

TOWN OF STAMFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
January 27, 2020
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Planning Commission: Aaron Malachuk, Chair, Sheila Lawrence, Helen Fields, Daniel J. Potvin, and Jenifer Hughs (7:40 p.m.).
Kurt Gamari, Stephen Bechtel, Steven Denault, and David Saldo were not present.
Visitors: Debra Burchard, Stephen Greene, Brian Jowett, Frederick Nazzewski and Colleen Zajac.
James Stimpson, Administrative Officer.
Lori Shepard, Secretary.

Aaron Malachuk called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and opened with the pledge of allegiance.

ROAD UPGRADE/RESIDENCE IN FOREST ZONE

Jim Stimpson received a call from Brian Jowett who is interested in purchasing property in the forest zone and would like to build a year round residence there. The property is about a 1/4 mile beyond the Class 4 road sign. Jim Stimpson spoke to the Selectboard about this at their recent meeting and they wanted the Road Commissioner's input. He understands that the property owner would have to obtain an insurance policy or bond in order to plow the road. The proposed By-laws allow for a full-time residence in the forest zone, but the obstacle is the road classification. Helen Fields agreed that the Planning Commission wants to make it easier for people to build, not harder. Although it is the Selectboard's decision, Jim Stimpson fully supports the idea and requested the Planning Board's recommendation as well. The Planning Commission deferred making any decision until Jenifer Hughs arrived to make a quorum. Jim Stimpson feels the town should consider getting grants to upgrade our roads. He said if County Road and Klondike Road were upgraded to Class 3, it would save the highway department a ton of money by not having to travel through Clarksburg to plow and maintain them. Sheila Lawrence noted that a \$1 million bond has been required in the past to protect the town and suggested if the buyer was willing to help out some, it would go a long way.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to recommend the Planning Commission's support of the full time residence on property located in the forest zone and on the Class 4 section of County Road. SECONDED by Jenifer Hughs. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

LETTER OF INTEREST

Deb Burchard submitted a letter of interest and stated that she would like to be considered for the next vacancy on the Planning Commission.

RESIGNATION

Aaron Malachuk received an email yesterday from Stephen Bechtel resigning from the Planning Commission due to a lack of time and other commitments. Aaron Malachuk said he is aware of other people who are interested in serving on the Planning Commission but has not received letters from anyone wanting to serve. The appointments are made by the Selectboard.

ATTENDANCE REVIEW

Aaron Malachuk asked Dan Potvin to contact Steve Denault concerning his intentions to remain on the board. He noted that Dave Saldo has not attended many meetings and said he would speak to Sheila Lawrence after the meeting.

INTERNET OPTIONS

Aaron Malachuk spoke to a technician from Consolidated Communications recently. A New Hampshire town hired Consolidated Communications to install fiber optic high speed internet to every household. It cost about \$1 million dollars and they offer speeds up to 80 megabytes. The town obtained a bond to pay for the installation. The internet subscribers pay an additional \$10.00/month on their Consolidated bill which is forwarded to the town who repays the bond. Aaron Malachuk think using Consolidated would be a benefit because if lines are down due to an ice storm, they will be right there to fix it. Jim Stimpson felt 80 megabytes would be a great attraction for new families. Helen Fields thought the Planning Commission should prepare a survey for town meeting. Aaron Malachuk will get in contact with Chris Warren who hopes to form a committee to research the town's internet options.

MINUTES

MOTION by Jenifer Hughs to accept the regular meeting minutes of December 9, 2019 as written.
SECONDED by Helen Fields. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

EMERGENCY PREPARDNESS

Dan Potvin talked with Jim Sullivan at the Bennington County Regional Commission who agrees that producing local foods should be a top priority. He would like to see the Planning Commission help the town plan for potential emergencies such as the corona virus. 40 million people are on lockdown in China and there are already three cases in California and one case in New Jersey. He would like the Planning Commission to send a letter to our residents with a list of the ten best foods to build your immune system and encourage them to start planting gardens. He feels this information is important for any type of natural disaster or emergency. After Hurricane Irene, FEMA produced flyers suggesting people keep six months of food on hand in the event of a disaster. Jim Stimpson is aware of a church that started a community garden that supports the local food banks and others in need. Helen Fields said the town is supporting local gardening through its farm to school program and hopes that the children will know how to plant gardens on their own and desire to be more self-sufficient. Aaron Malachuk likes the idea but without fear mongering. Helen Fields suggested sending something to the town's emergency management team. Stephen Greene said teaching people to grow gardens and become self-sufficient is a slow process that takes years. Jim Stimpson grabbed some booklets from Vermont Emergency Management that Bill Levine planned to hand out at town meeting. They outlined how to be prepared for a disaster. Several on the board thought the handouts would be a good start.

RECOMMENDATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Jim Stimpson's three year Administrative Officer term is up for renewal. He stated that although the town hasn't done it this way in the past, he would like the Planning Commission to send a letter to the Selectboard to formally recommend that he be reappointed for another term. He has gone through a lot of turmoil since taking the position but the past year has been much better. He has learned that the Bennington County Regional Commission and Vermont League of Cities & Towns are great resources. His goal is to have the By-laws revised so that they are more understandable and clear. He said he will always side with the landowner in a controversy. Helen Fields was ok with his request but asked if other people are interested in the Administrative Officer position. She was uncomfortable making the recommendation because it wasn't warned on the agenda for discussion which might have brought other people out.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to recommend to the Selectboard that Jim Stimpson be reappointed as Administrative Officer. SECONDED by Aaron Malachuk. 4 in favor, 1 abstained (Sheila Lawrence).
Motion APPROVED.

Sheila Lawrence asked if he was running for a Selectboard seat and felt it was a conflict to hold both positions. Jim Stimpson said it was not a conflict.

DISCUSSION OF ZONING BY-LAWS

Helen Fields reviewed and questioned various sections of the By-laws with the board. The board will ask Jim Sullivan for clarification and whether the sections can be revised or if they are required by law. They discussed the pros and cons of bringing the approval to the town for a vote.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to adjourn. SECONDED by Aaron Malachuk. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 10, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Aaron Malachuk
Planning Commission Chair

AM/las