

**BETHLEHEM PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
October 14, 2015
BETHLEHEM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM**

Present: Mike Bruno, Chris McGrath, Don Lavoie, Steve Gorman, Marie Stevenson and Sandy Laleme.

Excused: Andrea Bryant, Dave Wiley and Jeanne Robillard

Mike calls the meeting to order at 6:33 and appoints Don Lavoie as full board member for Andrea.

The board reviews the minutes from 9/23/2015.

Motion made by Chris McGrath, seconded by Marie Stevenson, to approve the minutes as submitted. Don Lavoie abstains from the vote, remaining members vote in favor. Minutes from 9/23/2015 are approved.

Dave Eckman is before the board to present a possible modification to the previously approved Site Plan Review. Rather than rehab the existing buildings the potential new owner would like to remove all the buildings on the north side of route 302 and construct a new, larger building with more rooms. The new building would be placed further back on the knoll of the property. The new building would consist of 40 to 60 units/suites. A discussion ensues regarding height requirements, green space, and parking requirements. The board informs Mr. Eckman that anything over 40 feet would require a special exception from the ZBA, and that under no circumstances may a building exceed 60 feet.

The board discussed the three proposed Lot Coverage changes that Sandy has presented. Don suggests Main Street be allowed a Special Exception for lot coverage. Sandy agrees and suggests adding the words "lot coverage" to the District 1-Main Street Dimensional Standards.

The board agrees proposal two works best and agrees the proposed warrant article should read:

"In all districts building coverage on the site shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the lot area unless otherwise stated here in. For the purpose of determining maximum lot coverage impervious areas are defined generally as areas the surface treatment of which substantially restrict or prevent water from being absorbed.

Motion made by Sandy Laleme, seconded by Steve Gorman to draft a warrant article to change the language in the Bethlehem Zoning Ordinances, Article II General Provisions, section E from:

"In all districts building coverage on the site shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the lot area. "

To:

"In all districts building coverage on the site shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the lot area unless otherwise stated here in. For the purpose of determining maximum lot coverage

impervious areas are defined generally as areas the surface treatment of which substantially restrict or prevent water from being absorbed .“ (See special exemption for District 1 Main Street, page 10)

Mike Bruno, Don Lavoie, Steve Gorman, Marie Stevenson and Sandy Laleme vote in favor, Chris McGrath is opposed. Motion carries.

Mike opens the public hearing for the adoption of the new Site Visit Definition and Site Visit Policy and reads the public hearing notice. The board reviews the minutes from previous meetings.

Motion made by Steve Gorman, seconded Marie Stevenson to adopt the proposed Site Visit Definition and Site Visit Policy which read:

Site Plan Visit: A visit by the Board, or a subcommittee of Board members to a location which is the subject of an application before the Boards, and involves going onto the property or visiting areas which are not customarily available for public inspection. The site visit shall be in the company of the owner, applicant, their agents or employees. This does not include a view of the site from adjoining public ways, or other points where observations can be made without entering the property.

8.7 Site Visit:

The Board may deem it necessary for adequate consideration of an application to require an onsite visit. The Chairman shall request the applicant to allow a site visit by the Board or Subcommittee of Board members.

The Chairman may request if unaccompanied visits by Board members is permitted. If granted, members may visit individually.

The Chairman may delegate members of the Board to visit the site of the application. If a quorum will be present, the site visit must be noticed as a public meeting with minutes recorded in accordance to RSA 91-A

While the Board shall have the authority to conduct approved site visits where the general public is not granted, such refusal may constitute grounds to decline the site visit. Consideration for the safety of Board members and the general public must be considered in requesting a site visit. Failure of the applicant to provide access to the site, in the absence of countervailing reasons such as health and safety concerns, would only be used as a basis for denying approval where a site visit is deemed to be essential for the board to fully evaluate the proposal.

Mike, Don, Marie and Steve vote in favor, Sandy and Chris oppose. Motion carries.

Dawn steps down as clerk to present information for the discussion regarding changing the districting of Thornhill Road. Mike Bruno allows minutes to be taken by recording for Dawn to transcribe later.

Previously Dawn had been before the board requesting they support a warrant article to change the districting of Thornhill Rd from District 3 to District 2. At that time the Board asked Dawn to gather support for the district change from other land owners on Thornhill Rd. Dawn has positive responses from 7 land owners in favor of the change as well as a statement from Jim Powers who developed the sub-division. Mr. Powers had placed a covenant in each of the deeds that read:

“Except for upon Lot 3, Phase II, no commercial enterprise whatever shall be conducted from or upon the within conveyed property, without prior written permission from the Grantor.” (James W. Powers)

In an email Mr. Powers wrote:

“Our intention was always to have all lots be treated as residential. Lot # 3 was sold prior to our acquisition and retained by Dr Howard Pritham, so we could not change his to this restriction.

Yes, I would support the zoning change. The covenant was placed there for a reason, and would go on in perpetuity.”

The board discusses the differences between District 3 and District 2.

Don Lavoie suggests the board consider creating a new type of district that is residential only. He has long had issue with the definition of District 2 and thinks this is a good opportunity to test the waters. This option is discussed at length with support for a future discussion.

The board reviews the map.

The board also discusses whether this is more suitable for a petition warrant article. The vision of the Master Plan is also raised.

The board then discusses procedure for moving forward. Tonight they are looking for a motion to draft the warrant article. If the motion carries then the board moves forward with the public hearing process. The last possible date to hold a public hearing for a warrant article to appear on the ballot in the spring is January 25, 2016. It is suggested that the board hold their first public hearing in advance of the final date for a petitioned warrant article submission should there be any push back.

Motion made by Steve, seconded by Marie Stevenson to move forward with the writing of a warrant article by November 18, 2015, and to hold a public hearing during December, to make all properties that have frontage on Thornhill Rd part of district 2. Don, Mike, Marie, Steve and Sandy vote in favor. Chris opposes. Motion carries.

Mike asks Dawn if she will research wording for such a warrant article, and to see if she can determine if West Forest Lake road was ever part of district 3, and if so when was it voted into district 2.

The board moves on to discuss the budget. Dawn is requesting 5 additional hours next year, giving her 25 hours per week in her position of Planning and Zoning Clerk. Dawn states she needs the hours to meet the needs of the Master Plan. These additional hours would make her a full time employee, and ultimately that is a decision for the Select Board. She is just asking for the Planning Boards support at this time. The board requests that Dawn find out what the impact of full time would be in regards to benefits. The board also discusses regarding shifting hours around to meet the Planning Board's needs. Dawn informs the board she uses all the hours she is given, plus some and that there is no way she could forfeit any welfare hours. Mike suggests he, Dave and Dawn meet one afternoon next week to look at the other line items and then to bring a new budget before the Planning Board at the next meeting.

Motion made by Sandy Laleme, seconded by Marie Stevenson, to adjourn at 8:45. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Ferringo
Planning and Zoning Board Clerk