

Town of Searsmont
Planning Board Meeting Minutes
September 19, 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
Sarah Crosby, Vice Chair
Jon Thurston
John Lightner
Evie deFrees
Jon Robbins
Jack DeGraff

Others:

Patricia Chapman, on Teams

Jake Boyington

3. Applications:

a. Site Plan Pre-Application Section 1102: Fire House Apartments, Jake Boyington

- i. J. Boyington wants to put 3 apartments in the old fire house. It is hard for his workers to find housing so two apartments would be for his workers and the 3rd rented out.
- ii. All three are 1-bedroom apartments.
- iii. There is a septic plan for 4 bedrooms plus a potential business. Originally wanted one apt to have 2 bedrooms but that doesn't work well with the current layout.
- iv. May use some of the garage space for projects but does not currently have any business happening in there.
- v. Water supply comes from Searsmont Water Company so there is no well required.
- vi. He originally proposed a 10' deck but has decided that won't really work with the layout of the building.
- vii. The footprint of the upstairs (2nd floor) is smaller than the downstairs because of the current roof design so the apartment dimensions on this application are not accurate.
- viii. Apt 3 will be on the ground floor in the old meeting room. Apts 1 & 2 will be upstairs on the 2nd floor.
- ix. Application currently indicates 1,000 square feet on the 1st floor and 1200 upstairs but that is per apartment. 2nd floor will actually be smaller – he will edit the sketch to reflect actual size based on roof design.
- x. He will be putting a drainage system in front of the garage doors.
- xi. He would like to make arrangements with the town to continue to use the existing sand shed as he has no other use for it. The sale of the property included a provision for the town to use the sand shed for free for three years. This will be the second winter.

- xii. Septic is based on 4 bedrooms/2 units but application is for 3 units. Estimates 436 gallons of water per day. J. Boyington will review with the septic planner to confirm it is for the correct number of units and bedrooms.
 - xiii. The property does appear to be in the shoreland zone but is more than 100' from the river so it is an allowed use. Site Plan Review process takes into account shoreland zone requirements.
 - xiv. The property actual straddles two lots. The building is split across two lots. The septic field would be in the sand shed lot.
 - xv. The board would like to have measurements from the building to the boundary lines.
 - xvi. The neighbor has a shed right on the boundary line but J. Boyington does not want to have any boundary disputes. He is measuring everything from where the neighbors have mowed.
 - xvii. He is not changing or expanding the footprint so there should not be any setback issues other than where the septic system is placed.
 - xviii. He does not anticipate changing any lighting. He will have normal outside lights.
 - xix. Existing entrance on the back of the building will go directly into one apartment. The other upstairs apartment will have a door on the river side where there used to be stairs in the old meeting room. The downstairs apartment entrance will be in the center of the back wall.
 - xx. The downstairs apartment will have egress windows. Upstairs will have egress windows – he will need to put dormers on the front of the building for that.
 - xxi. He needs to add neighbors from across the street to his list of abutters. He is responsible for notifying the neighbors of his application and providing proof of notice with the application. The Planning Board will notify abutters if there is a public hearing.
 - xxii. Application needs to include a contour map specifically showing where water runoff would flow. C. Halsted can assist applicant with that piece.
 - xxiii. J. Boyington has not been able to get an actual surveyor to come out and assist him.
 - xxiv. The Searsmont Water Company is a public/private company. It started because of several (5?) contamination issues in the area – the store, the Sproul's, a local church with a leaky oil tank, etc. The DEP got a grant to put in the water system and then handed it over to the Searsmont Water Company made up of 9 different properties/owners who each contribute to the costs. The well head is out in a field behind the little yellow shed that houses the filtration system, pressure tanks, and electrical boxes, etc.
 - xxv. J. Boyington needs to get the completed application with proof of abutter notices in to C. Halsted by next Tuesday, Sept 26 and we can put him on the next agenda for Oct 3 meeting.
 - xxvi. He is doing some general work on the building but is not yet starting on the apartments. If he is digging and bringing in gravel, etc and doing outdoor work, he should think about erosion control and be aware of the proximity of the river. He does have a barrier in his plans.
- b. Permit Applications:
- i. Didier Bonner-Ganter, build a 25'x24' barn at 17 Lawry Road, Map 5, Lot 110-1

