

**TOWN OF STAMFORD**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**March 25, 2019**  
**(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Planning Commission: Aaron Malachuk, Daniel J. Potvin, Helen Fields, Jenifer Hughs, Stephen Bechtel, and Sheila Lawrence.

Kurt Gamari, Steven Denault, and David Saldo were not present.

Visitors: Jim Sullivan, Bennington County Regional Commission.

Nancy Bushika, Eleanor Derby-Kilfoyle, Joan Levine, William Levine, Lori Shepard, and James Stimpson.

Aaron Malachuk called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and opened with the pledge of allegiance.

#### HEARING OF VISITORS

1. Nancy Bushika asked if the Planning Commission could keep track of changes to the by-laws with strike-outs and underlines for any changes that are made. Aaron Malachuk pointed out that much of the changes will be according to state mandate.

2. Bill Levine is the town Energy Coordinator. He stated that there was an energy study group several years ago and Eleanor Derby-Kilfoyle was part of the group. Bill Levine has not been active and if someone else would like to become Energy Coordinator, he would be willing to give it up. Jenifer Hughs was interested and will attend the next Selectboard meeting.

#### PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC HEARING

Jenifer Hughs summarized the process and goals of the Planning Commission. The board will be working with the school to choose non-fossil fuel. The Commission has worked with the Bennington County Regional Commission who recommended and mapped preferred sites for the town. The Planning Commission gave their input on what they thought were more desirable or less desirable sites. Board members and visitors had time to review the map of solar and wind designations in Stamford. There is still an opportunity to have private property considered as a preferred site.

MOTION for Jenifer Hughs to recess the Planning Commission meeting. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Planning Commission meeting was recessed at 7 p.m.

The Planning Commission meeting reconvened at 7:50 p.m. after the completion of the public hearing.

#### CLERK TO TAKE MINUTES

The Planning Commission discussed hiring a clerk to record minutes and transcribe them. There is a Planning Commission account with over \$3,000.00 which has been around for over 25 years. There is no longer any documentation. Jim Sullivan recalled that the money was from Act 200 for a municipal planning and mapping fund. He said if we still had funds available after all this time, he felt the Commission could use them as they saw fit. Nancy Bushika objected to hiring a clerk and felt one of the current members should take the minutes. Helen Fields and Jim Stimpson both felt an accurate description of their discussion was important and Helen Fields felt she could not actively participate in discussion while taking minutes.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to hire Lori Shepard to take minutes for the Planning Commission at her current salary rate. SECONDED by Jenifer Hughs. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The Commission began to review the Zoning By-laws. At the last meeting they reviewed the definitions. Jim Sullivan recommended the Commission designate specific items be allowed in specific districts where we want them. Language should be added to define if a zoned lot is bisected. He stated that obtaining variances can be difficult.

Jim Sullivan advised that conditional use does not need to be appealed after a denial if the project falls within the dimensional requirements of 6.2.1. The Zoning Board of Adjustment should act on conditional use when the project is out of sync or out of character, if the project has a high-intensity commercial use, or if the project is expected to be very noisy, smelly, or disruptive. One option would be to create a village district where the Commission would encourage all types of business use.

The question was asked whether new energy development projects would need a town permit. Jim Sullivan said they are exempt from municipal regulation. Small individual projects are fine, but anything over 715 kw would have to be approved by the Vermont Public Utility Commission. Nancy Bushika was concerned that neighbors would not be able to object, but he explained that notifying all abutters would be part of the process.

A lengthy discussion ensued about the forest land, its best use and regulations. Members felt residents should be allowed to build within a forest zone without having to obtain a variance from the Zoning Board as long as they meet the standards in 6.2.1 of our current By-laws. Jim Stimpson would like to be able to refer applications to the Zoning Board without charge instead of denying the permit and making residents appeal his decision. The notion was expressed that building a second home on your property should be allowed if you have the room available, for instance, if your children wanted to build a home on their parent's land. The recognition of a 20 foot right-of-way should allow building instead of the requirement to have 150 feet of road frontage. Members discussed removing the building minimum square footage requirement.

Jim Sullivan was asked to look at the revisions adopted on June 25, 2009 to be sure the wording that was required by state law was made without modifications.

MOTION by Helen Fields to adjourn. SECONDED by Jenifer Hughs. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

The next meeting was scheduled for April 15, 2019 at 7 p.m.

Helen Fields,  
Planning Commission Clerk

HF/las