

READFIELD PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of Tuesday, December 14, 2021

Planning Board Members: Paula Clark (Chair), Henry Clauson, Jack Comart, Jan Gould, Noel Madore

Excused: Bill Buck, Bill Godfrey, Don Witherill

Others Attending: Ron “Chip” Stephens (CEO), John Cushing, Christine Cushing, Brittany Johnson

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Paula via Zoom and at the Town Office.

Public Meeting:

866 Main Street; Cushing Storage and Rentals, LLC

The meeting began with a discussion about Cushing Storage and Rentals, LLC’s proposed storage building. Owner John Cushing’s original application for a permit would have exceeded the 5,000-square foot limit for the zone in which the building is located. John has revamped his plans so that the building is under that limit.

The committee had asked for additional information regarding his plans for construction. The driveway would be 14 feet wide from existing parking lot to new building where it widens out to about 20 feet and will be comprised of crushed gravel. The turnaround is 20 by 108, about the length of the building.

There will be two feet of erosion control on the downhill side of the driveway to the side of the building, with a silt fence at the bottom in case anything escapes. He plans to angle the driveway about 2 to 3 degrees for drainage, with a riprap drainage pool at the bottom on the other side of the drive to catch anything that runs off.

Questions about visuals were asked, primarily concerned with whether the new building will be visible from the road and how much tree cover will remain. John said that the way the property is situated elevation will hide most of the 10-foot-high building except maybe the roof. John plans to leave most of the trees, so the entrance will show just the driveway width of 12-14 feet. Trees will also hide much of the building, but some committee members expressed concern as to whether that buffer is adequate. John said he could plant more trees either before or after the building is complete. The committee was amenable to adding trees at a later date if the visuals are inadequate.

Jack moved that the application be found complete and that they move to a public hearing. Henry seconded.

455 Sturtevant Hill Road; Quinton and Brittany Johnson

Quinton and Brittany Johnson at 455 Sturtevant Hill Road want to buy a small square of land from their neighbor and join it with their property for privacy and resale reasons. The application was previously found complete.

There was confusion about whether this meeting was meant to be a public hearing or a public meeting. The abutters have not yet been notified, so the public hearing will have to be held over until January. Mrs. Quinton called her surveyor, who said he could supply needed documents in time for that meeting in January. A motion was made, seconded and approved to hold the Public Hearing on January 11.

Old Business:

Review of meeting minutes November 9, 2021. Paula asked for several changes to be made. Jack moved that the minutes as edited by approved; Noel seconded. All approved except abstentions by Jan and Henry who were absent at that last meeting.

New Business:

Chip introduced the topic of tiny houses, which he recently learned through his work in Wayne are now legal based on state legislation passed in June in a Bureau of Motor Vehicle bill. The law defines tiny homes as not exceeding 400 square feet and says they have to be able to get down a road and pass under a bridge.

The new law says municipalities shall allow these tiny houses as either primary homes or additional dwelling units, which is currently not allowed under Readfield's current ordinances.

The committee discussed the actual meaning of the law and whether the law overrides local ordinances and compels towns/cities to allow tiny homes as ADUs. Members suggested these homes should still have to meet minimum lot sizes and other zoning issues.

The committee discussed the legislation (LD 1312 and 1530), and how it will affect the town in the future. It was suggested that the committee look at the town's accessory dwelling regulations and also proposed that the issue be discussed in the Comprehensive Planning Committee meetings.

Chip updated the committee on plans by Scott Morash to adapt his building plans to avoid the need for a road setback variance. It is unclear as to whether the issue will be included in the January agenda.

Henry brought up concerns about discussing land use issues that cross over from the Planning Board to the Comprehensive Planning Committee. Paula said she and Matt had met with Charles of KVCOG several times to discuss these issues, but his departure has derailed that process.

Paula asked for any issues that might need to be included in the package of revisions that will be prepared for town meeting to be brought to her attention.

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 11.

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m. by Paula

Minutes prepared and submitted by Holly Rahmlow