1. The barn is already in process – almost done. The start date on the application is July.
 2. Planning Board members who noticed the building had assumed the barn was included in the original permit for building his house. C. Halsted will check the original permit to confirm whether it was included.
 3. If this is a new project, it is late and will be charged the late fee of 4x the original fee. Even if it was on the original application, it would have expired by now and he has not requested any extensions so this would be a new permit and late.
 4. The base fee is \$260 for this project.
 5. C. Halsted made a motion to approve this permit as submitted, J. DeGraff seconded. Motion passed with 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstained (J. Thurston).
- ii. Sheep Island Lot, Mary Jane Schott, owner – build a seasonal camp on 18-acre lot; Steve Merritt, contractor submitted the permit application today.
1. There is an existing dock (which doesn't require a permit anyway).
 2. There are a lot of resource protection issues and shoreland zoning issues. They want to cut trees within the shoreland zone.
 - a. There is a scoring system for trees within 100 feet of the shoreland zone
 - b. Then you have 100'-250' plots that need to be scored.
 - c. There is a formula where once you have a final score, you can't go below a specific score with the trees you want to remove. Beyond the 100' there are percentage requirements for how much the score can change.
 - d. Permit application does not have any of the scoring information needed to approve cutting trees. The application does refer to a forestry plan but the plan is not included.
 3. There is not enough information to do an accurate review of the application tonight. It may require a site visit.
 4. The island can only be accessed by water so all materials need to be transported over by boat.
 5. The plan is for two long buildings.
 6. The application does include a septic plan. The LPI will need to do a site visit as well. If the septic plan is not approved, the building permit can not be approved.
 7. Front side of the property is limited residential but the back side of the property is in a resource protection area (wetlands).
 8. They do have a Permit By Rule from DEP for intake pipes and movement of rocks or vegetation.
 9. C. Halsted needs to go back to applicant with specific instructions about what the board needs to approve the permit:
 - a. The board would like to do a site visit to verify the specific location, setbacks, and tree situation, etc. C. Halsted will reach out to the contractor to set up a site visit.

- b. C. Halsted will request a copy of the referenced vegetation / forestry plan.

10. There are footpaths indicated on the plan. There are guidelines about how the paths can be made and what materials can be used – not to exceed 6' wide, etc.

4. Approval of Minutes:

- a. J. Robbins moved to accept the September 5, 2023 minutes as written, J. Thurston seconded. Motion passed with 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstained (J. DeGraff).

5. Treasurer's report:

- a. C. Halsted did submit a proposal to the Selectmen to get a projector for about \$4-420. They indicated it was a good idea but did not give final approval to make the purchase. He will follow up at their next meeting.
- b. J. DeGraff made a motion to purchase the projector, seconded by S. Crosby. Motion passed 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

6. Communications:

- a. Permit spreadsheet is up to date and the digital map is up to date.
- b. C. Halsted did a visit on Levenseller where someone purchased a small lot and wanted to cut trees and remove a deck to drill a well.
- c. There was an inquiry from Steve Marin from Vision Builders.
- d. The people who wanted to build a Farm Stand on New England Road met with C. Halsted – plans have changed, now they want to remodel the existing house instead of building one and build a serious farmstand. They will be coming with a site plan application for change of use.
- e. The new house on Magog Road – there was an existing building permit when the CEO left but they are having issues with CMP and needed C. Halsted to do a form indicating they are in compliance.
- f. C. Halsted has been working with J. Murphy to get updated tax maps with the owner information.
- g. Still no updates on getting a new CEO. Selectman Redman may reach out to the state for assistance in finding candidates. C. Halsted made it clear that the board can not continue acting as CEO indefinitely.

7. Committee Reports: None.

8. Old Business: None.

9. New Business:

- a. Building permit form review: defer discussion to Oct. 3 meeting. C. Halsted has a draft of the new form that he will share before the next meeting.
- b. We will also start reviewing the Site Plan forms at the next meeting.
- c. There are flyers to share to encourage people to join the comp plan committee.
- d. C. Halsted and Adie will be reviewing applications they have already received from people interested in joining the comp plan committee.

- i. The Selectmen have final say in the decision about who will be on the committee.
- ii. We need a mix of people who:
 1. Will bring different perspectives
 2. Are invested and willing to do the work
 3. Will work well as a team.

10. 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 7:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Chapman, Planning Board Clerk

J. DeGraff made a motion at the October 3 meeting to approve the September 19 minutes with edits (see below). Motion passed with 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

Edits: change "project" on line 150 to "projector"; line 59 remove "septic system" as discussion was just about a well and not a septic system; line 60 was about an inquiry from Steve Marin from Vision Builders (originally just had "Maren")