

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT PLANNING BOARD

**October 4, 2016
Whitsett Town Hall**

The meeting of the Whitsett Planning Board was held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 4, 2016 at the Whitsett Town Hall. Those in attendance were Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia, Board Vice Chairwoman Ella Efird, Board members Joe Wheeler and Craig York, Council Member liaison Jerry Rice. Also present were [retiring] Town Administrator Gary Deal and Ken Jacobs.

Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia called the meeting to order, noting that a quorum was present, and asked Council Member liaison Jerry Rice to offer the invocation.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of Minutes

Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia asked for any changes to the minutes from the Planning Board meeting on Tuesday, June 7, 2016. With none made, Chairman Maccia asked for a motion to approve the minutes as written. Board Vice Chairwoman Ella Efird made a motion to accept the minutes as written; motion seconded by Board member Joe Wheeler. Adoption of the June minutes carried by unanimous vote Board members.

At this point in the meeting, departure from the order of agenda items occurred to accommodate the priority agenda item of Article VI on Subdivisions.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review Revisions to Article VI on Subdivisions

Chairman Maccia invited Town Administrator Gary Deal to preside over the meeting for this subject. Deal explained that what prompted the immediacy to modify Article VI was a request to subdivide one of two contiguous 4-acre lots in Dow Acres; and he had to scurry to re-familiarize himself with Town procedures and make numerous contacts with Guilford County for updates to its requirements since the county is under contract to serve as the Town's agent on such cases.

Deal further stated that, during his tenure, the Town had received very few subdivision cases; and had he known ahead of time about the Dow Acres parcel, he would have been better prepared to address the request. The surprise Town Hall visit and demands of a hired Alamance County land surveyor, who knew nothing of Guilford County requirements or processes to follow complicated matters, which led to turmoil and rudeness towards the county planners by the surveyor. Through the acid, the surveyor withdrew the request to subdivide, and configured a recombination plat to resize the two parcels for recording, thereby averting Town and county reviews.

This experience drove home the need for Town Administrator Deal to carve out extended time to meet with members of the Guilford County Planning Department in order to clarify procedures and to ensure that the current Town ordinance, which had not been updated since its original adoption in the early 1990's mirrored the county's ordinance and appendices (e.g., map standards).

So that the Town's ordinance would automatically be updated any time future modifications were made to the county ordinance, Deal asked Town attorney Bill Trevorrow if sections of the county ordinance could simply be referenced in the Town's. This would avoid incorporating volumes from the county code and ordinance into the Town's document and would easily assure updates in tandem. Trevorrow advised that the Town, being an incorporated municipality, needed to take responsibility and own its own ordinances. A cut and paste effort would, therefore, be the ticket.

As a result of the meeting with the county and in a concentrated effort to go page by page through the Town and county ordinances, Deal had drafted a customized Article VI aligning Town and county requirements, duties, and processes. The draft was provided to Board members to begin discussions and study the document to arrive at a proposed revised Article VI for recommendation to Council. When asked about a target date for completion, Deal stated the sooner, the better because the next ordinance for the Board to tackle would be Article IV on Zoning.

Deal excused himself to attend the Ruritan meeting; and discussions ensued among Board members. Soon recognizing that having been given the document this evening with all its "add-in" references and highlighted suggestions, absorption of Article VI would be a tall order for one night. Members opted to take the ordinance home for reading and comprehension; and discussions on it would consume next month's Planning Board meeting.

2. Any Other New Business

Board Chairman Maccia asked for any other new business; and there was none.

OLD BUSINESS (continued)

2. Any Further Discussion on Ordinance for Solar Farms

Board Chairman Maccia asked Board member Craig York if any changes had been made to the original draft document proposing regulation of solar farms. York replied that he understood before further action was required to redevelop or finalize an ordinance governing solar farms, the Town attorney would be consulted on whether the Town could legally prohibit the large land-mass Level 3 solar energy systems. An alternative might be to set down stringent stipulations so stringent that such farms would be discouraged.

The one-page document prepared by Board member York will be forwarded in tact to attorney Bill Trevorrow, and upon receipt of his rendered opinion, the Planning Board would continue its work.

3. Any Other Old Business

Board Chairman Maccia asked for any other old business; and there was none.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Planning Board Chairman Maccia invited a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Board Vice Chairwoman Ella Efird to adjourn; motion seconded by Board member Joe Wheeler. By unanimous vote of the Board, the October 4, 2016 meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:40 p.m.

The next meeting of the Whitsett Planning Board will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 1, 2016 at the Town Hall. [NOTE: The November, December, and January Board meetings were subsequently cancelled, making the next Planning Board to be held on Tuesday, February 7, 2017 with a time change to 6:00 p.m.]

/s/

/s/

Jo Hesson, Town Clerk

Bob Maccia, Planning Board Chairman

APPROVED: February 7, 2017