

**Town of Northwood
Planning Board
January 10, 2013**

Chairman Robert Strobel calls the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Robert Strobel, Vice-Chairman Timothy Jandebour, Selectmen's Representative Scott Bryer, Joe McCaffrey, Alternate Victoria Parmele, Town Planner Elaine Planchet, Board Administrator Linda Smith, and Board Secretary Lisa Fellows-Weaver.

Alternate Adam Sprague arrived at 6:20 p.m.

VOTING DESIGNATION: Bob Strobel, Tim Jandebour, Scott Bryer, Joe McCaffrey, and Alternate Victoria Parmele.

ABSENT: Babette Morrill, Herb Johnson, and Rick Wolf.

MINUTES

December 20, 2012

Mr. Jandebour makes a motion, second by Mr. McCaffrey, to approve the minutes of December 20, 2012.

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Motion passes; 5/0.

Voluntary Merger

Case VM 13-01: Ley Living Trust; Curtis Ley & Patricia Ley, Trustees; Map 104 Lots 27, 30 and 31; Catamount and Blaisdell Roads

Materials for the voluntary merger are distributed in members' packets. Mr. Strobel asks if board members could do the drivebys on the private road. Ms. Smith indicates that it is acceptable. Mr. Jandebour asks what the purpose of a voluntary merger is. Ms. Smith explains that combining the two properties is an advantage to the owners as it will reduce their taxes.

OTHER

Letter of Resignation ~ Herb Johnson

Mr. Jandebour makes a motion, second by Mr. Bryer, to accept the resignation of Mr. Johnson, with regret. Motion passes unanimously; 5/0.

Terms of Office

Ms. Planchet mentions that there will be two 3-year terms available on the board as well as one one-year term, which will fill the vacant seat of Mr. Johnson. Mr. Strobel states that the filing period for the March elections is January 23 to February 1st.

Alternate Adam Sprague arrives at 6:20 p.m.

**Town of Northwood
Planning Board
January 10, 2013**

Candidates Night

Mr. Jandebour states that the historical society did not have candidates night last year and are not planning to do it this year. He states that he would like to see that this be done this year and is working to find an entity that would sponsor the event. Discussion ensues of possible entities that may consider sponsoring the event as well as locations. Mr. Jandebour states he will continue to work on this.

Public Present

Debra Locke, Ted Wilkinson, Meg McGoldrick, Lucy Edwards, Michael Faiella, Carl Wallman, Karen Smith, and Jeff Lalish.

Ms. Locke states that agriculture is a very important topic and requests that the planning board consider postponing this meeting to another time when more people are available to attend based on other meetings taking place tonight. A discussion is held and the board agrees to continue with this meeting and to schedule an additional meeting for further discussion of agriculture.

Agriculture Committee

Additional discussion is held regarding the agriculture committee. Ms. Planchet states that currently there is no official record of an existing agriculture committee and no minutes of meetings available at the town hall. She states that the town website lists members but only Victoria Parmele and Scott Martin have current terms which expire in 2013. Ms. Locke states that the committee needs to be reconvened.

Agriculture Discussion

Ms. Planchet welcomes everyone and explains that this time is for the public to express comments and concerns about agriculture in Northwood and is a time set aside for the planning board to listen to what the public would like to see in Northwood for agriculture as part of the master plan update.

Ms. Planchet states that the town master plan update could include different areas, subjects and categories. She displays draft vision statements drafted as a result of the community survey responses and statements received from the May 2012 visioning sessions. She explains the seven statements and asks those present to take a sheet with four stickers to place on the tri-fold display to indicate their preferences. She explains that this information will be used to draft the visioning section of the master plan update and will be presented at other work sessions for further public input.

Members of the public introduce themselves and briefly state what is important to them regarding agriculture and what they are involved with in the town.

