

**TOWN OF PITTSFIELD
PLANNING BOARD
TOWN HALL, 85 MAIN STREET
PITTSFIELD, NH 03263**

MEETING MINUTES OF Thursday November 12, 2020

ITEM 1. - CALL TO ORDER

Call to order at 7:00 P.M. by Adam Gauthier, Chair of the Planning Board.

ITEM 2. – ROLL CALL

Adam Gauthier – Chair

Matt St. George – Vice Chair

Carl Anderson – Ex officio Alternate

Ray Ramsey – Alternate

Clayton Wood (arrived at 7:01 P.M.)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jim Adams - Ex officio Alternate

Randy Severance - Alternate

OTHERS PRESENT

Bonnie Theriault – Administrative Assistant

ITEM 3. –PUBLIC INPUT

None.

ITEM 4. – APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 15, 2020 MEETING

Matt St. George: I make a motion to approve the October 15, 2020 meeting minutes.

Ray Ramsey: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 3-0-2. Adam Gauthier – yes, Matt St. George– yes, Ray Ramsey – yes. Clayton Wood and Carl Anderson abstain.

ITEM 5. – REVIEW RULES OF PROCEDURE AND VOTE ON ANY AMENDMENTS

a. Address the items that need updating within the document

Board members discussed the previous meeting's draft changes within the Rules of Procedure. Bonnie Theriault stated that she had sent the Board's questions to Central NH Regional which included moving some sections towards the front of the document and other changes like time limits, redundancy of public input, as well as questions about disqualifications and whether there is a reason to keep this part in the document. Bonnie Theriault said that she is still waiting for clarification from Central NH Regional Planning and doesn't have that update from them yet.

ITEM 6. – REVIEW AND DISCUSS POSSIBLE ZONING AMENDMENTS FOR 2021

Board members discussed the ZBA Zoning Amendment ADU proposal and took a vote to accept the updated version.

Matt St. George: I motion to accept the updated ZBA Zoning amendment Accessory Dwelling Unit proposal draft.

Ray Ramsey: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 5-0-0. Adam Gauthier – yes, Matt St. George – yes, Carl Anderson – yes, Ray Ramsey – yes, Clayton Wood – yes.

Adam Gauthier took a vote to approve the RV Amendment proposal so that the Board could move forward with further discussion. Clayton Wood had some concerns about the legality of the Amendment.

Carl Anderson: I motion to approve the proposed RV Amendment to go forward with further discussion.

Matt St. George: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 4-0-1. Adam Gauthier – yes, Matt St. George – yes, Carl Anderson – yes, Ray Ramsey – yes. Clayton Wood abstains.

Board members proceeded to discuss the RV Amendment proposal. Matt St. George had some concerns about residents needing to meet setbacks even in short term use and felt that the proposal was regulating more than needed.

Carl Anderson said that the RSA setbacks are 10-15 feet from property lines and would help ensure that a neighbor doesn't become a nuisance by camping on shared property lines or devaluing property of the neighborhood. The proposed Amendment in whole would also make sure that people aren't using Town services without paying Town property taxes and circumventing needing to get an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) permit.

Adam Gauthier brought up adding "all recreational vehicles when is use for more than 3 consecutive days" that would allow weekend camping at any time.

Matt St. George felt that restricting camping in any way is against those who aren't using RVs for a year-round residence. Matt St. George wondered if just putting a stipulation of not allowing year-round RVs would help.

Carl Anderson said that it would be too vague to enforce.

Ray Ramsey had issue with it infringing on a person who is building a house and needs to live in a camper, but now can't after December 1st.

Carl Anderson said that the way it was written is a person has until December 14th and then would need to get a variance through the Zoning Board to continue living in the camper. Carl Anderson said realistically, there won't be many people who will need to live in a camper while building a house in the middle of winter and pointed out that most towns regulating campers/RVs require a permit. Pittsfield does not require a permit for campers/RVs and would only require a permit from Zoning if needing to camp off season.

Carl Anderson explained that the other side of that is if a person has a legitimate complaint about a camper parked on a neighboring property line with someone living in the camper for 2-3 years (not paying Town taxes) with questions about how the septic is handled, the complaint can come to the Select Board but there is nothing currently in place to prevent it. Going through the State takes forever if the Town doesn't have rules in place to prevent year-round camping.

Matt St. George said there are other sides of the argument to take into consideration before the vote and wanted to discuss some of what might come from voting for the proposal. Matt St. George had a question about the requirements of residency to be able to vote in the Town.

Bonnie Theriault said that showing proof of residence typically involves a utility bill or other secure proof to be accepted as viable.

Matt St. George wanted to know if a person decided to camp every weekend on their own property how that would fall into the proposed change. The change would help put a stop to those who are circumventing ADU requirements from camping year-round but would also restrict a property owner December 1st through April 1st from camping on their own property if they wanted to.

Bonnie Theriault asked about "in use" campers/RVs having to meet setback requirements and wondered if there have been any complaints of someone parking on setbacks while not "in use".

Carl Anderson said that there have been no complaints about parking campers/RVs and only neighborhood complaints about people circumventing ADU requirements and living in campers/RVs year-round as a residence. The other issue is people living in campers/RVs year-round using Town services without paying the Town tax that every resident in Pittsfield has to pay.

Clayton Wood wanted to know if Central NH Regional Planning will be looking over the proposed changes.

Bonnie Theriault said that they are busy right now due to COVID-19 and updating other Town ordinances but would be available when they could.

Clayton Wood and Matt St. George agreed with weighing the consequences of accomplishing one thing and what would be on the other side of that decision.

