

PLANNING BOARD
TOWN OF FRANCESTOWN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Minutes December 5, 2023

Members Present: Gerri Bernstein, Scot Heath (ex-off), Linda Kunhardt, Karen Fitzgerald, Sarah Pyle, Betsey Hardwick

Absent: Bob Lindgren

Alternates present: Susan Kane, Greg Neilley, Kaela Law

Absent: Kris Stewart, Chris Danforth

Others present: Bob Bitterli, Fieldstone, Larry Ames

Voting members: Gerri Bernstein, Scot Heath (ex-off), Linda Kunhardt, Karen Fitzgerald, Sarah Pyle, Betsey Hardwick, Susan Kane

Minutes prepared by Maureen Troy

Gerri Bernstein called the meeting to order at 6:30.

Revisions to the Proposed 2024–2029 Capital Improvement Plan

Jamie Pike asked CIP meetings be moved to December 19th.

Sarah Pyle will lead the meeting on the 19th.

Preliminary Consultation: Bob Bitterli, Main Street

The Board will consult with Mr. Bitterli regarding the need for potential Site Development and/or Zoning Board of Adjustment applications that may be appropriate to enable future business plans.

There is normally a \$50 fee for preliminary consultations, but because revisions are currently being considered to the Site Development Regulation fee schedule, Bernstein moves...

Motion: Bernstein moves to waive the fee for preliminary consultation. Pyle seconds.

Discussion: Members discuss costs of having a consultation and the necessity of fees. Board members discuss the benefit of having people come for preliminary consultation and less fees encourage this. The current Zoning review committee has recommended that we not charge fees for preliminary reviews or consultation for site development—the Planning Board has not discussed this or voted on this.

In Favor: Hardwick, Fitzgerald, Heath, Bernstein, Pyle, Kane; **Opposed:** Kunhardt

Bernstein states that preliminary discussions are general and nothing is binding or voted upon.

Bob Bitterli engaged Fieldstone. Bitterli makes chocolates in his basement currently. He is refurbishing his barn to create and sell them out of the barn. He is also hoping to have a space to enjoy chocolates, coffee and pastries. He believes this falls under the category of “home

business” but he is also hoping to host pop-up dinners every so often. He has created seating, a handicap ramp. He has not expanded the barn at all. He discussed interior upgrades. The business will require a special exception which will require site plan review by the Planning Board. Fieldstone is wondering what they will need for this. Planning Board members agree that this is not a “home business.” Pyle states that this will be a retail store and restaurant—special exception and site plan review from Planning Board—the application should reflect specific uses. Pyle recommends reading the Zoning Regulations for each specific use. The board discusses if a restaurant label would include the production and selling of chocolate too.

The board discusses criteria for zoning regulations, site plan review and special exceptions. Fitzgerald asks about parking, traffic and access. The board discusses safety for cars, crossing and parking. Bitterli has 10 parking spaces onsite. Fieldstone asks about drainage and sediment and erosion control plans. The PB says they will need a surveyors stamp on the plat. PB members ask about hours.

Preliminary Consultation: Larry Ames, Bible Hill Road

The Board will consult with Mr. Ames regarding various subdivision options and conservation strategies under consideration involving a parcel of land on Bible Hill Road.

Motion: Bernstein moves to waive the fee for preliminary consultation. Pyle seconds.

Discussion: Same as last motion.

In Favor: Hardwick, Fitzgerald, Heath, Bernstein, Pyle, Kane; **Opposed:** Kunhardt

Ames addresses Map 9 Lot 13—break off a lot of existing house and have a family lot. Current use lot needs 10 acres undeveloped. The bulk of the acreage will go to the Francestown Land Trust. Ames and the Planning Board discuss the lots and acreage. The Board and Ames discuss the driveways, acreage for the back lot and septic designation.

Proposed Changes to the Zoning Ordinance for 2024

The Board considers various proposed changes to the Francestown Zoning Ordinance, as drafted by the Rules and Regulations committee, to be brought to a Public Hearing review in January 2024 and subsequently to Town Meeting in March 2024 for the Town’s approval.

The board discusses ADUs. Detached are allowed 1000 sq ft. The attached are currently 40% of the existing dwelling. The Board agrees both attached and detached ADUs should be a maximum of 1000 sq feet—no percentages.

Motion: Kunhardt moves to change Article III, Section 3.11.1a to strike the last sentence and add “single-family” after “one” and only one ADU is permitted attached or detached to the lot. In 3.11.1b add language that there is a maximum allowance of 1000 sq ft—3.11.1b to match 3.11.2b. Pyle seconds.

In Favor: Hardwick, Fitzgerald, Heath, Bernstein, Pyle, Kane, Kunhardt; **Opposed:** none

The board discusses Article III, Section 3.1.2. In 3.1.2a—strike “no more than one accessory dwelling” and insert “only one ADU attached or detached is permitted on the lot.”

Motion: Harwick moves to approve change. Pyle seconds.

In Favor: Harwick, Fitzgerald, Heath, Bernstein, Pyle, Kane, Kunhardt; **Opposed:** none

The board discusses finished living space. The board agrees finished living space should include space in a dwelling for sleeping, eating, living, cooking, bathrooms, closets and halls. Unfinished storage spaces, open porches or utility spaces are not considered finished living space.

Motion: Harwick moves to accept this language. Heath seconds.

In Favor: Harwick, Fitzgerald, Heath, Bernstein, Pyle, Kane; **Opposed:** Kunhardt.

The board discusses the definition of “commercial”—a use primarily concerned with the sale of goods or services.

Motion: Pyle moves to accept this language. Harwick seconds.

Discussion: The board discusses profits versus not-for-profit.

In Favor: Harwick, Fitzgerald, Heath, Bernstein, Pyle, Kane, Kunhardt; **Opposed:** none

The board discusses the floodplain language.

Motion: Kunhardt moves to change flood hazard building code to meet the language of the updated FEMA mapping systems as provided by the State of NH. Harwick seconds.

In Favor: Harwick, Fitzgerald, Heath, Bernstein, Pyle, Kane, Kunhardt; **Opposed:** none

The board discusses changes to tables.

Motion: Pyle moves to accept changes as discussed tonight—formatting of minimum front to match side rear. The changes in minimum front and side rear and the addition to minimum buildable acreage to the actual table. Fitzgerald seconds.

In Favor: Harwick, Fitzgerald, Heath, Bernstein, Pyle, Kane, Kunhardt; **Opposed:** none

The board discusses more changes to the tables. The board agrees to discuss further at the next meeting.

Motion: Pyle moves to take zoning amendments that the PB has approved so far to the Public Hearing in January. Heath seconds.

In Favor: Harwick, Fitzgerald, Heath, Bernstein, Pyle, Kane, Kunhardt; **Opposed:** none

Proposed Changes to Site Development Regulations

Discussion moved to December 19th.

Review of Minutes:

PB 12/5/2023- Approved

November 14, 2023 minutes—postponed until next meeting

New Business:

Other Business:

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Next meeting is Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 6:30pm.