

Town of Searsmont  
Planning Board Meeting Minutes  
November 7, 2023  
6:30 PM

1. Call to order: The meeting of the Planning Board convened at 6:30 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  
Evie deFrees, Vice Chair  
Jon Thurston  
Sarah Crosby  
Jon Robbins  
John Lightner

Others:

Patricia Chapman, on Teams  
Kyle Skinner  
Matt Silverio  
Adam Wolfrey  
Natalie Curry  
Jake Boyington  
Donna Murphy & Ron Jackson (abutters to the Fire House Apts, arrived 6:56)

3. Applications:

a. Building Permit Applications:

i. Roger Cook, 376 Main St N, 14'x24' shed on skids

1. No setback issues

2. S. Crosby moved to approve the permit request, E. deFrees seconded the motion. Motion passed 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

3. Fee = \$167.60

ii. Gibson, 219 Pond Road S/Hummingbird Lane, 14'x24' shed

1. There appears to be an existing shed on the property near the road. The location of the new shed is marked with an asterisk on the sketch.

2. Setbacks are okay.

3. Fee = \$167.60

4. S. Crosby motioned to approve the permit request, J. Lightner seconded. Motion passed 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

iii. Van Dover,

1. C. Halsted visited the site with Richard Ames, the contractor. There were questions about the site and some trees they wanted to remove.

a. There are two large Hemlocks right up next to/touching the shed they wanted to take down. They are healthy trees.

b. The decision was to only take down one of them.

c. Footprint will be the same or reduced (if they remove the overhang).

d. It's a very old building that needs to be rebuilt.

e. There were some other unhealthy trees they wanted to remove nearby but one is not dead and should not be removed unless a new tree is planted.

2. LUO is not clear whether a permit is needed since it is a renovation. C. Halsted recommended they did need one since they will likely be tearing some of it down and rebuilding much of it. Fee is \$50 as there is no change to the square footage.
  3. J. Thurston motioned to approve the permit, C. Halsted seconded. Motion passed 6 in favor, 0 opposed.
- iv. Kyle Skinner, 98 Belfast Augusta Road, Map 8, Lot 105-2
1. C. Halsted had talked to the owners earlier in the year about this project.
  2. A 3+/- acre lot with an existing home. They want to put a second home on the lot – a trailer.
  3. LPI has already confirmed the well and septic meet the requirements for the second home.
  4. The lot is big enough to accommodate both homes.
  5. There is an existing right of way to the back section of the property behind the existing house in case the property is ever split. [This does not show on the digital zoning maps] The new home will not interfere with the right of way.
  6. There is an existing power pole.
  7. Setbacks are 27' on one side and 17' on the other.
  8. C. Halsted motioned to approve the permit. S. Crosby seconded. Motion passed 6 in favor, 0 opposed.
  9. Fee = \$481.20  
[K. Skinner left after his permit was approved – 6:50 pm]
- v. Dickey project, 260 Walker Road
1. The board has previously discussed this project. They have shifted the location slightly to make more space between the building and the septic and keep it off the driveway.
  2. Not in the 75' shoreland zone.
  3. The septic is existing. There is a setback variance in the packet approving the distance from the septic signed by the LPI at the time.
  4. They got permission from the state to use these variances on an existing septic even though they are intended for new installation.
  5. S. Crosby made a motion to approve the permit request, J. Robbins seconded. Motion passed 6 in favor, 0 opposed.
  6. Fee = \$419.60 – the calculation was done on the sections of the building: 24'x26', 11'x24', 12'x14', 1,056 total square feet  
[Matt left at 7:02]
- vi. Tappen-deFrees, Lincolnville Ave, Map 5, Lot 3, 16.5 acres
1. The zoning map identified the shoreland zone measuring from the center of the stream but almost all of the property is actually in wetlands – the map is not accurately identifying the resource protection area.
  2. The property meets all of the requirements needed to be approved to have a building in the protection area unless the board or CEO has other concerns.
  3. Table 700 under residential – says a single-family dwelling with a driveway is allowed in the resource protection area with CEO approval.

