

**Pittsfield Planning Board  
Town Hall, 85 Main Street  
Pittsfield, NH 03263  
Minutes of Public Meeting**

**DATE:** Thursday, December 1, 2016

**AGENDA ITEM 1:** Call to Order

Chair Clayton Wood called the meeting to order at 7:06 P.M.

**AGENDA ITEM 2:** Roll Call

Planning board members present:

Clayton Wood (chair),  
Daren Nielsen (vice-chair),  
Jim Pritchard (secretary),  
Pat Heffernan,  
Gerard LeDuc (selectmen's ex officio member),  
Roland Carter (alternate), and  
Paul Nickerson (alternate)

Planning board members absent:

Carole Richardson (alternate for the selectmen's ex officio member)

Members of the public appearing before the planning board: Ralph Odell, appearing for the master plan committee.

“Members of the public appearing before the planning board” includes only members of the public who spoke to the board. It does not include members of the public who were present but who did not speak to the board.

**AGENDA ITEM 3:** Final Approval for the Application by James E. Donini Jr., 43 Locke Road, Pittsfield NH 03263 for a Lot Line Adjustment

Neither the Doninis nor their surveyor, David Vincent, was present.

Jim Pritchard moved the board to give final approval to the Donini lot line adjustment.

Clayton Wood seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Vote to give final approval to the Donini lot line adjustment: carried 5 - 0 - 0. Voting “yes”: Jim Pritchard, Daren Nielsen, Pat Heffernan, Clayton Wood, and Gerard LeDuc. Voting “no”: none. Abstaining: none.

After agenda item 5, Master Plan Committee Presentation, Jim Pritchard said that the planning board had erred in giving final approval to the Donini lot line adjustment before explicitly finding that the condition precedent that permanent boundary markers shall be set had been satisfied. Jim Pritchard moved the board to rescind its vote to give final approval to the Donini lot line adjustment. (See 74 Cox Street v. Nashua, 156 N.H. 228, 931 A.2d 1194 (2007), for the board’s authority to rescind the board’s vote to give an application final approval.)

Clayton Wood seconded the motion.

Vote to rescind the board’s vote to give final approval to the Donini lot line adjustment: carried 5 - 0 - 0. Voting “yes”: Jim Pritchard, Daren Nielsen, Pat Heffernan, Clayton Wood, and Gerard LeDuc. Voting “no”: none. Abstaining: none.

Jim Pritchard moved the board to find that the condition precedent that permanent boundary markers shall be set had been satisfied.

Clayton Wood seconded the motion.

Vote to find that the condition precedent that permanent boundary markers shall be set had been satisfied: carried 5 - 0 - 0. Voting “yes”: Jim Pritchard, Daren Nielsen, Pat Heffernan, Clayton Wood, and Gerard LeDuc. Voting “no”: none. Abstaining: none.

Jim Pritchard moved the board to give final approval to the Donini lot line adjustment.

Clayton Wood seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Vote to give final approval to the Donini lot line adjustment: carried 5 - 0 - 0. Voting "yes": Jim Pritchard, Daren Nielsen, Pat Heffernan, Clayton Wood, and Gerard LeDuc. Voting "no": none. Abstaining: none.

The board's notice of decision giving final approval to James Donini Jr.'s application for lot line adjustment is appended at the end of this minutes document. (See RSA 676:3, II.)

**AGENDA ITEM 4: Public Hearing - Proposed Amendments to Subdivision Regulations and Site Plan Review Regulations**

No members of the public were present for the hearings on the proposed amendments to the subdivision regulations and to the site plan review regulations.

Clayton Wood read the notice of public hearing for the proposed amendments to the subdivision regulations and to the site plan review regulations:

The Pittsfield Planning Board will hold a public hearing pursuant to RSA 675:6, I, on amendments to the board's subdivision regulations and to the board's site plan review regulations. The time and place of the public hearing is **Thursday, December 1, 2016**, 7:00 PM, at the Pittsfield Town Hall, 85 Main Street, Pittsfield, NH.

The amendment to the subdivision regulations is a comprehensive revision. This amendment's greatest emphasis is on (1) stating what is required for a complete application according to RSA 676:4, I, (b); (2) establishing a design review process pursuant to RSA 676:4, II; and (3) stating how the board will conduct preapproval third-party review, but the amendment affects the whole subdivision regulations document with a goal of making all parts of the subdivision regulations clearer and better organized.

