

TOWN OF BENNINGTON
PLANNING BOARD
Minutes of the Meeting- November 23, 2015

Present David McKenzie, Chairman
 Christopher Maple, Vice Chairman
 Jeffrey Rose, Ex Officio
 Sam Cohen
 Donald Trow

Guests Joseph MacGregor, Conservation Commissioner
 Valerie Germain, Conservation Commissioner

Chairman McKenzie called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

The minutes of the November 9, 2015 meeting were reviewed and accepted with amendments. It was noted that the final approval for the lot line adjustment for Map 7, Lot 18 and 19 did not include condition number 2 (if lot 18 is developed it must be connected to the Town sewer system) as lot 18 will be required to be hooked up to the Town sewer system if it is to be developed.

The Board met with Joseph MacGregor and Valerie Germain from the Conservation Commission to discuss a proposal for a Natural Resource Inventory of the Town's resources. The Conservation Commissioners were seeking the Planning Board's input before they approached the Selectmen. It was noted that the proposal should be included in the Master Plan. The inventory would be a 4 month project done by South West Regional Planning Commission. The Commissioners would receive the final draft in 9 months to a year. The cost of the inventory has been quoted at \$6800, but can be changed if less information is needed as the price is based on projected work hours. The inventory can be a valuable tool for the Town, which will point out possible properties to protect by Town purchase. Chairman McKenzie pointed out that the Master Plan currently has a section on Natural Features. The old listing was done in 1990 and new information can now include visuals. Mr. MacGregor stated that this is an educational document that is strongly recommended by the State to be able to make an educated choice of the direction of the Town. It was suggested that the Conservation Commission have a section in the Master Plan. Chairman McKenzie will send Mr. MacGregor the information that the Planning Board currently has. It was noted that the Conservation Commissioners are looking for the Planning Board's approval. Sam Cohen stated that he has a concern that if the project is included in the Master Plan it is suggesting to the public that the Planning Board endorses it. Sam Cohen expressed his concern about the price and need to raise the funds from the tax payers. Sam Cohen noted that he does not agree with this project. Jeffrey Rose noted that he

understands the concern about spending money, but he also can understand the need to identify property to protect in town. At this time, the Master Plan has an introduction for the Conservation Commission, but it does not identify areas in need of protection. It was suggested that the Conservation Commissioners get other quotes for the work as well as apply for grants. It was suggested that the Conservation Commission include in the Master Plan a statement that they are looking to provide a Natural Resource Inventory. The inventory could be added to the Master Plan as an update. The Conservation Commissioners will provide the Planning Board with a write-up to be included in the Master Plan. Sam Cohen questioned the ability for the Selectmen to authorize the funds for this project without presenting it to the voters. Donald Trow stated that he would like to have more information in order to make a decision. He was concerned about over regulation on properties. Jeffrey Rose noted that the inventory would be a great tool to have, but he questioned the ability to fund it. The money raised from current use properties can be used to purchase land; it may be possible that it could also be used for the inventory.

In other business, the Planning Board discussed possible amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. The following was proposed be presented at a public hearing:

Article VII General Requirements

A. Sanitary Protection. All dwellings and sanitary systems shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with standards set by the New Hampshire Water Supply and Pollution Control Commission, by the Town Subdivision Regulations and other applicable health and sanitary codes. Sanitary systems shall be subject to the same setback requirements as buildings.

Chairman McKenzie made a motion to present the Zoning Amendment for public approval. Jeffrey Rose seconded the motion and all were in favor.

The following Excavation amendment was proposed:

Section XIII Excavations

7, The proposed excavation shall be situated a minimum of 50 feet from a property boundary line, except that with the permission of the abutter it may be permitted as near as 10 feet from said boundary line.

It was noted that the Planning Board can change Excavation Regulations. Zoning Ordinance changes require Town approval. The Board suggested that they make the change to the Excavation Regulation and add a date to the document. It was suggested that the amendments be explained in the voter's guide, noting that the Town currently has three existing excavations which are operating under the 50 foot/10 foot rule. The proposed change shall apply to new excavations.

The Planning Board will work on the Master Plan at their December meeting.

As there was no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Debra Belcher
Planning Board Recording Secretary