

## **Town of Groton Planning Board Minutes 02/24/16**

**Present: Chair Deb Johnson, Select Board Liaison Bob Ferriere, Celine Richer, Russ Carruth, David Labar, Jenny Burnett**

Meeting came to order at 7:10 PM. We moved to dispense with reading the minutes, as we had no printed copies.

Residents Mr. Mike Madden and Mr. Dave Sharp came before the Board. Mr. Madden has been running an auto repair garage at his residence across from Forest Hills Road and Mr. Sharp has been preparing firewood on the same property.

Deb explained to Mr. Sharp that his activities had come to the attention of the Board via Mr. Madden when the latter was notified that his auto shop likely needed to come before the Town Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA) and Planning Board (PB). Mr. Madden was concerned that Mr. Sharp's cutting of firewood on the premises would come under the same need for compliance as his shop. There was also one complaint about chainsaw noise.

Mr. Sharp is a logger and he stores logs for firewood on Mr. Madden's property and cuts firewood when conditions for logging are poor. He told the Board that he had been doing this for 11 years and had always thought firewood came under agriculture. He did get a noise complaint from a neighbor once and since has never operated a chainsaw before 8:00 AM or after 4:00 PM. He added that he never bought a firewood processor just to keep the operation small.

Celine inquired whether or not he (Mr. Sharp) had a lease with Mr. Madden to which he replied, 'No'. Deb pointed out that as a logger his business was not on Mr. Madden's property, he received no calls or mail and transacted no business there, merely staging firewood and storing logs. Deb was of the opinion that he did not need to get a variance and go through site plan review. The Board had no objections and agreed Mr. Sharp had no compliance issues with the Town.

Next we took up the issue of Mr. Madden's auto shop. Deb recognized that Mr. Madden had reached out a few times to find out how to be compliant, and she thanked him on behalf of the Town for his efforts and responsiveness.

Deb went on to explain that back in 2007 the entire Town was zoned Residential-Rural, and also put into place Site Plan Review in order to provide a mechanism to bring businesses in to Town provided they fit certain basic requirements. This is to allow the Town to avoid problems (like bright lighting or large signage), and to provide for public safety (as in adequate off-road parking) and resource protection (how is used oil disposed of).

The Board and Mr. Madden agreed he would go before the Zoning Board of Adjustments requesting a variance (that we can't see why they would deny), and then come back before the Planning Board for Site Plan Review. Both Board appearances will involve holding public hearings.

Mr. Madden asked if an abutter had negative comments would that be a problem, and Deb replied that it wouldn't because all we are seeking is compliance with the process, and she does not foresee any reasons for the Town to discourage a business like Mr. Madden's. Bob added that he has heard a lot of positive feedback about the auto shop, and only one resident was somewhat concerned with wood-cutting noise and whether folks had gone through the proper Town process.

Next on the Agenda, the Board went through some mail briefly, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Next meeting is March 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.

-Submitted by Jenny Burnett