

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT PLANNING BOARD
January 7, 2020
Whitsett Town Hall

The meeting of the Whitsett Planning Board was held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at the Whitsett Town Hall. Those in attendance were Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia, Vice Chairman Tyler Harris, Board members Joe Wheeler, Craig York, and Board alternate Ken Jacobs. Also in attendance, was prospective Planning Board member Karen Horne. Absent due to sickness, was Council Member liaison Jerry Rice.

Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia called the meeting to order at 6:00, noted that a quorum was present, and then seated Board alternate Ken Jacobs as Board member to make a full five-member Board. Chairman Maccia asked Ken Jacobs to offer the invocation.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of Minutes

Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia asked for any changes to the minutes from the last held Planning Board meeting on Tuesday, September 3, 2019. With none made, Chairman Maccia asked for a motion to accept the minutes. A motion was made by Board member Craig York to adopt the minutes as written; motion seconded by Board Vice Chairman Tyler Harris. Adoption of the September minutes carried by unanimous vote.

2. Election of Planning Board Officers

Chairman Maccia asked for any nominations for Chair and/or Vice Chair, and consensus among members was to keep the same officers as last year. Both Bob Maccia and Tyler Harris casually agreed to continue to serve in their respective positions for another year. Board member Craig York made the formal motion to retain current Board officers for 2020; motion seconded by Vice Chairman Tyler Harris. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

3. Text Amendments to Commercial Architectural Guidelines for Designated Neighborhood Business (NB) District

Town Administrator and seated Board member Ken Jacobs distributed a proposed amendment to Article XII relative to secondary building materials in the existing paragraph 3 under Section 12.5.4. [The draft document is part of the official file for this meeting.]

Jacobs explained the intention was to primarily restrict or prohibit certain building materials, e.g., metal siding, from structures in the Town's NB district that is planned for small professional offices, coffee shops, etc. With minor rewording changes made to the text amendment, the Planning Board voted to recommend to Council Members its acceptance and adoption at a future public hearing. The document will be presented to the Council at next week's regular monthly meeting.

4. Any Other Old Business

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

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discuss Existing Mature Tree-line Preservation

Town Administrator/Board member Ken Jacobs distributed a list of four questions that needed to be addressed while creating the new ordinance. Jacobs explained that what prompted the need for the document was the proposed development of a 25-acre parcel at the Town's farthest east edge for an active senior community.

The original developer, Paul Milam, stated during public meetings his commitment to not removing any mature trees or usable shrubbery that borders other Town parcels and Gibsonville's Lindley Park subdivision. Nothing, though, was ever put on paper except the reference in meeting minutes. When Milam became embroiled in conflicts with another real estate acquisition, namely in Burlington, his attention was taken away from the smaller Whitsett project, which then became owned and financed by Keystone Group, Inc.

This ordinance would allow the Town to enforce protection of mature tree lines not only for the Keystone development, but would encourage residents to work out neighbor to neighbor any modifications or removals planned for shared or close by buffered lines.

The lively discussion produced more questions than answers; and so the topic will continue at another Board meeting. Board member Craig York offered to research existing similar municipal ordinances to bring back to the table.

2. Address Ordinance Additions Concerning New Sign Types

Chairman Maccia looked to Town Administrator/Board member Ken Jacobs for a recap of the Town’s sign ordinance and the new sign types that seem to be cropping up in nearby areas. Jacobs coined the reference as “hockey stick” signs, and suggested a change to the current ordinance to prohibit them. In his review of the sign ordinance, however, there were some contradictory mentions relative to prohibited signs and acceptable signs. The remedy, he stated, may be as simple as some deletions in the ordinance; but with the allotted time for the Board meeting about to run out, the Board would revisit the subject later. All members will look over the sign ordinance for future discussion.

3. Any Other New Business

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

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Maccia invited a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board member Joe Wheeler made the motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Board member Craig York. By unanimous vote, the January 7 meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:02 p.m.

The next meeting of the Whitsett Planning Board will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at the Town Hall. [Subsequent to the January meeting, the February Board meeting was cancelled, making the next Planning Board meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 3, 2020.]

/s/

/s/

Jo Hesson, Town Clerk

Bob Maccia, Planning Board Chairman

APPROVED: March 3, 2020