



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

375 MAIN STREET • NEW LONDON, NH 03257 • NEWLONDON.NH.GOV

**New London Planning Board
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 26, 2024
Whipple Memorial Town Hall, 6:30 PM**

PRESENT: Tim Paradis (Chair), Jeremy Bonin (Vice Chair), Paul Gorman, Paul Vance, Joe Kubit, David Royle, Emily Campbell, and Janet Kidder (Selectmen's Representative).

MEMBERS ABSENT: Katie Vedova and Marianne McEnrue.

STAFF PRESENT: Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator

OTHERS PRESENT: Rich Epstein, Mike Hansen, John Ellis, Steve Root, Sue Stuebner, Greg Rusnica

Chair Paradis called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Review of minutes: February 27, 2024 – Deferred.

Continued PUBLIC HEARING – Lot Line Adjustment – Nicholas Gilman Sunapee Trust & Deborah Gilman Sunapee Trust and Secret Cove, LLC, Davis Hill Road

Tax/Map Lot 068-006-0-0-0, 309 Davis Hill Road, Nicholas Gilman Sunapee Trust & Deborah Gilman Sunapee Trust, Zoned Agricultural Rural Residential, Shore Land Overlay District, currently +/- 20.7 acres, proposed to be +/- 11.65 acres.

Tax/Map Lot 068-006-002-0-0, Davis Hill Road, Nicholas Gilman Sunapee Trust & Deborah Gilman Sunapee Trust, Zoned Agricultural Rural Residential, Shore Land Overlay District, currently +/-12.26 acres, proposed to be +/- 14.16 acres.

Tax/Map Lot 068-006-003-0-0, Davis Hill Road, Secret Cove, LLC, Zoned Agricultural Rural Residential, Shore Land Overlay District, currently +/- 12.5 acres proposed to be +/-25.47 acres.

Tax/Map Lot 068-006-004-0-0, Davis Hill Road, Nicholas Gilman Sunapee Trust & Deborah Gilman Sunapee Trust, Zoned Agricultural Rural Residential, Shore Land Overlay District, currently +/-11.06 acres, proposed to be +/- 5.29 acres.

Chair Paradis announced that the applicants have requested a continuance until the next meeting, April 9, 2024.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Emily Campbell) to approve the request for a continuance until the next meeting- THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC HEARING – Final Site Plan Review – Michael Hansen Properties, LLC, located at 10 Main Street, Tax Map/Lot 073-047-0-0-0, Zoned Commercial (Comm), +/- 0.729 acres.

The applicant is applying to construct a 2,880 square foot building to house an office space. The development includes an 18-space parking lot, walkways, patios and stormwater management infrastructure.

Mike Hansen stated since the last meeting the office building has increased in size from 40' x 60' office space to 40' x 72' allowing for an entryway and bathroom off to the side. It will still have 18 parking spaces out back, that has not changed. It was noted that the Planning Board has received the traffic study but has not had an opportunity to review it. Mr. Hansen explained that he met with the State DOT regarding the site distance of vehicles exiting the site and the State is satisfied with the site distance as it is however if the use is ever changed to retail space, then the State would look at the requirements differently and there could be a requirement to increase the site distance then.

Mr. Hansen informed the Board that the drainage study and landscape plans have been completed and he has met with department heads respectively. There is no issue with water hookup, there is a pre-existing hookup. It is anticipated that less water will be used compared to the previous owner. The existing sewer line is fine for the proposal and fire has no issues as well. A suppression system will be installed for fire, it won't be charged but accessible for the fire trucks to hook up and get water. There is no requirement for a sprinkler system for just two offices. Chair Paradis noted that Bob Harrington has requested a review by engineers for the sewer hookup, Mr. Hansen noted that the engineers found no issues.

Selectman Kidder inquired about the water project that is to begin this summer and whether he has considered how that will impact his building. Mr. Hansen replied that it is his understanding that the project should be starting late summer; early fall and he believes the water company doing the installation for the water main will be requesting to use his property for parking/staging, which he has no problem with. Mr. Hansen was not sure if the existing water service will be used or if a new service will be required.

Selectman Kidder spoke about a raised curb for the safety of vehicles traveling in and out. Mr. Hansen agreed. There will also be signage for a right-hand turn only upon exiting. Mr. Bonin suggested that if Horizons includes this information about the curbing and signage on the plan, it will not need to be a condition of the permit. Mr. Hansen agreed.

Chair Paradis asked if there were comments from the public – there were none.

IT WAS MOVED (Jeremy Bonin) AND SECONDED (Paul Gorman) to issue a continuance until the next meeting- THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tree Cutting – 782 Pleasant Street Revocable Trust, Christopher & Cynthia Winship Located at 782 Pleasant Street - Tax map/lot 049-003-0-0-0, Zoned Residential (R-2), Shoreland Overlay District, +/-0.97 acres.

The applicant proposes the removal of one birch tree.

Mr. Bonin recused himself and removed himself from the Board.

Greg Rusnica, a professional landscape architect from Bonin Architects, met with the Board representing the property owners. The application is to remove one 8” birch tree that is leaning over the lake. Removal of the tree will bring them under the point threshold; however, they will be replanting in accordance with the NH DES riparian buffer list to include some but not all: blueberry, button bush, assorted native shrubs. This replanting will be done in the Spring. As part of the wetland permit and will also rebuild an older retaining wall along the shoreline.

