thanked the Committee for their hard work and looks forward to the next
90 meeting where the outreach materials and revised language based on Board feedback is
91 reviewed. Board members generally thanked the Committee members for their efforts.

92 **b. Gateway Zoning District Amendments**

93 Mr. Austin provided an overview of the materials in front of the Board and discussed how
94 the Board’s work from the prior workshop was represented in the materials.

95 Mr. Roseen questioned the removal of sidewalk along street frontages. Mr. Austin stated
96 the revisions made were to sidewalks along the “gateway roads” that were revised to be
97 parking area connections vs actual streets, however the Portsmouth Ave. sidewalks were
98 still required. Mr. Roseen agreed but noted the language needs to more clearly state that.

99 Mr. Houghton questioned the need to retain the Technical Review Committee section of
100 the regulations. The Board generally discussed. There were questions of project timing,
101 functionality of the TRC when there were still not utilities. There were questions on
102 purpose of giving TRC time to review projects when the Board would still be reviewing
103 the same elements and may arrive at different conclusions or recommendations.

104 Mr. Canada asked if TRC review streamlines a project’s review process. Mr. Austin stated
105 such was the intent of the regulation as adopted, however, the Planning Board, despite
106 TRC review, has always chosen to review the “entire project;” the streamlined process
107 falls apart if the Board insists on reviewing the entire project.

108 Mr. Houghton asked about dark sky lighting and if it had been addressed in this draft. Mr.
109 Austin reminded the Board that site lighting is addressed through the Site Plan
110 Regulations. This draft of the Gateway regulations has been updated to appropriately
111 reference the Site Plan Regulations so that a formal zoning amendment need not be
112 required should the Board desire to modify lighting levels and/or dark sky language. Mr.
113 Austin added that no changes had been proposed to current lighting regulations.

114 Mr. House asked if staff could present the Board with some examples of ‘more current’
115 dark sky ordinance language. Mr. Austin stated he would provide the Board with some
116 option to consider at their next meeting.

117 Mr. Canada asked the Board's thought on making 'drive-through' a permitted use or if it
118 might be more appropriate to treat them as conditional use permits. Board members
119 discussed topics such as lighting and noise related to drive through facilities. Mr. Austin
120 pointed out the provided draft definition of drive-through for the Board to consider with
121 this draft. The Board provided general consensus to make drive-throughs a conditionally
122 permitted use in subsequent drafts.

123 Ms. Hollasch questioned the light manufacturing footnote and earlier discussion proposing
124 the same along the RT 33 corridor. She stated concern about limiting nature of the
125 language that was focused on artisanal goods and that there may be other, non-artisanal
126 manufacturing that could be just as acceptable in the Gateway or RT 33 areas.

127 The Board discussed intensity of vehicle traffic, loading docks, lighting, and the fine line
128 between 'light manufacturing' and 'manufacturing.'

129 Mr. Austin stated he would look into the 'light manufacturing' definitions based on the
130 Board's discussion as well as looking into criteria for the Board to consider when
131 evaluating drive-throughs and provide suggestions for the Board to review at their next
132 meeting.

133 Mr. Houghton asked if staff could prepare a flow chart of the project review process for
134 the Board to review as it may assist in the consideration of whether or not to remove the
135 TRC section of the regulations.

136 Mr. Canada motioned to delete section 3.8.6 from future drafts of the Gateway
137 amendments. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed with a (3, 2, 0) vote.

138 Mr. House asked what applications were going to be on the October 07 meeting agenda.
139 Mr. Austin stated one minor subdivision. Mr. House asked for Board thoughts on making
140 the remainder of the October 07 meeting a workshop given the number of major changes
141 being considered. The Board agreed.

142 Mr. Austin suggested moving the MS4 and Driveway Regulation discussed to the October
143 07 meeting. The Board agreed.

144

145 Mr. Houghton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:05. Mr. Anderson seconded the
146 motion which passed with a unanimous vote.

147

148 Mr. Austin presented a requested from Exeter Squamscott River Local Advisory
149 Committee (ESRLAC) who were requesting Board support of a grant request being
150 prepared by Rockingham Planning Commission. Mr. Canada motioned to support the
151 request and authorize Chairman House to sign the letter. Mr. Roseen seconded the motion
152 which passed with a unanimous vote.

153 **4. Adjournment**

154 Mr. Canada motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 PM. Ms. Hollasch seconded the
155 motion which passed with a unanimous vote.

156 Note(s):

157 1. Materials related to the above meeting are available for review at the Municipal
158 Center during normal business hours. For more information, contact the Stratham
159 Planning Office at 603-772-7391 ext. 147.

160 2. The Planning Board reserves the right to take items out of order and to discuss and/or
161 vote on items that are not listed on the agenda.