The amendment to the site plan review regulations revises citations of the subdivision regulations to make these citations consistent with the amended subdivision regulations.

Clayton Wood opened the hearing to public input. There was no public input because no members of the public were present.

Jim Pritchard moved to approve the amended subdivision regulations dated November 17, 2016.

Clayton Wood seconded the motion.

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote to approve the amended subdivision regulations dated November 17, 2016: carried 5 - 0 - 0. Voting “yes”: Jim Pritchard, Daren Nielsen, Pat Heffernan, Clayton Wood, and Gerard LeDuc. Voting “no”: none. Abstaining: none.

All five board members signed the certificate of adoption.

Jim Pritchard moved to approve the amended site plan review regulations dated October 6, 2016.

Clayton Wood seconded the motion.

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote to approve the amended site plan review regulations dated October 6, 2016: carried 5 - 0 - 0. Voting “yes”: Jim Pritchard, Daren Nielsen, Pat Heffernan, Clayton Wood, and Gerard LeDuc. Voting “no”: none. Abstaining: none.

Jim Pritchard said that he had forgotten to prepare a certificate of adoption for the site plan review regulations but that he would prepare one promptly.

The two amendments to the subdivision regulations and to the site plan review regulations are appended at the end of this minutes document.

**AGENDA ITEM 5: Master Plan Committee Presentation**

Ralph Odell, chair of the master plan committee, appeared before the planning board to review the master plan committee’s work.

Ralph Odell summarized the survey that the master plan committee had done of the town in 2012.

Ralph Odell then moved on to discuss the chapters of the master plan.

Demographics chapter:

In 2000, Pittsfield's population was 3996; in 2010, the population was 4106. Pittsfield's growth is slow. The town is aging, as is the rest of New Hampshire. The birth rates and death rates show that Pittsfield's indigenous population is not growing much.

Transportation chapter:

Ruairi O'Mahoney, of the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission, wrote 99% of the transportation chapter. Repairing roads is much less expensive than maintaining roads in good condition.

Ralph Odell and Jim Pritchard discussed a computerized software system, called road surface management system (abbreviated RSMS) for telling a town where and how the town needs to spend the town's road-maintenance resources in order to maintain roads in the best condition for the minimum expense. The system is available from the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission. Dean Williams is the contact person there.

Board members discussed that highway agent George Bachelder knows the roads well enough that he can probably manage the road-maintenance resources well, but board members also observed that long-time highway department member Philip (Sparky) Gordon has already retired, that George Bachelder expects to retire within a year, and that the town has no replacement for George Bachelder.

Jim Pritchard said that Ted Mitchell, the town's voting member on the transportation advisory committee, had several times suggested to the board of selectmen that the town should acquire the road surface management system.

Gerard LeDuc said that he had never heard of the road surface management system.

Clayton Wood said that he would talk to Ted Mitchell about impressing the board of selectmen with the urgency of having a road surface management system.

Housing chapter:

The values of homes in Pittsfield are about \$20,000 less than the values of homes in Epsom and Northwood. The number of rental units is high: 1220 according to the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning, and about 650 according to the Pittsfield Housing Standards Board. In the region around Pittsfield, only Pembroke has more rental units, and Pembroke's population is two times Pittsfield's population.

Assessments in Pittsfield are higher than market value. The department of revenue administration's ratio (DRA ratio) for Pittsfield is 121% as of 2012. The DRA ratio purports to be the ratio of the town's assessments to the actual market values. Pittsfield's DRA ratio is higher than in surrounding towns.

Pittsfield's tax rate, \$36.35/\$1000, is the fifth highest in the state. Ralph Odell cautioned that the tax rate is not a good indication of how much tax payers pay in taxes, because, for a given tax burden, the tax rate will be higher when property values are lower.

(Comment of recording secretary Jim Pritchard: The tax rate of \$36.35/\$1000 is listed in table 1.8 of the draft master plan. In the review of these minutes on January 5, 2017, the board asked that a comment be inserted saying that \$36.35/\$1000 seemed higher than the tax rate actually is.)

