

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

1. Call to order: The meeting of the Planning Board convened at 6:33 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  
Jack DeGraff  
Sarah Crosby, Vice Chair

Others:

Patricia Chapman, PB Clerk  
John Lightner (taking G. Hamlin's place once approved by the Selectmen and sworn in)

3. Applications:

- a. The Selectmen would like the Planning Board to handle building permits while we look for a new CEO:
  - i. It will be mostly office work but there may be site visits needed occasionally.
  - ii. We need to reinstate meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday for permit reviews to reduce the time applicants wait for an answer.
  - iii. We will need to update the website and make it public that there will be a second meeting each month to meet notification requirements. C. Halsted will cancel the second meeting if there are no permits to review in a particular month.
  - iv. C. Halsted will send out permit information prior to the meeting when possible.
  - v. Does the board want the Tax Assessor to assist with building permits? No, it may be confusing and more difficult to keep track of if both entities are doing them.
  - vi. This is a good opportunity to use the new mapping tools to see property details.
  - vii. C. Halsted has received general CEO related questions recently:
    1. Some have been easy to answer based on LUO information.
    2. C. Halsted will reach out to the board if there are complicated questions.
    3. There is a more complicated one for a property on a lake in a shoreland zone that needs to be researched. That is more of a state issue vs the town Planning Board.
  - viii. This is an opportunity to make us all more familiar with the LUO and to model how we want to see CEO responsibilities handled. The board can plan to do more site visits – it doesn't need to be the full board, individual members can handle visits and report back to the board. The Selectmen are also willing to assist if needed.
- b. Shoreland Zoning permits will take additional time to review.
- c. There are no CEO prospects right now. There was one potential person recently but they were already doing two or three towns and didn't feel they could take on another town.

- d. The Camden LPI is helping with the plumbing issues right now but he does not want to do it long-term.
- e. Permit application #1: Natalie Curry, 74 Higgins Road, Map 9, Lot 37-1 - proposing a 2 garage, no plumbing, with an office upstairs
  - i. Paperwork indicates it is 19 feet from the boundary line.
  - ii. A proposed breezeway will connect the new building with the existing house.
  - iii. A tiny house showing on the existing site plan has been sold and removed from the property.
  - iv. J. DeGraff made a motion seconded by J. Thurston to approve the Curry permit application. Motion passed 5 in favor, 0 opposed.
- f. Permit application #2: Cody Raven, 188 Borough Road, Map 9, Lot 22 – proposing a 28’x38’ three bay garage on a pad.
  - i. Confirmed in LUO that buildings must be at least 15’ from property lines and 10’ in the village core.
  - ii. C. Halsted made a motion seconded by S. Crosby to approve the Raven permit application. Motion passed 5 in favor, 0 opposed.
- g. Permit application #3: Jack DeGraff, 38 Main Street, Map 10, Lot 66 - proposing a new 42’x48’ barn with 3 bays on a slab, no plumbing.
  - i. There is more than 14’ between the house and the garage and the garage and the boundary line
  - ii. The previous barn has already been removed.
  - iii. New barn will be lower than the 50’ restriction on buildings outside the shoreland zone and village core.
  - iv. This property is not within the village core.
  - v. S Crosby made a motion seconded by C. Halsted to approve the DeGraff permit with the condition that it is confirmed to be 15’ from the property boundary line. Motion approved, 4 in favor, 1 abstained (J. DeGraff), 0 opposed.
- h. Permit fees:
  - i. \$50 base fee plus \$.35 per square foot for buildings up to 1,500 square feet.
  - ii. Curry permit fee: \$50 plus \$.35/square foot (1,120) = \$442
  - iii. What is the definition of “late” in relation to permit fees? After the project is complete? Individuals should review LUO to confirm.
  - iv. Building permits should be submitted 7 days prior to the board meeting but the board is not going to enforce that right now since applicants may have to wait between meetings. The board can choose not to act on a permit at the first meeting it’s presented if it is complicated or they have questions.
  - v. Raven permit fee: \$50 plus \$.35/square foot (1,064 square feet) = \$422.40
  - vi. DeGraff permit fee: \$50 plus \$.35/square foot (2,016 square feet less the original 1,008 square foot building) = \$402.80

#### 4. Approval of Minutes:

- a. J. DeGraff moved to accept the May 2, 2023 minutes as written, C. Halsted seconded. Motion passed with 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

#### 5. Treasurer’s report: None

6. Communications:

- a. CEO Report: None. (Remove this item for future meetings until we have a CEO)
- b. Building Permit spreadsheet:
  - i. Building permits are on the online map, there is a building permits layer you can turn on.
  - ii. It will show the location of the property with a permit since we've using the spreadsheet and the details of the application.

7. Committee Reports: None.

8. Old Business:

- a. By-Law Review – meeting times were not listed in the by-laws but it did state that we were meeting two times per month.
  - i. J. DeGraff made a motion, seconded by E. deFrees to change the wording about meetings to: The board shall meet on the first Tuesday of each month; a second meeting may be held on the third Tuesday of the month at the discretion of the board based on workload.
  - ii. P. Chapman will make the change in Appendix A and update the approved date.
- b. K. Hoey signed the cover page for the revised LUO that was approved this past spring. P. Chapman will update the website. C. Halsted will provide printed copies for those who want it (E. deFrees, J. DeGraff) and the front desk.
- c. C. Halsted talked to the Selectmen about MCOG.
  - i. They have joined MCOG.
  - ii. C. Halsted set up a meeting with the Selectmen, Planning Board, and MCOG on Monday, June 19<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm to discuss the comp plan process and what the town wants MCOG's role to be in the process – facilitating, do it for us, etc. and what the costs would be.
  - iii. P. Chapman is available to take notes if needed. C. Halsted will discuss that option with the Selectmen.
  - iv. The Planning Board will be as involved in the comp plan process as needed but are not primarily responsible for it in any way. The Selectmen are primarily responsible for making it happen.
- d. F. Therio had some projects in progress – i.e., the condemned property near the Ghent Road, and the camper with the gray water system – those will fall to the Selectmen to follow up on.
- e. K. Hoey talked to C. Halsted about the building permit forms. We are getting low so this is a good time to revise the forms before they are re-printed.
  - i. K. Hoey would like to see a box specifically for their received stamp.
  - ii. They do not need to be carbon copy forms. A regular/non-carbon paper form could be printed in house.
  - iii. We are not ready to create an online form yet. We could create a fillable PDF that could be put on line or handed out as a paper form.
  - iv. Board members should review the form and look at options that other towns use and be prepared discuss revising our form at a future meeting. When we have a draft, we can share it with town staff and selectmen for comment.
  - v. The plumbing form is a state form and not part of this discussion.

9. New Business:

- a. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 4<sup>th</sup> – how do we want to deal with that?
  - i. It was suggested to move the meeting to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday – July 18 but that would be a month from the second June meeting.
  - ii. It was decided to change the July 4 meeting to Thursday, July 6 and keep the 18<sup>th</sup> as the second meeting for potential permit requests.
- b. J. Lightner will be taking over G. Hamlin's spot on the board once the selectmen approve him and he gets sworn in.

10. Adjournment: J. DeGraff made a motion to adjourn, seconded by E. deFrees. Motion passed by a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patricia Chapman, Planning Board Clerk

C. Halsted made a motion at the June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting to accept the June 6, 2023 minutes as amended, J. DeGraff seconded. Motion passed with 5 in favor, 0 opposed [motion to approve permit #3 was amended to clarify that J. DeGraff abstained from the vote]