4. The septic design is done and all soil tests, etc. and have been submitted to the LPI.
5. C. Halsted motioned to approve this permit request. J. Thurston seconded. Motion passed 5 in favor, 1 abstained (E. deFrees), 0 opposed.
6. Fee = \$386 - 24x30 house and 12x20 shed  
[Natalie left at 7:15]

vii. Cell tower application on Appleton Ridge

1. The application includes all the regulations around this project.
2. Adam Wolfrey, from Centerline Communications representing T-Mobile
3. Scope of work includes:
  - a. Removing one antennae, one RRU, 2 hybrid cables, installing 6 new antennas, 3 new RRUs, 3 new hybrid cables, removing one cabinet from the ground and installing 2 new cabinets
4. T-Mobile and Sprint merged so they now have more customers in the vicinity of this tower. In order to accommodate the increase in customers, they need to upgrade the equipment at this tower.
5. They are not increasing the height or expanding the footprint on the ground of the tower.
6. Fee = \$50 base fee as there is no change in the square footage of the footprint.
7. J. Robbins made a motion to approve this permit request. J. Lightner seconded. Motion passed 6 in favor, 0 opposed.  
[Adam left at 7:18]

b. Site Plan Review: Fire House Apartments project

- i. Pre-application was reviewed earlier this fall. This is the final review to confirm the application is complete before being officially reviewed at a subsequent meeting to be determined.
- ii. Section 1102: This will be a minor site plan review (under 5,000 square feet)
- iii. We have the contour interval and the deed for ownership interest.
- iv. There are no waivers requested.
- v. We have signed letters for all of the abutters as proof they were notified.
- vi. We are reviewing Section 1102.4 to confirm we have all the information needed to make the decision (at a future meeting). [This is more of a checklist, no motions required.]
- vii. The only change from the original submission is removing the deck that was planned for the back of the building.
- viii. Apartment sizes are confirmed on the sketch.
- ix. Planning Board Clerk will do the letters to the fire road commissioner and public officials.
- x. Checklist:
  1. We have the fully executed and signed application.
  2. All of the general information is included (name, address, map/lot information, etc)
  3. Copy of the deed is included.

4. No professionals were used to prepare the plan so there are no names for that.
5. The building is in the limited residential shoreland zone
6. The water lines are indicated on one of the attachments. There is a water line easement in the title but it was never actually used. The actual water lines in use go under the river and along the side of the roadway from the town water company to the front of the building.
7. Location names, existing streets, rights of way are indicated.
8. A sketches of the buildings and dimensions are in attachment E and G.
9. The public will not have access to the sand shed on the property; only the sanding/plowing company will access it.
10. The proposed driveway for the residents is indicated. It is currently a grassy area.
11. Parking will be behind the building.
12. The board does need dimensions of the driveway and parking area as well as setback details, and the type of surface materials that will be used. The board needs to do more research on what the requirements are.
13. Maximum impervious surface is based on the size of the whole lot so it should not be an issue.
14. We have the information on drainage, stands of trees, etc on the photos.
15. We have a contour map to look at drainage
16. There will not be any signs.
17. We do have soil information from the septic design.
18. Location and dimensions of easements are included.
19. The building is not in the 100-year flood plain.
20. Proposed development activity – location, dimensions, and ground floor elevations of buildings are included.
21. Existing and proposed setbacks & buffers – we need more information regarding driveway
22. Water supply is town water
23. Normal outside lights like a porch light. No streetlights or 24/7 lights.
24. Each apartment will have its own entrance and they are indicated on the building sketch. Two are in the back and one is on the side of the building.
25. No incineration devices.
26. No noise issues or loud machinery.
27. Sewage disposal information is included.
28. No waste materials will be stored outside.
29. Proposed landscaping and buffering has been discussed.
30. No state approvals needed
31. Estimated start and completion dates? As soon as possible.
32. Item 6 is for major developments and does not apply
33. Not a motorized racetrack
34. No submission waivers

- xi. C. Halsted moved to accept the application as complete except that we need the setbacks and driveway dimensions before final review, seconded by S. Crosby, Motion passed 6 in favor, 0 opposed
- xii. C. Halsted emailed the applicant after the meeting to outline the fees: \$400 pre-application fee and a permit fee of \$612.50 for a total of \$1,012.50. Fee needs to be paid before the application can be officially reviewed and approved on Nov 21.
- xiii. Abutter concerns:
  - 1. The neighbors (Jackson/Murphy) have concerns about the parking area that will be on their side of the property. There have been some materials that have rolled onto their property.
  - 2. Technically, it appears their shed is on the Fire House property so it's not really going onto their property.
  - 3. There will be a silt fence to help prevent erosion.
  - 4. The board can make contingencies on their approval to require additional erosion controls if needed when it's reviewed.
  - 5. The Fire House is at a much higher elevation than the neighboring property so if there is any run-off, it goes on the neighboring property.
  - 6. Neither party wants to go through an official process to look at and/or fix the property lines.
  - 7. J. Boyington is willing to build a retaining wall if needed.
  - 8. Each apartment has one bedroom so the max tenants will likely be 6 people between the three apartments.
  - 9. The neighbors are concerned about who the tenants may be. J. Boyington plans to rent two apartments to employees so he will know them.
  - 10. Will pets be allowed? Neighbors are concerned about animals "visiting" their property. J. Boyington has not thought about a pet policy. The current employees do not have pets. He may be able to put up a fence.
  - 11. Current employees do not have children but there could be some in the future.
  - 12. The goal of the apartment is to provide affordably local housing for his employees. He plans to charge \$750/month.
  - 13. Noise, crime, and pets (dogs) are the neighbor's biggest concerns.
- xiv. The board needs to decide if a public hearing is necessary. If they do, the final review will not be able to happen at the Nov 21 meeting.
- xv. J. Boyington has not heard any concerns from other neighbors. No one else showed up tonight to express concerns.
- xvi. All of the work will be interior and not change the footprint, etc. so the site plan is just because of the change of use.
- xvii. The plow trucks he uses for this area will stay at this location during the winter.
- xviii. The board does not feel a public hearing is required so the final application can be officially reviewed at the Nov 21 meeting.