The master plan committee's survey in 2012 found that the townspeople think that the housing for people aged 55 and over is the town's greatest housing need.

Clayton Wood said that retirees have little financial incentive to stay in New Hampshire.

Ralph Odell said that half of new housing construction nationwide is for people aged 55 and over.

Ralph Odell said that the housing situation for older people in Pittsfield will not change much because such housing is not appropriately put on the outskirts of town and because the town's urban center is largely built out.

Municipal operations of the town chapter:

Pittsfield needs an outside agency to audit the efficiency of its municipal departments.

Pittsfield's water and sewerage systems have more capacity than the town currently uses. The wastewater treatment plant can process 300,000 gallons per day but only processes 100,000 gallons per day in the summer. The town has plenty of capacity to support economic growth.

Clayton Wood asked about grant money for an outside agency to do an operational audit of municipal departments.

Roland Carter said that grant money for operational audits was available. Roland Carter said that Pittsfield's problem was in not having a person who knows how to write a grant proposal. Roland Carter said that the University of New Hampshire would help the town apply for a grant from the department of agriculture. Roland Carter said that grant money from the department of agriculture is also available for a town planner.

Daren Nielsen asked about specific recommendations to stabilize the tax rate and to improve property values.

Ralph Odell said that the town's economic base would have to increase in order to improve property values.

Daren Nielsen asked whether the town could increase efficiency by cutting spending.

Gerard LeDuc said that the board of selectmen had cut what it could and was left with reducing personnel.

Daren Nielsen asked what is driving the town's expenses.

Gerard LeDuc said that pensions and health insurance are driving the town's expenses.

Clayton Wood and Jim Pritchard said that creating jobs is the best way to revitalize the town.

Roland Carter and Daren Nielsen said that limiting government spending is also important.

Paul Nickerson said that creating jobs is important but that creating jobs that pay good wages is also important. Paul Nickerson said that the town had lost good jobs when the town lost Cambion, the shoe factory, and the canning factory.

Clayton Wood asked when the master plan would be released.

Ralph Odell said that the next step would be to have a public hearing.

Clayton Wood asked how many chapters the master plan has.

Ralph Odell said that the master plan has 10 chapters and that the master plan committee is preparing seven new chapters.

Clayton Wood asked how much the committee would release.

Ralph Odell said that he would like to release all seven new chapters at once.

Jim Pritchard suggested that the planning board hold a public hearing in February on what the master plan committee has.

Ralph Odell agreed.

Clayton Wood suggested that the master plan have a condensed list of recommendations.

The board discussed the Main Street Program and how it might help Pittsfield.

Roland Carter said that Dick Lewis, from Franklin, would speak at the economic development committee on January 11, 2017.



**AGENDA ITEM 7:** Approval of the Minutes of the November 17, 2016 Meeting

Clayton Wood moved to approve the minutes of November 17, 2016, as written in draft.

Jim Pritchard seconded the motion.

Discussion:

No board member stated any problems in the draft minutes.

Vote to approve the minutes of November 17, 2016, as written in draft: carried 4 - 0 - 1. Voting “yes”: Jim Pritchard, Daren Nielsen, Pat Heffernan, and Clayton Wood. Voting “no”: none. Abstaining: Gerard LeDuc.

**AGENDA ITEM 6:** Conceptual Consultation for Don Rose, of 8 Foss Avenue, for a Lot Line Adjustment Between Tax Map U-6, Lots 6-1 and 7.

Donald Rose was not present for the conceptual consultation.

Jim Pritchard said that he would explain Donald Rose’s situation. Jim Pritchard said that Donald Rose had come to the planning office for guidance on how to proceed with a lot line adjustment of tax map U-6, lots 6-1 and 7, which both front on Foss Avenue. Jim Pritchard said that Donald Rose wanted to move the dividing lot line between lots 6-1 and 7 so that the frontages of lots 6-1 and 7 were equal in length and so that the rear lot lines of lots 6-1 and 7 were equal in length. Jim Pritchard said that Donald Rose had recently demolished a house on lot 7, that the house had been very close to Foss Avenue, and that Donald Rose wanted to build a new house that would conform to the zoning ordinance’s minimum street setback. (The minimum street setback is 25 feet. Zoning ordinance, article 3, section 4, (d), and article 3, section 4, (h), Table of Dimensional Requirements. The Rose lots are in the Suburban zoning district.) Jim Pritchard said that both lots are nonconforming to the zoning ordinance now, in area and in frontage; that the two new lots would be nonconforming, in area and in frontage, after the lot line adjustment; and that the two new lots would need a variance because they would be nonconforming. Jim Pritchard said that the two lots

