



PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
TOWN OF FOSTER
Benjamin Eddy Building
6 South Killingly Road, Foster, RI
Wednesday: September 20, 2017
7:00 p.m.

A. Call to Order

Mr. Carey called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Board Members Present: Joseph Carey (Chair); Richard Sparks (Vice Chair); Helen Hardy (Secretary); Jeff Sheldon; Mike Carpenter; and Ron Cervasio.

Board Members Excused: Sergio Spaziano

Staff Present: Cheryl Maynard (Planner), Joanna Achille (Solicitor),

Public Present: Scott Millar and Jen West from Grow Smart RI. Gordon Rogers, Paul Allen, and Sandy Sheldon.

C. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Carpenter moved, Mr. Sheldon seconded, to approve the minutes of August 9, 2017. Motion passed 6-0.

Mr. Carpenter moved, Mr. Sparks seconded, to approve the minutes of September 6, 2017. Ms. Hardy explained she had several edits/comments/corrections to the minutes, and suggested tabling the minutes in order to pass them along to Ms. Maynard to incorporate. Mr. Cervasio moved to table minutes, Mr. Carpenter seconded. Motion passed 6-0.

D. Correspondence

None.

E. Board Members' Reports

1) Land Trust: Mr. Carpenter stated the next meeting of the Land Trust is Tuesday, October 03, 2017. He said the Greenway will be one of the topics discussed at this upcoming meeting.

2) Conservation Commission

None.

F. Zoning

Continued Discussion of Farm and Forest Accessory Business Overlay District
Scott Millar, Grow Smart RI and Jennifer West, Grow Smart RI

Mr. Millar stated that before he got into the board's specific comments, he would like to start with lessons learned from other towns such as Middletown and Exeter, noting concerns and misinformation in these communities looking at a similar ordinance. Middletown initiated a public workshop to explain proposed revisions to their zoning ordinance and receive comments from farmers and other community members. This process was more successful than the reception in Exeter without the public workshop. Mr. Millar said he would recommend having workshops in Foster, what he would call "listening sessions" to get feedback from local farmers.

He recommended not using the terms "small, medium and large" to describe farms instead but to use lot size for greater clarity. And, he suggested including definitions to clarify "horse farm" from an "equestrian facility."

Mr. Millar reviewed the complete list of Foster Farm and Forest Business Uses Recommendations (9-20-2017), submitted as Exhibit A. The Planning Board generally agreed with the recommendations and Mr. Millar indicated he would incorporate the recommendations into the proposed revisions.

Gordon Rogers asked about the Farm Bureau's response. Mr. Millar said Grow Smart RI has met with them but noted there remained misinformation.

Mr. Millar suggested the Planning Board schedule a workshop / listening session and have it facilitated by Jen West, Grow Smart RI, who could run an interactive session to get input from the public.

Ms. Hardy polled the board to gauge interest in scheduling a public workshop/listening session:

Rick Sparks, yes; Mike Carpenter, yes; Jeff Sheldon, yes; Helen Hardy, yes; Ron Cervasio, yes; Joe Carey, yes.

Mr. Millar also suggested that revisions could be done through the zoning ordinance by right, by special use, or added to the use table.

Mr. Millar and Ms. Maynard will work together to determine the best timing for the public workshop/listening session.

Mr. Carpenter suggested that before the public workshop, the Planning Board should be clear on what is being suggested, what is currently allowed, and what changes are proposed. Mr. Rogers said he also wanted to include what's prohibited.

Mr. Millar stated he would create a table for the Board to review including all the information requested.

G. Major Land Development

H. Comprehensive Plan Update

Ms. Maynard updated the Board on recent tasks. The planning department has asked for comments from several organizations/departments and continues to receive comments. She met with the Land Trust this month and is managing the comments and edits. Ms. Maynard has also met with the consultant, Mason and Associates, to facilitate the creation and printing of GIS maps. She also is going to meet with Laura Sparks about creating maps through GIS for the comprehensive plan and general use in the town.

Mr. Cervasio stated to the Chair that he wanted to clarify the procedure for site walks prior to the hearing. He would like to make it mandatory that at least two Planning Board members conduct a site visit to any property to be discussed at a Planning Board meeting.

I. Future Agenda Items

- 1) Marijuana Ordinance
- 2) RIDEM Farmland Access Program
- 3) Screening berms requirements along roadways

J. Adjournment

Mr. Cervasio moved to adjourn at 8:17 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by

Helen Hardy, Secretary