Chair Paradis noted that Adam Ricker, Town Planner, did go out and visit the site to witness the erosion caused by the tree/roots in the area. Mr. Rusnica pointed out that the homeowner referred to it as a “hazardous tree” as it overhangs the lake where the family uses the lake and he asked the Board to consider that as well. He explained that the shoreline is being worn away by increased wake action from boats. A hybrid solution is being offered by the State, in addition to the tree removal, to use rock to stabilize the shoreline.

Chair Pardis asked for confirmation that the replanting plan will bring the property into compliance with the points required. Mr. Rusnica agreed that the replanting will replace the points lost by the removal of the tree.

Chair Pardis asked if there were comments from the public – there were none.

IT WAS MOVED (Paul Vance) AND SECONDED (Paul Gorman) to allow the tree cutting - THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Board member Jeremy Bonin returned to the Board.

Sign Permit in an Institutional Zone – Colby-Sawyer College - Located at 541 Main Street, Tax Map/lot 086-001-0-0-0, Zoned Institutional College, +/- 76 acres.

The applicant is applying to erect at 24” x 36” sign on Seamans Road, across from the entrance to Kelsey Field.

President Sue Stuebner met with the Board to present an application for a sign at the entrance of Kelsey Field. This sign is expected to increase visibility directed from the road as to where to turn to get to the field. She explained that often buses and parents pass by the entrance to the field and miss the entrance when they come to the field for sporting events.

Chair Paradis noted that there is a single abutter 200 feet from the proposed location of the sign. He pointed out that the Board should consider if the proposed sign is the appropriate size/location for the institutional use of the campus. President Stuebner noted that the sign will be 24” x 36” and it will be double sided so it can be seen coming from both directions.

David Royle asked if the sign will be illuminated, President Stuebner noted that it would not be.

Finding of Facts

1. The 6 square foot sign is a reasonable size for the Institutional Zone.

2. The location will not adversely affect the abutter located within 200 feet.
3. Directing visitors to Kelsey Field at the crossing is an appropriate usage of a sign.

IT WAS MOVED (Jeremy Bonin) AND SECONDED (Emily Campbell) to approve the sign being erected - THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Public Comment:

Steve Root addressed the Board to discuss the results of the elections. He referenced the three meetings in December and January in which he opposed the detached accessory dwelling units (ADU). He reviewed the history of the previous election results pointing out that generally voters approve the Planning Board's recommendations. He described the reaction of the loss of Amendments 1,2, and 4 and how they were voted out by the town at large. Mr. Root wanted to know the Board's reaction to the voter opposition, in dramatic margins, of Amendments 1,2 &4.

Chair Paradis replied that this is the first meeting since the elections and he was disappointed in the results as he felt that the amendments were good for the town. He felt that there needs to be increased communication by the Planning Board so town residents have a better understanding of what they are voting for or what the amendments represent and to combat some of the confusion and concerns that voters had.

Mr. Gorman feels the fundamental issues the Planning Board attempted to address are not going away. The majority of the town did not agree with the solutions presented by the Planning Board and perhaps some of the measurements the Planning Board used were unnecessarily large and could be constrained and rethought and presented again to the town. Mr. Gorman noted that he felt the overarching question is how we control the demand for more living space in town in a way that honors some of the traditions of the town for members of the community.

Mr. Bonin commented that the need for varied and additional housing is not going away. It is not just a New London problem; it is a state problem as well. The original changes to the ordinance for accessory dwelling units happened as a result of requirements by the State and he suggested that additional changes may potentially be required by the state. Mr. Bonin agreed that better communication must happen to encourage better public attendance and not having opposition come in at the "11th hour". He noted that the Housing Commission and the Board worked very hard listening to the requirements and surveys done – they had been working on it for over half a year.

Mr. Root noted that he was not as sure that the state will be requiring municipalities to change zoning for ADUs. He noted that with regard to public participation there was someone asking about setbacks during the summer and there was no response by the Board. He raised issues in the December 13th meeting, the ones related to two ADUs per lot were addressed but other issues were not. Mr. Root pointed to several parts of the Master Plan that refers to 'affordable housing' noting that he did not believe the proposed amendments addressed 'affordable housing'. He suggested that the town has enough big houses; the problem is affordable housing and he felt that if the Board addressed that issue people would have supported them. Mr. Root suggested that the Board stepped back from addressing affordable housing and instead focused on diverse housing and changes impacting big expensive houses. He noted that there are 217 housing units

already approved and in the pipeline. He questions whether the town is ready for the impact of more cars and increased population, suggesting that he does not feel that the town is ready to sign up for this. Mr. Root concluded by advising the Planning Board to address affordable housing as the Master Plan provides and not a global ‘we want more housing’.

Joe Kubit asked Mr. Root where the 217 units he mentioned came from. Mr. Root noted that Continuum has approval for 157 units and Long Meadow Commons (Twin Pines) has 60 units. He also noted that previous relaxing of restrictions of zoning in the commercial area has led to additional housing development.

Rich Epstein agreed with the points raised by Mr. Root. He noted that he felt that the town would support workforce housing and elderly housing. He felt that the leap to the ill-defined “diversity housing” stumped many residents and was not justification for the amendments presented.

Future Meeting Dates: Chair Paradis announced that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 9, 2024 and the items continued at this meeting will be taken up then.

Motion to Adjourn

IT WAS MOVED (Jeremy Bonin) AND SECONDED (Tim Paradis) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer M. Sweet
Recording Secretary
Town of New London

Note: RSA 91-A:2, II provides that “*Minutes of all such meetings, including nonpublic sessions, shall include the names of members, persons appearing before the public bodies, and a brief description of the subject matter discussed and final decisions.*” A video of the entire meeting may be available for viewing on the town website, NewLondon.NH.gov, if more than the brief description contained in these meeting minutes is desired.