

READFIELD PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of Thursday, March 1, 2018

Planning Board Members: Paula Clark; Chair, Jack Comart; Vice Chair, Jay Hyland, William Buck, James Schmidt, Andrews Tolman, Don Witherill

Others Attending: Gary Quintal; CEO, Kristin Parks; Board Secretary, Karen Peterson, Grace Keene, Pam Osborn, Leah Hayes, Matt Nazar, Bonnie Harris, Ed Sims, Jerry Bley, Willard Harris, Deb Curtis, Romaine Turyn, Clifford Buuck, Darcy Whittemore, Ann Keilty, Gary Keilty, Jeanne Harris, Robert Harris, Milton R. Wright, Thomas R. Higgins, James Tukey, Linda Tukey, Ellen Bowman, Henry Whittemore, Hunter Farwell, Kayla Diplock, David Trunnell

Meeting called to order at 6:33 pm by Paula Clark.

Public Hearing of February 7, 2018 – Schedule for March 1, 2018 (due to weather)

Zoning change request to enlarge the Village District, from the Town Office to Giles Road including Mill Stream Road.

- Paula gave a brief update on why the Public Hearing is happening. Zoning change from Rural Residential to Village District. March 21, 2018 is the deadline for the written decision. Paula went over the process of the zoning change and any issues that could arise. The Land Use Ordinance and Land Use Descriptions is a big thing to look at when making decisions.
- Mr. Bittar was unable to attend but had Leah Hayes present for his representation.

Public Hearing opened at 6:44 pm.

- Leah Hayes was the personal representative for Robert Bittar who was unable to attend the meeting. Leah Hayes stated that Mr. Bittar's intentions are to have a place for musicians and artists to play and share their art while keeping the historical aspect of the property and building. He also would like to make a community center for the town. There are two building that are joined together, one is the large barn and the other was the old textile mill. The barn has the performance space and the other is like a café.
- Romaine Turyn spoke that she was unclear on the proposal of the rezoning changes. Gary Quintal went over the large map displayed with the changes.
- Brief discussion on hours of operation and event schedules. Leah Hayes was unclear on any of this at this time. Paula Clark said all items like this would be done during the site review process not at tonight's meeting.
- Henry Whittemore asked about protocol and the change of zoning and if a property owner has to be in favor of a rezoning change to their property. Paula Clark said that in some cases rezoning changes do happen without the owner's approval.
- Tom Higgins is curious as to why he did the work to the site when the zoning wasn't configured for these changes. Jack Comart explained that he was permitted for a single family residence and the Planning Board invited Mr. Bittar to come back in front of the

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planning board and ask for a permit change. He didn't come in and was told he was proceeding at his own risk.

- Cliff Buuck stated the application says Community Center/ Commercial use and he would like to know which one he was using? Paula Clark replied that at this time the Planning Board does not have a specific proposal. Cliff Buuck also asked why the area is being chosen for rezoning. About 50% of it is in Shoreland zone and he is worried some will be wiped off the maps. He also wanted to know if the rezoning is consistent with the comprehensive plan. Paula Clark did say that the ordinance does require the rezoning to be consistent with the comprehensive plan and this will be a factor in the decision.
- Gary Quintal that Mr. Bittar doesn't want to change any Shoreland or wetland. There is a process to make any changes like this and that's not in the plan. He just wants it to go from Rural Residential to Village District.
- Leah Hayes mentioned that Mr. Bittar really wants to keep the beauty of the property.
- Jerry Bley asked if the Planning Board was on a yes/no vote or can modifications be made to the application.
- A review of the Community Center definition in the Land Use Ordinance was read.
- Cliff Buuck stated that in 2009 the Comprehensive Plan was updated from the 1993 plan. After this was updated a subcommittee was formed and this area in question was left alone for a reason.
- Matt Nazar has looked over the Comprehensive Plan. He has submitted an email but was able to attend tonight's meeting. The future Land Use map is very clear. It is important for the Planning Board to look at and also may require an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. He is concerned that it may open up to a whole host of other things on the properties. Another concern is the road and look at the effects due to heavier traffic, maintenance to the road and parking.
- Will Harris is concerned with the procedural issue and how he went from a single family to a commercial structure. He is able to hear a lot of noise even with the tree buffer.
- Ed Sims said that the quiet enjoyment has changed and that you can hear noise much more now. He feels it's a "disturbance" to a residential area.
- Dave Trunnell appreciates the vision that Robert and Helen have and has never had any issues from them as a business owner.
- Leah Hayes spoke to Bob Bittar via telephone and he said while rezoning does open up for all these activities having any of the proposed changes wouldn't be wise. He could make conditions on his property but is unable to change other people's properties.
- Cliff Buuck wanted to know what happens if someone decides to sell the piece of Town property to have a commercial business in the future. He agrees with Will Harris and the noise issues.
- Paula Clark mentioned again that the letter sent to Mr. Bittar from the Planning Board said that the property was limited to residential use and all further construction was at his own risk.
- Jerry Bley understands the challenge of the benefits and risks of the proposal but wants to keep everything in perspective. He feels to give this adventure a chance to succeed and to give the community a chance to respond to the changes.
- Ellen Bowman did some research and in Brownfield Maine, another small town, they added a community center and have had very positive feedback for the town.

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- Romaine Turyn hopes that the Comprehensive Plan was really put into consideration and is unsure why rezoning has to be done on Old Kents Hill Road. She would like to see the neighborhood aspect of the area kept the way it is.
- Henry Whittemore feels that rezoning changes over lots that are not owned by the applicant is problematic. There are a lot of risks and the process is really messy.
- Romaine Turyn asked if the Emporium, currently owned by Mr. Bittar, would close or disappear. Leah Hayes said he doesn't have any plans to do this and it will continue to be open.
- Bonnie Harris spoke to a realtor and they said it would definitely change the property values and possible home sales if rezoning is done.
- Gary Quintal has received email correspondence from Matt Nazar, John Knox and a telephone call from Rama Ashby who was not in favor of the zoning changes.
- Written comments on the rezoning changes will be accepted until the close of business day (4:30 pm) on Tuesday, March 6, 2018. The next meeting is Wednesday, March 7, 2018 at 6:30 pm for continuing deliberations. There will be no discussion at tonight's meeting and next meeting will be when the Planning Board deliberates on individual considerations and with a intention to vote. A written decision is due by March 21, 2018 to the applicant. Eric Dyer said April 2 is the next Select Board meeting so he would need to receive it by March 29 for any legal review and get it on the agenda. If it is approved it will go to the Select Board to be placed as a Warrant Article. If turned down then Mr. Bittar can get signatures and override.

Motion made by Jay Hyland to close the Public Hearing at 7:57 pm, Second by James Schmidt. Vote 7-0 in favor.

Application:

1. Robert and Helen Bittar — Owner of 26 Mill Stream Road
 - a. 309 Waugan Road — Zoning Change Application
 - b. N. Monmouth, ME — Village District Expansion
 - c. Planning Board reviewed application

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.

Next scheduled meetings: March 7, 2018 – continued deliberations from Public Hearing
March 14, 2018 – regular meeting