together after the proposed redevelopment would be less nonconforming than they are now and that the town had an interest in supporting the Rose proposal because the proposal would reduce the nonconformance. Jim Pritchard said that he had thought that he should help Donald Rose with his variance application because the town had an interest in supporting the Rose proposal. (Comment of recording secretary Jim Pritchard: Jim Pritchard is the planning board's acting administrative secretary.) Jim Pritchard said that the purpose of the conceptual consultation was to disclose publicly that he, Jim Pritchard, would help Donald Rose with his variance application and that, consequently, Jim Pritchard would be disqualified from sitting for the lot line adjustment if Donald Road were to apply to the planning board.

Gerard LeDuc said that he too would be disqualified from sitting for the Rose application because he is related to one of the abutters. Gerard LeDuc said that tax map U-6, lot 4, which is a large lot behind the Rose lots, has two rights-of-way onto Foss Avenue. Gerard LeDuc said that he did not know where the rights-of-way were or whether the rights-of-way crossed the Rose lots.

Jim Pritchard said that interference between the proposed house location and the rights-of-way seemed unlikely because Donald Rose wants to put his new house straight back from where the old house was. Jim Pritchard acknowledged that no one could know for sure whether there would be interference until the location of the rights-of-way is known.

Gerard LeDuc said the town's book of properties owners appeared to be wrong about the ownership of lot 4. The property book says that Joseph Cortese owns lot 4, but, Gerard LeDuc said, the estate of Arthur Riel owns lot 4 and that Ann Amadon is the executrix.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 8: Selectmen's Report**

Gerard LeDuc said that the board of selectmen had voted 3 - 2 to eliminate the position of school resource officer from the police department. Gerard LeDuc said that the COPS grant funding the school resource officer would require the town to eliminate two police officer positions and that eliminating the school resource officer would not save the town any money because the town would have to pay back the one year of money that the town had received for the school resource officer so far.

**AGENDA ITEM 9: Members Concerns**

Clayton Wood said that Larry Konopka, chair of the board of selectmen, had said that he might come to the planning board and to the economic development committee to brainstorm ways to improve Pittsfield’s economic condition.

Clayton Wood reminded board members that the board has a second regular meeting in December, on the third Thursday of the December (December 15, 2016), to process citizen petitions to amend the zoning ordinance if the board receives any such petitions. (Rules of procedure, section VI, 1, (c).) Clayton Wood said that he would tell board members in advance of any such petitions if the board receives any.

**AGENDA ITEM 10: Public Input**

No public input.

**AGENDA ITEM 11: Adjournment**

Pat Heffernan moved to adjourn the meeting.

Clayton Wood seconded the motion.

Vote to adjourn the planning board meeting of December 1, 2016: carried 5 - 0 - 0. Voting “yes”: Jim Pritchard, Daren Nielsen, Pat Heffernan, Clayton Wood, and Gerard LeDuc. Voting “no”: none. Abstaining: none. The planning board meeting of December 1, 2016, is adjourned at 9:04 P.M.

Minutes approved: January 5, 2017

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Clayton Wood, Chairman

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Date

I transcribed these minutes (not verbatim) on December 3, 2016, from notes that I made during the planning board meeting on December 1, 2016, and

from the digital audio recording that Chairman Clayton Wood made during the meeting and uploaded to the Internet.

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Jim Pritchard, planning board recorder and secretary

Attachments:

1. Notice of decision giving final approval to James Donini Jr.'s application for lot line adjustment.
2. Statement of the amendment to the 2010 subdivision regulations.
3. Amended subdivision regulations proposed on November 17, 2016; approved on December 1, 2016, and effective on December 2, 2016.
4. Statement of the amendment to the 2010 site plan review regulations.
5. Amended site plan review regulations proposed on October 6, 2016; approved on December 1, 2016, and effective on December 9, 2016.