Adam Gauthier asked if there was any other input or changes Board members wanted to discuss further before the proposal goes to a Public Hearing because most of the changes would need to happen beforehand.

Ray Ramsey said that he understood the purpose of the proposal but still has a hard time getting past a property owner only being allowed to camp on their own property from April 1st – December 1st and only for 14 days at a time.

Carl Anderson said the property owner would be able to go to ZBA and get a permit. It was pointed out that many towns across NH have recently put in a camper/RV ordinance so Pittsfield wasn't alone in looking at the change.

Matt St. George said a permit would require a property owner to file for variance, notify abutters, and

hold a hearing. Camping only being allowed for 14 days in an off season could affect those who use campers/RVs year-round. Matt St. George said that when travelling in and around the State you will see people who use their property for a camper, even in colder weather conditions, and would hate to see this type of restriction on property owners.

Carl Anderson said the 14-day maximum will help enforce the rules for those who use campers/RVs for a permanent residence. A person could move out of a camper for a week and then move back in still bypassing ADU restrictions. The only other way would be to require permits, which most residents are against. Keeping the 14-day maximum camping limit in off season would ensure that campers/RVs are being used solely for camping and not for a permanent residence. Carl Anderson asked other Board members if they had another solution to the problem.

Matt St. George said that he understood what they were trying to do and was still unsure of the restrictions that would be placed on those who do not camp/RV year-round, but he didn't have a solution right now.

Clayton Wood said that he sees the concern if someone is freezing to death or ends up with carbon monoxide poisoning from a heat source while using a camper/RV in the winter, but State laws are in place that restrict fire places or furnaces from being used in manufactured housing due to ventilation issues. Clayton Wood said that he would rather look into the complaints of campers/RVs being on neighboring property lines to try to resolve the issue in that way and wondered what the input was from the last Public Hearing.

Bonnie Theriault said that there were concerns about parking in setbacks during off season from a couple of people at the last Public Hearing because there are some who only have room to park an unused camper/RV within the setbacks of their property during the winter.

Board members discussed whether they were ready to bring the amendment forward to a Public Hearing at this time and decided to take a vote on it.

Carl made a motion for the Planning Board to bring the proposed amendment forward for a Public Hearing.

Adam: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion failed 2-0-3. Adam Gauthier – yes, Carl Anderson – yes, Matt St. George – no, Ray Ramsey – no, Clayton Wood – no.

ITEM 7. – BRIDGE STREET ADU REQUEST

Bonnie Theriault updated the Board members that she had reached out for more information on the ADU request for Bridge Street since the main residence was an apartment building. Central NH Regional Planning said that the request could be treated like anything else with a variance and special exception. Bonnie said that the applicant was made aware that a potential zoning amendment will allow ADU by right if the applicant wanted to wait until after the Town meeting before going forward with plans.

Matt St. George pointed out that an ADU as defined in RSA 674:71 means a residential living unit that is within or attached to a single-family dwelling. Since the ADU is not attached to a single dwelling unit and the applicant is looking for changes on the outside of the building, the applicant will need to go to ZBA for a variance and special exception.

Carl Anderson said that the only way he could see a variance working is if the barn/garage was attached to the main residence because of the requirements in the RSA for a detached ADU. Bonnie Theriault said that she would let the applicant know.

ITEM 8. – BAILEY DRIVE SUBDIVISION

Bonnie Theriault said she has gone back through to look at cluster subdivision plans for Bailey Drive and the decision to cease building on the lots. An applicant is looking for information on adding an ADU to their home but there is a restriction of 1008 square feet footprint of building on the lot. After further discussion, Board members decided that the applicant would need to follow the original plat. If the subdivision plans restrict building to 1008 square feet per lot before purchase then that is what has to be followed. Proceeding with Town council would only cost the tax payers who have nothing to do with the approved subdivision plans.

Clayton motioned to not send more information in to Town council for further guidance.

Matt: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 5-0-0. Adam Gauthier – yes, Matt St. George – yes, Carl Anderson – yes, Ray Ramsey – yes, Clayton Wood – yes.

ITEM 9.- SELECTMEN'S REPORT

None.

ITEM 10. – MEMBERS' CONCERNS

Matt St. George said that he understood a lot was going on at this time with COVID-19 case increases in Town, but in the future, he would like to hold a mock Planning Board meeting to go over the site plan or subdivision applicant process. This would help Planning Board members see from the perspective of an applicant vs Board member and whether or not any changes should be made while at the same time giving Board members more experience with the process.

Adam Gauthier updated Board members that the school is looking into the request of Town meetings being held at the High School gym and identifying space that can be used for a larger amount of people in attendance.

Bonnie Theriault said that if the school couldn't be used for the Public Hearings, they could also look into a having Zoom meeting if needed.

ITEM 11. - ADJOURNMENT

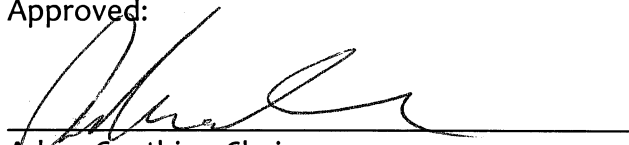
Carl Anderson: I make a motion to adjourn at 8:43 P.M.

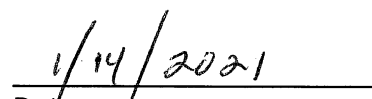
Ray Ramsey: Second.

Discussion: None.

Motion carried 5-0-0. Adam Gauthier – yes, Matt St. George – yes, Carl Anderson – yes, Ray Ramsey – yes, Clayton Wood – yes.

Approved:


Adam Gauthier, Chairman


Date