

The PB corrected and approved these minutes at the meeting of 04-24-2024. Concern was expressed that Hilary Coles did not capture the reason why the PB approved a zoning line adjustment, see page 2 highlighted area. The corrections are viewable in the approved meeting minutes dated 04-24-2024.

Planning Board Minutes December 27, 2023

Members of the Planning Board present:

Deb Johnson, Chair
Dave Madden, Vice Chair
Ray Blake
Dave LaBar
Russ Carruth

Members of the Planning Board absent:

Kristina Madden
John Rescigno, Select Board Liaison

Alternates of the Planning Board:

Eric Jones
Michael Sheehan

Members of the Public present:

Alan Barnard, Surveyor
Jon Martin
Stephen Spafford

Deb calls the meeting to order at 7:00pm and motions to appoint Eric and Michael as alternates. Russell seconds the motion. There are no deliberations and the board unanimously agrees. Since Alan Barnard and Jon Martin, the representatives from Mourning Dove Holdings, LLC, are present, Deb moves discussion of the minutes to the end of the meeting. She invites Mr. Barnard to speak about the project.

Request from Mourning Dove Holdings, LLC

Mr. Barnard, a surveyor hired by the property owner, begins by indicating the property he is referring to, owned by Mourning Dove Holdings, LLC (Map 2, Lot 48). A portion of the property is under conservation easement. While the state of New Hampshire owns the easement, Mourning Dove Holdings, LLC is the owner of the property.

When the easement was created in 2005, a 12-acre window was set aside, giving Mourning Dove Holdings, LLC the right to remove up to 10 acres within twenty years after the easement's creation. The owner wants to create two 5-acre plots to sell in order to raise revenue to put towards the maintenance of the rest of the property.

Groton's zoning districts and regulations were created after the conservation easement and the 12-acre window sits outside of the proper zoning district. But since it abuts the correct district, Mr. Barnard would like to invoke Article 4 of the Final Zoning Ordinance from 2023 so that his client can exercise their right under the conservation easement with the state.

Mourning Dove Holdings, LLC, would continue to own the road, but would grant right of way to any future owners of the proposed two 5-acre lots. Mr. Barnard indicates that his client is aware of the need to include a maintenance agreement in the deed and Deb confirms this would be appropriate. Discussion between Mr. Barnard and members of the board about who abuts the property, where it is located, public access, and compliance with things such as road frontage continues.

Deb clarifies that the board is meeting with Mourning Dove Holdings, LLC, not to discuss or make decisions on a subdivision, but to correct the zoning district lines so that the property owner can exercise their right within their conservation easement. Since the zoning districts were created using tax maps and because the board did not go through every deed, they included a clause which would allow for situations like this.

Mr. Barnard further illustrates that the property is currently within the Rural Residential and Forestry/Agriculture zoning district, which has a 25-acre lot minimum. He is requesting that the zoning district lines be shifted to accommodate the 12-acre withdrawal window, placing the 12 acres within the Residential and Forestry/Agriculture zoning district, which has a 2-acre lot minimum.

Deb makes a motion to accept these zoning line adjustments and asks if there are any questions or need for further discussion. Seeing none, Dave M. seconds the motion with the board agreeing unanimously.

Mr. Barnard and Mourning Dove Holdings, LLC can update their maps to reflect the new 12-acre property and Deb will send off the new information to correct the zoning map.

Draft Report for the Annual Town Report

Deb will draft the report and with authorization from the Planning Board, will send that draft to Sara for inclusion in the annual report. Members of the Planning Board will have the chance to review.

Update on Secretary Position

Deb reviews her plan of offering Hilary Coles a one-time payment of \$2,000 out of the Planning Board budget in order to have her help with straightening out the materials that the current board inherited. Current obligations need to take priority over the filing as that was the responsibility of a previous board.

The Select Board refused Deb's request, reasoning that it is not a good use of taxpayer money to hire someone to straighten out the files. During Deb's meeting with the Select Board, John Rescigno suggested the Planning Board take time during meetings to clean up the files. Discussion about filing will continue and be an agenda item reflected in the meeting minutes after each meeting, going forward. Deb confirms that the need to straighten out the files would be a one-time event and not something they would hire Hilary for indefinitely. However, she will only be a minute-taker for all committees and boards.

Whenever the Planning Board does have the time to file, they would do so by map and lot numbers, with notation in the minutes of what property each file corresponds to. Discussion around secretarial responsibilities continues. Eric comments on how having a secretary would allow the chair to not be overburdened while they focus on the responsibilities of the chair person.

FEMA Map Presentation

Deb asks if members of the board received her email with the FEMA Map presentation and asks if anyone has questions. Eric asks for clarification about the town being within the Pemigewasset River watershed. Deb explains that because Groton is in the Baker River watershed, which flows into the Pemigewasset River, and because the Pemigewasset is a major watershed in the state, Groton and other towns are listed as being within the Pemigewasset watershed.

Members of the Planning Board should be familiar with the changing FEMA maps. The flood zone in Groton has expanded and the board should be prepared to respond accurately to requests that come before them for things such as subdivisions and building permits, for example.

Request to Change Meeting Time

John Rescigno has requested the Planning Board change their meeting time from Wednesdays to Thursdays as he has scheduling conflicts with the Bridgewater-Hebron-Groton Steering Committee. The board discusses different options to their regularly Wednesday meeting as well as recommending the Select Board choose a different liaison to the Planning Board. Deb asks if anyone would like to make a motion to change the Planning Board's meeting time. No motion is made.

Review of Minutes from November 15, 2023

These minutes were prepared by Hilary, even though her role as minute-taker doesn't officially begin until Jan 1, 2024. The board briefly reviews the minutes. Dave M. asks for clarification on the size of Accessory Dwelling Units. Deb will review the ordinance to confirm this. Members of the board will take home the minutes from November 15 to review, mark up with any corrections, and bring back to the next meeting.

The board offers feedback for Hilary on required information to include, spellings of names, and formatting of members and alternates.

Upcoming Town Election

Members of the board discuss the upcoming town election and inquire amongst themselves what everyone's intentions are. Anyone wishing to run for an open position on the board must be a registered voter from the town. The filing period is January 24 through February 2.

Deb asks if the board has any other business to discuss. Seeing none Michael makes a motion to adjourn. Dave M. seconds with the board unanimously agreeing. The meeting adjourns at 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by Hilary Coles