

Planning Board – Regular Meeting

Former Longmeadow Adult Center “Over 60 Meeting Room” – 231 Maple Rd.

Wednesday July 7th, 2021 7:00 p.m.

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

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: None.

The *Planning Board In-Person Regular Meeting* was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chair Donald Holland.

Announcements:

On June 22, 2021 Josh Levine was elected as a Select Board official, therefore Walter Gunn publicly thanked Mr. Levine for his service as a Planning Board member. Although his tenure was short, Mr. Gunn felt that Mr. Levine’s expertise in Real Estate Law and deep interest in town projects were valuable to the board.

Planning Board Reorganization:

Walter Gunn nominated Don Holland for the position of FY22 Planning Board Chair. Ken Taylor seconded the nomination. All in favor, 3-0 with one abstention (Mr. Holland). Additionally, Chair Don Holland nominated Walter Gunn for the position of FY22 Planning Board Clerk. Ken Taylor seconded the nomination. All in favor, 3-0 with one abstention (Mr. Gunn).

Process To Appoint Planning Board Position Vacated By Josh Levine:

The Planning Board assumed Mr. Levine’s recent election as Select Board official has now made his position vacant. However, because Mr. Levine has not submitted a formal resignation nor is there any known precedent of an elected official actively holding two elected positions, the board will reach out to both Mr. Levine and Town Manager Lyn Simmons to verify this matter. Should Mr. Levine formally resign, the Planning Board has the expectation of filling the vacancy by seeking qualified applicants and working with the Select Board on the appointment of a new board member that would finish Mr. Levine’s term.

Planning Board Member Comments:

Walter Gunn urged the board to consider a deep evaluation of the bylaws and the portions that describe when projects require a Planning Board review. With Planning Board lacking special permit granting authority (the role is currently assigned to the Zoning Board of Appeals), the Planning Board has been overlooked by certain project developers in the past, a matter that Mr. Gunn feels is detrimental to the town. As an example, he pointed out the July 6th Select Board meeting, in which a passionate debate ensued during the discussion of parking and site lighting improvements being performed at Colvest Group’s 471-475 Longmeadow Street property as portions of this project encroach on town property. The project has been presented to the Select Board as opposed to the Planning Board, therefore a public hearing has not been considered; Mr. Gunn appeared at said meeting to voice his concerns over the handling of this project. With other issues, such as the new lower voting thresholds under the state’s amended Zoning Act for matters taken up at town meetings, it is in the best interest of the town to fully pursue this evaluation to better illustrate the Planning Board’s jurisdiction. Other members echoed this sentiment and will reach out to the Select Board to discuss how to best approach the situation.

Meeting Minutes Review:

1. Public Hearing June 8th, 2021: Walter Gunn made a motion, which was seconded by Chair Don Holland, to accept the minutes as presented. All in favor 4-0, motion passed.
2. Regular Meeting June 8th, 2021: Bruce Colton made a motion, which was seconded by Chair Don Holland, to accept the minutes as amended. All in favor 4-0, motion passed.

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Ken Taylor, to adjourn the meeting. All in favor 4-0, motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 7:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bianca Damiano