

## Planning Board – Special Joint Meeting with Select Board

Zoom Virtual Platform – [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us), P: 646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 881 6658 5166, Password: 460455

Wednesday September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 7:00 p.m.

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

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Karl Petrick, Cheryl Thibodeau

The *Planning Board's Special Joint Meeting with the Select Board* was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Select Board Chair Marc Strange. The purpose of the meeting is to interview two candidates that have applied for a vacant Planning Board position.

Mr. Karl Petrick, the first interview of the evening, has been a town resident for over 10 years and feel his availability nowadays better aligns with the commitment requirements that entail being a part of the Planning Board. Aside from his strong desire to be involved in town affairs and his background in Economics, Mr. Petrick feels he understands the importance of balancing the town's historic components with its revenue needs, especially considering Longmeadow's severe limitations for new development and high property taxes.

Planning Board members Don Holland and Walter Gunn brought up examples of specific projects that have been in recent discussions that pose unique circumstances and considerations, such as the proposed zoning change from "Residential A1" zone to "Business" of the property located at 916 Williams Street. While a "Business" zoning for this location may seem very fitting due to its proximity to other businesses and the potential for increased town revenue, Mr. Petrick agrees that any change to "Business" zone, once granted, restricts the town in influencing or determining the final outcome of the development, hence his reluctance to vote on a project that is not presented with a detailed scope of work and commitment on the part of the developer. Selectman Mark Gold pointed to the, figuratively speaking, crossroads of "growth vs. character" that is faced by town officials when reviewing the development of unique parcels in town. Mr. Petrick indicated that while growth is important, growth at the expense of character poses substantial detriment, thus requiring a meticulous and forward-thinking strategy when reviewing each project.

At around 7:25pm, the interview process was halted to allow for two public hearings on the Select Board's regular meeting agenda to move forward in a timely manner. At approximately 8:47pm the interview process was reinstated to proceed with Mrs. Thibodeau's interview.

Mrs. Cheryl Thibodeau, a town resident for approximately 6 years, has been involved with some town groups and is looking forward to the opportunity to aid in the shaping of meaningful ideas that have long term impacts for the town while also providing a different gender perspective (if appointed, Mrs. Thibodeau would be the only female board member) and representation. She brings to the table a background in Negotiation and Alternative Dispute Resolutions, which she applies in her current job as a claims manager in the healthcare industry, and considers an attractive tool to have as the town evaluates unique projects, any risks associated with them and the passionate discussions that may ensue among the parties involved.

Selectman Mark Gold pointed once again to the crossroads of "growth vs. character" that is often faced by town officials, with Mrs. Thibodeau indicating that both concepts must be considered and emphasized the need for critical thinking. Planning Board member Walter Gunn highlighted the element of contention that has been present in past project reviews and requires objectivity on the part of Planning Board members.

Select Board Chair Marc Strange anticipated that both boards would reconvene on October 4<sup>th</sup> for a final vote. With that said, Planning Board member Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Mr. Holland, to adjourn the joint meeting. Roll call vote – Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Colton: yes. All in favor 3-0, motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bianca Damiano*