

Planning Board – Regular Meeting
Longmeadow High School – Meeting Room A15
535 Bliss Road, Longmeadow, MA

Wednesday, February 6, 2019 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Donald Holland, Chair; Walter Gunn, Clerk; Ken Taylor, Bruce Colton.

Absent: Heather Laporte.

Others Present: Stephen Crane, Town Manager; Heather Dudko, Andrea Chasen, Marie Angelides, Michele Marantz.

The **Planning Board Regular Meeting** was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Donald Holland.

Correspondence Review:

The Longmeadow Fire Chief has reached out to Planning Board, among other public bodies, requesting one representative from the board to attend the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program workshop to be held on February 25th and 26th. The purpose of the workshop is to develop community resiliency should they face adverse impacts due to climate change. Ken Taylor made a motion to propose Walter Gunn as the Planning Board member that will attend the workshop, Donald Holland seconded the motion, all in favor, motion passed 3-0 with one abstention (Walter Gunn).

Sign Application – Allstate, 811 Williams St. – Case# 20190206-1:

Heather Dudko presented an application for the insurance agency's sign to be located in the vacant location mentioned above. The sign's area is 19 sq. ft. with internally illuminated blue lettering; in addition blue vinyl lettering totaling about 4 sq. ft. will be installed on the door stating the business. Walter Gunn made a motion to accept the application as presented, Ken Taylor seconded, all in favor 4-0, application approved.

Documents presented:

1. *Complete Sign Application for 811 Williams St.*

Discussion –Zoning By-Law Amendment, Proposed Article XV:

Andrea Chasen (236 Crestview Circle), representing LPAG, wishes to introduce to the Board the article being proposed by the group, which has voiced grave concerns over the lack of transparency that both Columbia Gas and Tennessee Gas Pipeline have shown during numerous communication attempts from both municipal and state entities over proposed work in the municipality. The article, which has emerged due to the community outrage generated by easement discussions between Tennessee Gas Pipeline and the Longmeadow Country Club that have come to light in recent months, aims to provide the Town of Longmeadow with both jurisdiction and enforcement capabilities to regulated any projects that would generate hazardous conditions to the community by means of various forms of pollution; the legal language in the article is modeled after similar language developed recently by the Town of Rehoboth in Massachusetts and approved by the state's Attorney General. The article also looks to designate a specific entity within the Town that can provide some oversight in the enforcement of such bylaw. The LPAG has a strong interest in including this proposed article on the upcoming Town Meeting's agenda.

Michelle Marantz (117 Rugby Rd), Chair of LPAG, added that, in addition to the health, safety and economic hazards that the proposed project poses for the community, there are five (5) properties that will be directly abutting the property and, thus, see their values adversely impacted. While the metering stations are designed to provide a safe access to the system, they've also become contributors to a catastrophe.

Marie Angelides (199 Tanglewood Dr.), spoke on behalf of the Select Board to indicate that said public body is looking to take over and redact its own bylaw; the Town Manager has been in communications with an attorney that specializes in legal cases against utility companies on a consulting basis, which will aid in the efforts of developing a robust bylaw. There is a deadline of February 25th to submit anything for the upcoming May Town meeting.

Documents presented:

1. *Proposed New Zoning Bylaw Article 15 Restrictions for Facilities of Natural Gas Utilities (Citizen Petition).*

Comments from Board members and Town Manager:

- Donald Holland indicates that the article, in addition to the penalty fees already described, could also include language that would allow the Town of Longmeadow to enter the property and shut off the system if a matter is not corrected in a timely manner. He cited the recent bankruptcy filing by PG&E in California after it was deemed responsible for the wildfires that generated extensive damage in the region as an example of fee penalties that may not be collected.
- Walter Gunn indicated that, even if the article enactment is unable to have an impact on the proposed project in the Longmeadow Country Club area, it does allow the municipality to set a strong tone on the matter that could have an impact at the state level; the current pressure from concerned citizens is already making an impact on the state Board overseeing this project.
- Bruce Colton indicated that our bylaws designate the Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board as Special Permit Granting Authorities.
- Stephen Crane clarified that ultimately the bylaw must contain robust legal language that does not contradict any other aspects of our bylaws, which is why this current proposal is being carefully vetted to ensure a successful integration into our bylaws.

Discussion – Longmeadow Tax Ceiling Task Force:

Marie Angelides, representing the Tax Ceiling Task Force, indicated that the group would welcome any suggestions the Planning Board may have to offer as they brainstorm alternatives to increase the town's tax base. There is growing concern that if the tax base is not increased in the near future and the tax rate reaches its cap, the Town will be forced to make some difficult decisions that would have a negative impact on the services currently provided to town residents.

Stephen Crane added that part of the group's brainstorming sessions involve looking into zoning changes and/or density increase in certain locations to determine viable solutions that could be implemented in the near future.

Discussion – Registry of Deeds:

The Planning Board received a letter from the Hampden County Registry of Deeds requesting that all members of the board that are authorized to sign off on ANR plans, provide their signatures and return such letter to the Registry of Deeds; the purpose of the document is to develop an official record of valid signatures to prevent fraud.

Meeting Minutes Review:

1. **Regular Meeting January 2, 2019:** Bruce Colton made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Ken Taylor seconded the motion, all in favor 3-0 with none opposed and one abstention (Donald Holland), meeting minutes approved as presented.

Bruce Colton made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ken Taylor seconded the motion, all in favor 4-0, none opposed, meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bianca Damiano