

Town of Searsmont  
Planning Board Meeting Minutes  
May 2, 2023  
6:30 PM

1. Call to order: The meeting of the Planning Board convened at 6:32 pm. These minutes are a summary of the Board's discussions. A recording of this meeting is available at the Town office.
2. Roll Call - Members Present:

Christian Halsted, Chair Evelyn deFrees Jon Thurston Jon Robbins on Teams Jack DeGraff Sarah Crosby, Vice Chair Guy Hamlin	Others:  Patricia Chapman, PB Clerk on Teams
--	--
3. Applications: None.
4. Election of Officers:
  - a. Chair:
    - i. J. DeGraff nominated C. Halsted, seconded by S. Crosby; 7 in favor, 0 opposed.
  - b. Vice Chair:
    - i. S. Crosby nominated J. Thurston, E. deFrees seconded. J. Thurston declined.
    - ii. J. Thurston nominated J. Robbins; J. Robbins declined.
    - iii. S. Crosby nominated E. deFrees; J. DeGraff seconded. 7 in favor, 0 opposed.
5. Approval of Minutes:
  - a. P. Chapman will send minutes and documents to C. Halsted to print now that C. Mancini is no longer here.
  - b. J. DeGraff moved to accept the April 4, 2023 minutes as written, C. Halsted seconded. Motion passed with 7 in favor, 0 opposed.
6. Treasurer's report: None
7. Communications:
  - a. CEO Report:
    - i. There is no report this month.
    - ii. F. Therio resigned April 25 and his last day is May 3.
      1. The Selectmen are looking for a replacement.
      2. They will let C. Halsted know when they meet with anyone.
      3. They are starting with neighboring towns to see if other town CEOs are part-time and want more hours.
      4. The Town of Morrill is currently using a Selectmen but that seems to be a conflict of interest. Searsport is also looking for a CEO.

- 5. Can a Planning Board member be CEO? Also, seems like it could be a conflict of interest.
    - iii. The plan is to have the new person work “normal” work hours to be more accessible to the public but it will still be part time and the specific day may vary.
    - iv. C. Halsted worked with the Selectmen to improve the job description.
  - b. Building Permit spreadsheet: C. Halsted has not updated the spreadsheet since last month.
8. Committee Reports: None.
9. Old Business:
  - a. Finalize notifications discussion:
    - i. S. Crosby brought in copies of different certified mail forms.
    - ii. Certified mail with a returned receipt is \$4.15; digital receipt is \$2.10.
    - iii. We decided not to make any changes to the process last time.
      - 1. We didn’t want to change the wording and have the Post Office change their process at some point requiring us to change our wording again.
      - 2. We can suggest to applicants that they use some kind of certified mail for notifications.
    - iv. We can use the document P. Chapman put together from the LUO documenting the notifications mentioned in the LUO, to make a simple cheat sheet to reference.
    - v. We can recommend to applicants that certified mail is the best way to prove notification was made but not having in the LUO as a requirement.
    - vi. Under 1003.2 I – Preliminary Plan Submission it says names and addresses of abutters.
    - vii. Where do we ask for certification of notifications?
      - 1. 1003.1 d – the subdivider shall certify to the board that all owners of abutting properties have been notified.
      - 2. 1003.1 c – a copy of the notice shall be sent by first class mail to abutting landowners and to the applicant at least 10 days prior to the hearing.
    - viii. All agree that we do not need to change the language.
      - 1. 1100 – the applicant shall certify to the board that all owners of abutting properties have been notified that an application for site plan approval has been submitted to the board.
      - 2. Notice of the public hearing shall be mailed to all abutters of the proposed development 7 days prior to the public hearing by the Town of Searsmont.
    - ix. The Planning Board can decide whether to use certified mail for their notifications depending on the project or situation.
  - b. How to clarify when a change of use review is necessary:
    - i. Add language that says “new ownership or change of use”.
    - ii. Definition of change of use would come from The Table of Land Use.
    - iii. Add new language to 1101.2 – Applicability

1. "All proposals for new development of" – change to "All proposals for new development or change of use"
    - a. Section a – Commercial uses
    - b. Section g – is pretty clear. Changes of use need to be reviewed unless the change is from commercial use to single family residential. The previous issue we had may not have been an issue if the LUO had been followed.
  2. If someone changes use from commercial to residential and then comes back to commercial, would they have to come back to the Planning Board? Yes, but they may not need a new site plan.
  3. Can we add language to the permit application indicating how recent the documents need to be vs putting that in the LUO? Yes.
  4. Since we are getting a new CEO, we can wait and see if things run more smoothly without changing the wording. If we make our expectations clear to the new CEO, we may not have the same issues we have had in the past.
- c. New CEO description does include an expectation for the CEO to attend Planning Board meetings. Depending on the candidate, we may have to consider adjusting the meeting schedule. C. Halsted will look for the job description and share it with the board members.
- d. By-Laws:
- i. The start and end times need to be changed to reflect the current actual meeting time.
  - ii. It is a requirement to limit meetings to 2 hours unless the members vote to extend a meeting.
  - iii. P. Chapman will look for a copy of the By-Laws and make the edits.
- e. The time is accurate on the website.

#### 10. New Business:

- a. Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG):
  - i. Adi Philson – Searsmont resident is a Planner on MCOG.
  - ii. One of their services is to assist with comp planning; there is an option to have them do it for the town.
    1. They also do consulting, meeting moderation, etc.
    2. They know all the requirements that need to go into a plan.
    3. They can bring in help to do resource analysis.
    4. They can organize the public hearings and collecting public input for the planning.
  - iii. There may be a membership fee for the group but there are definitely fees for their services.
  - iv. The state wants to put money into planning but can't do it by county so they use these Council of Governments.
  - v. They are trying to get towns together to look at access to funding for things like culvert repairs.
  - vi. They are planners and have access to government programs and grant funds and can help towns apply. They are offering their services to get funding for

Hazard mitigation, stream, culverts, housing opportunity programs, infrastructure funding, boating facilities, DOT grants, land banking.

- vii. They keep track of things like LD2003 which seems to have had implementation delayed and the marijuana legislature issues.
  - viii. This may be a more affordable a way than using our legal services to get some of our questions answered.
  - ix. For some projects, they can write their fees into grant applications for the project.
  - x. There were similar groups in the area before but they've been reorganized.
  - xi. A. Philson is also working with local towns on the grants for internet infrastructure.
  - xii. C. Halsted will talk to the Selectmen about this group and try to get their support to join.
- b. Is there a rule that you can't be on both the Planning Board and Comp Plan Committee? The state rep that will help us get started can answer that question.
  - c. Lincolnville has started their plan and have created subcommittees for the process.

11. Adjournment: J. DeGraff made a motion to adjourn, seconded by J. Thurston. Motion passed by a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patricia Chapman, Planning Board Clerk

J. DeGraff made a motion at the June 6 meeting to accept the May 2, 2023 minutes as written, C. Halsted seconded. Motion passed with 5 in favor, 0 opposed.