

**Planning Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Joint Meeting of the Town Council and the Planning Board**  
**Benjamin Eddy Building and Via Zoom™**  
**Wednesday May 19, 2021**

**A. Call to Order**

Chair Anthony Renzi called the Planning Board to order at 7:28 p.m.

**B. Roll Call**

Planning Board Members at the Benjamin Eddy Building: Michael Carpenter; Hilary Downes Fortune; David Paolissi; Chair Anthony Renzi; George Sackal; attending via Zoom™: Vice Chair Warren Ducharme; Secretary Helen Hardy.

Staff: Michael Antonellis, Planner; Joanna Achille, Solicitor; Kelli Russ, Treasurer.

Town Council: Denise DiFranco, David Paolino, Heidi Rogers, Chris Stone; excused, Cheryl Hawes.

Members of the Public attending via Zoom™: Joe Carey; Angela Cambio; Michael Dillon; Ondrea Paolino; Lynn Rider;

**C. Blighted Properties on Route 6 (Danielson Pike)**

Denise DiFranco advised attendees that discussion of specific properties or properties in litigation was not allowed. She said that a number of properties were in litigation.

The State Property Maintenance Code is the legal means for addressing blighted properties.

There was a discussion about the enforcement of the Code. Denise said that the former Zoning Official, Jeff Lykins, is working for the town on a per diem basis, and that he and the Planner, Michael Antonellis, have been visiting properties and speaking to owners who made themselves available, although most have not. The Town has addressed a number of property owners.

David Paolino said that the State Fire Marshall and Police Chief have also been involved, and that they had visited property together with Town Officials.

Heidi Rogers said that there has been an effort to have property owners meet with the Town Council in closed session to work out mitigation for these properties.

Denise said that the Town is discussing re-structuring positions to combine the Planning and Building and Zoning Official positions. There was a discussion about the requirements for the positions and about how to go about hiring a person for this position.

Joanna and Warren explained the procedure that must be followed in addressing a blighted property. First the Building Official must determine a property to be unfit and write and deliver the violation to the property owner. The case then gets turned over to the solicitor. If there is no abatement of the problem the case then goes to Municipal Court, which can take months. The Court is the entity that declares the property to be unsafe.

There was a discussion about having a more local Municipal Court. David Paolino said that the Town Council has approached Gloucester and Scituate about combining to have a more local Municipal Court. Gloucester is pursuing this with Burrillville and was not interested in working with Foster. Scituate is in discussion with Foster on this.

There was a discussion on the Zoning Ordinance and loopholes in the Zoning Ordinance. Denise said that Michael Antonellis and Jeff Lykins are working together to try to address these loopholes.

There was a discussion on fines, and the problem of property owners buying back their property when it goes up for tax sale, and whether it was possible to prevent this.

There was a discussion on licensing properties, and whether licenses could be withheld pending rectification of blight issues.

Mike Carpenter made the recommendation that the Council and Planning Board develop a prioritized list of properties that includes the ownership of the property and a detailed list of violations on each property. When the property is owned by an LLC, as many are, the name of the person attached to the LLC should be included.

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It was decided that there will be two committees, each composed of two Planning Board members.

Mike Carpenter moved David Paolissi seconded the motion to form a committee to identify property ownership of properties needing remediation, and to detail the violations. Motion carried, 7 – 0 (Michael Carpenter, Hilary Downes Fortune, Warren Ducharme, Helen Hardy, David Paolissi, Anthony Renzi, George Sackal, aye). Mike and David will form this committee.

George moved and Warren seconded the motion to form a committee that would ????

Motion carried, 7 – 0 (Michael Carpenter, Hilary Downes Fortune, Warren Ducharme, Helen Hardy, David Paolissi, Anthony Renzi, George Sackal, aye). This committee will consist of George and Warren.

Both committees will report back to the Planning Board at the Planning Board meeting on July 21, 2021.

**D. Adjournment**

Mike C. moved to adjourn at 9:35. Motion carried, 7 – 0 (Michael Carpenter, Hilary Downes Fortune, Warren Ducharme, Helen Hardy, David Paolissi, Anthony Renzi, George Sackal, aye).

**Future Agenda Items**

- a. Farm and Forest Accessory Business Uses
- b. 2021 Road and Bridge Update – Michael will check with the DPW director about this
- c. Finalize Comprehensive Plan

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Hardy,  
Secretary