Ms. Planchet provides a brief summary of agriculture in Northwood. She explains that local regulations regarding agriculture exist. She states that agricultural soils

**Town of Northwood
Planning Board
January 10, 2013**

are addressed in the development ordinance for protection with the agricultural soils overlay district and that agriculture and forestry are permitted in the entire town, with specific criteria. She adds that the 2004 Master Plan included references to agricultural soil and uses, but that the activity was not considered a major economic factor in the community. She explains that the economy has changed significantly since 2004 when the emphasis was on growth control.

Ms. Planchet states that about 8% of land in current use is now an agriculture use or is farm lands. She explains that agricultural soils are protected by the overlay district in that lots with prime agricultural soils greater than 20 acres, if developed, have to be an open space design. She states that was the situation with the recent development on Blakes Hill Rd, which followed the regulation specifically with the houses clustered around the edge of the lot. Discussion ensues regarding how that could be improved and for agriculture use as well as agriculture land to be encouraged.

Ms. Parmele states that it is very important to have an agriculture section in the master plan. She suggests that there be a vision statement to define agriculture in the future.

Ms. Planchet states that the purpose of this discussion is for the planning board members to listen to the public and get their input on agriculture, what they would like to see in the future, what is important to them, etc. She explains that the board will have opportunity to discuss this input later on. She asks the public to provide ideas, preferences, what they would like to see in the future, etc.

Mr. Jandebour left at 6:54 p.m.

Public Comments provided are as follows:

Vision – Agriculture

- Ms. Edwards: Sustainable Agriculture should be a goal. When using the word “sustainable,” this takes into consideration water quality goals as well.
- Ms. Edwards: Healthy Agriculture Economy
- Mr. Wilkinson indicates that agriculture is changing. He states that the emphasis is now on smaller, low impact agriculture, on smaller scales.
- Mr. Wilkinson states that hay would be an important crop given the climate change and drought conditions elsewhere.
- Question of commercial agriculture – not much large scale here. Discussion ensues relative to regulations as to how people do farming; impact to water quality, farming will become smaller and smaller, do not try to micromanage. Recommendation in master plan to fix or have strong recommendations for regulations to make sure that the balance is met to benefit the people.

Official as of January 24, 2013

**Town of Northwood
Planning Board
January 10, 2013**

- Ms. Locke: Town Sponsored Community Garden – on town land if possible to promote resources. This was seconded by another resident.
- Suggestion to Encourage Sustainable Agriculture. Ms. Planchet adds the word “sustainable” to the tri-fold board draft statement.
- Add employment opportunities
- Ms. McGoldrick states that there are 3 participants at the Farmer’s Market that are from Northwood. She adds that people farm on different scales now – there is a trend toward “slow *food*” farmers with several within 50 miles
- There is a need for collaboration among various groups in town, specifically with an eye toward agriculture related businesses and groups.
- Mr. McCaffrey asks what the planning board can do to encourage people to become more involved with agriculture. A discussion is held regarding the Northwood businesses need to work together as other towns, larger events more synergy/collaboration.
- Mr. Bryer states that the idea of a chamber has been raised recently.
- Preference stated that people should still be able to have their chickens, pigs, etc., but not by annoying neighbors or polluting area. There has to be a balance.
- Ms. Edwards mentions Bear Paws Regional Greenways. Recommendation to protect the wonderful lands, etc., that we have. Need to keep the agricultural feeling of the community.
- Ms. Edwards mentions that U.S. Rep Anne Kuster has been assigned to the Agriculture Committee. And that may be helpful.

Scott Bryer left at 7:27 p.m.

Mr. McCaffrey makes a motion, second by Ms. Parmele, to host an additional meeting to discuss agriculture on April 11, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. Motion passes unanimously; 4/0.

Mr. McCaffrey left at 7:40 p.m.

The meeting adjourns at 7:40 as there were only 3 planning board members remaining.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Fellows-Weaver
Board Secretary

Official as of January 24, 2013

**Town of Northwood
Planning Board
January 10, 2013**

Official as of January 24, 2013