#### 4. Approval of Minutes:

- a. Follow up: Line 46 – the Sheep Island project – confirmed that if they want to do something with the old building close to the water, they would need to come back to the board for a new permit.
- b. E. deFrees, moved to accept the October 3, 2023 minutes as written. J. Thurston seconded. Motion passed with 5 in favor, 1 abstained (J. Lightner), 0 opposed

5. Treasurer's report:

- a. We got a projector free from the Lincolnville Bulletin board and the town ordered the screen and accessories needed.
- b. It makes it nice for everyone to look at the same thing.

6. Communications:

- a. Walter Wetmore, from Bear's garage, has met with the Selectmen about the CEO position but he needs some training before he can officially start working.
  - i. C. Halsted has offered to have him sit in on meetings or meet with him one-on-one to get started. There is no set timeline for officially starting.
  - ii. Trainings are available online. He is allowed 12 months to complete the official certifications.
  - iii. He has a lot of building experience so he is familiar with codes.
  - iv. Rob will continue to be the LPI
  - v. The expectation will be for Walter and Rob to work closely together.
- b. Building permit spreadsheet is up to date.

7. Committee Reports: None.

8. Old Business

- a. Permit Application:
  - i. C. Halsted incorporated all of the comments from the previous meeting.
  - ii. Is it clear that we calculate footprint including overhangs?
    1. It does not appear to be anywhere on the new form.
    2. Should we add something to where it mentions the dimensions of new structures? The LUO does have a specific definition. Change the sentence to "...dimensions of new structures including overhangs..."
  - iii. C. Halsted will circulate the revised Building Permit application around the office and to the Selectmen for comments.
  - iv. Permits can be scanned/mailed to the board.
  - v. Typo – "later" should be "late" permit penalty
  - vi. The start date listed on the application isn't as important as the date the applicant actually starts work. Many applicants from tonight may have indicated work was going to start on Nov 1 but as long as they didn't start before approval, it's not an issue. The selectmen are in charge of enforcement.
- b. Site Plan Review application:
  - i. Same typo (late vs later) in the Site Plan application
  - ii. C. Halsted did re-organize the questions on the Site Plan application to group together related questions.
  - iii. Change wording about dimension to "...total footprint including overhangs..."
  - iv. The requirements section is just pasted from the original application. Is it even a necessary section as the information is in the LUO?

- v. Change to just 2 bullets for Existing conditions and link to 1102.4 c4 and Proposed Development Activity and link to 1102.4 c5. This removes a whole page in the application.
- vi. Major vs minor – we can identify the different sections of LUO.
- vii. If applicants are confused, they should meet with CEO (or board) for assistance vs sending them more paperwork to review to try and figure it out.
- viii. There are a couple of sections that are very close to the header and hard to read – C. Halsted will fix it so it stands out better.
- ix. “All proposed uses...” should be “All proposed activities...” to include construction and the actual use of the site.
- x. Definition of major vs minor should be somewhere up front – in the fee list? We can Insert link to the section/definition in the LUO.
- xi. Escrow is required for a major site plan application.
- xii. Minor plans have a minimum and a maximum fee; major plan application does not have a minimum but by definition they would not be below that \$400 minor minimum.
- xiii. Construction in a shoreland zone – clarify that dimensions include overhangs as we did in the permit application.
- xiv. We will do a final review of this at the next meeting before circulating it around the office.

9. New Business: None.

10. Adjournment: C. Halsted made a motion to adjourn, seconded by J. Lightner. Motion passed by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patricia Chapman, Planning Board Clerk

J. DeGraff made a motion at the November 21 meeting to accept the November 7, 2023 minutes as written. J. Robbins seconded. Motion passed with 6 in favor, 0 opposed.