

TOWN OF NORTHUMBERLAND PLANNING BOARD

Minutes

Weds., September 6, 2023

Groveton PD/Ambulance Bldg. - Meeting Room

10 Station Square

Groveton, NH

6:00 P.M.

Board members present: Al Rossetto, Sean Durkin, Nicole Canavan, Jim Weagle

Others: Liz Ball, Rebecca St. Cyr – Minute Taker

1. MINUTES of the August 2, 2023 Meeting

Motion to approve the August 2, 2023 minutes by: S. Durkin

2nd by: N. Canavan, All in Favor 3 – 1 Abstained

2. Master Plan Discussion

Everyone has received the tally that Al and Gail did. Sean said to put it into a spreadsheet is almost impossible, we condensed it down so that it was more readable. We went through the general issues. and responded profile (1-8) until the Board reviewed/approved. Al said it looks good and to continue with how they have been doing it. Al suggested leaving out the don't knows.

Al asked about the census data, Nicole has most of 3 done and 3 of 4 done for chapter 4. She and Liz are working putting together the places where you can find the info. Nicole is working on the traffic data as well. The biggest problem with the census data base doesn't have Northumberland by name, Nicole further discussed. It was impossible to find a track that just had Northumberland, but she had to manually find the information.

Sean had a couple of questions, there are surveys from 86 adults and 36 students, he thought we had a lot more. Al said we did. J. Weagle said there are approximately 10 surveys missing, out of the 97 received – 2 were pretty much blank.

Sean asked Jim what happened; he had them a long time. Why did Al and Gail end up doing these instead of him? Jim said he's juggling multiple things. Sean said we waited 3 months for him to do this, we need to get this done. If he runs into issues again, he needs to reach out for help.

Al said Sean is going to put together the spreadsheet for the surveys, Nicole and Liz are working on the census and traffic data. Nicole said 4-2 is Building Permits by type, Liz has all that information. She is waiting for CMP to show her how to run a report to pull all the information needed.

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Al said in October we should have the data ready and can start plugging into the Master Plan. November – December - proof read and have is ready for the end of the year or the January Meeting.

Sean asked how we move forward with this; there are people saying we need better future planning; what are we doing with this and how will it be presented to the Town. Or are we doing this to help get grants for the Town. Al said we would take the Master Plan that we have and paste it into the new data we have. We can change verbiage as needed. Sean – so we will take the last Master Plan and compare to what we have now. We will be able to see how the population as changed and what do we do from there. Al said the Master Plan should take the data from the surveys and census and have a vision for the Town. Resources (example) that's an important value for residents. The Master Plan is a document that's taking the current information and looking to the future.

Jim said the Master Plan is used more for grants and such instead of planning ahead. Where we are located, we rely on what the business are doing. IF we don't have the business, there isn't anything to drive it, it goes to the Town's people, and we are pretty much tapping that out.

Sean isn't from here but has been around the area since the 1970's, if the people in Groveton don't spread out and include the people in Northumberland then it's never going to change. Coming into Town you see an old Train and a gigantic bright red commercial building and a Town that's busted down broken, if we don't make some changes it's only going to decline. The Town is going downhill - it's not going in a good direction.

Jim commented that with social media once a negative post is made it grows faster than weeds. Discussion ensued about social media and computer access.

Al said the public safety building that was presented to the Town, it could have been an anchor for grown in this Town. The Board further discussed the failed proposal for a public safety building.

Jim said when he came on the Board is 1 or 2 years after the mill shut down; for the first 3 years on being on the Board, the Town was close to bankruptcy. Now, our unpaid tax balances are lower, houses are selling. People are buying houses and some as vacation homes, which doesn't bring any vision to the Town.

Next meeting – have the data ready; Al asked Jim to write up a vision on his view point as a Town official.

3. Any Other Business To Come Before the Board

Liz said we need to start working on changes for the zoning ordinance. There is wording that needs to be updated, spelling, position descriptions, etc. Jim explained why the Building Inspector title was changed.

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Recreational vehicles – 1) you can stay in one with a dwelling for 3 weeks of a calendar year. 2) you can stay in one without a dwelling for 6 months. Liz would like to change it and add specific dates. We have several and are trying to crack down on this. Jim said we had a case where a resident was living in a motor home without heat, etc. She has family who knew she was living like this, that wouldn't get involved. There is a house on the property, and technically it should have been for only 3 weeks.

Liz commented that if we are allowing them to stay in campers in the middle of winter and they die, could it be a Town issue. Nicole said with a dwelling its not fair for only 3 weeks, maybe the house needs to be completely rehabbed? Liz said that would be an exception. Jim said with any of the zoning, they can comply. The Select Board can make an exception.

Nicole asked if we are doing them a disservice by booting them out. Will they be homeless and where would they go? Jim further discussed. Sean asked what if you have someone with an expensive motor home that wants to park it and live there for more than 6 months. Jim discussed a situation on his street.

Sean agrees that people shouldn't live in a camper year round, some people that's all they can afford. Nicole asked if the zoning covers tiny homes; Sean thought would be a feasible thing to do for this area. There are lots of single people that need housing. Nicole further discussed. Al said this is something that we all need to think about. It's part of the vision!

Al had a good news story – in the Village there was a lady being kicked out of her home. The owner at the Down Home Motel stepped up to the plate and helped this lady out.

No further business was discussed.

Motion to adjourn by: A. Rossetto, 2nd by: S. Durkin, All in Favor 4-0

Meeting adjourned at 6:29 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rebecca St Cyr, Minute Taker

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Minutes approved by Northumberland Planning Board Members on _____

X
Al Rossetto
Northumberland Planning Board Chair

X
Sean Durkin
Northumberland Planning Board Member

X
Ryan Shannon
Northumberland Planning Board Member

X
Nicole Canavan
Northumberland Planning Board Member

X
Jim Weagle
Northumberland Select Board Rep

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