

Westmoreland Planning Board Minutes

October 16, 2023

Attending: Lauren Bressett, Bruce Smith, Liana Capra, Larry Siegel, Alison Fissette, John Stronk (alt.) Kristen Riley (Alt., clerk), Bill McGahie (selectman), John Snowdon (selectman)

Excused: Tim Thompson, Kristen Riley seated for Tim.

Guests: Mr & Mrs Rob Parisi, Bill Hutwelker, Dave Siano.

Lauren Bressett called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Review of Minutes- 9/18/23

Bruce Smith moved to accept minutes as written. John Snowdon seconded that motion. All voted in favor. Larry Siegel abstained.

Hearing for Reconsideration of Revocation: R5-6

John Snowdon and Bruce Smith recused themselves and left the table. Bill McGahie, Selectmen was seated for John, John Stronk was seated for Bruce. Lauren Bressett opened the hearing and invited the applicant, Rob Parisi, to present his case.

Parisi acquired land in 2021. They have been working with various entities including the Cheshire Conservation Commission to determine improvements to the land. He wants a holistic approach. He considered the current plan and acknowledged that they desired changes. They were shocked that the planning board revoked a 2/3 completed project. In a time of housing need, it seems unwise to remove existing plans for a previously approved housing development.

John Snowdon, of 66 Carriage Lane, said he thinks that this is more of a housekeeping issue. Phase III should have been dissolved 25 years ago. It is not that Westmoreland doesn't want housing, it is that the town's lawyer said that these are the proper steps to take. While the landowner wishes to make changes in the deeded HOA, and as the president of the HOA John is open to having conversations, however the matter in front of the board is more of a town issue.

Liana Capra asked what their vision was. Parisi said he would be interested in having a community with elements of farming and preservation of timbering, since Adams Farm was previously a farm. He noted there has not been an active forest plan since 2016.

Dave Siano, an abutter at 75 Carriage Lane, said that he was under the impression that since phase 3 did not happen, that there would be a statute that would make this subdivision expire. Lauren explained that that is the intention of the revocation.

Bill Hutwelker, Robert Parisi's real estate agent, said that the previous discussion with the clerk and chair and the discussion taking place tonight was very positive and helpful. His main

concern is that the board did not give the landowner an opportunity to speak to the board prior to taking the action of revocation. That a new plan could possibly result in more lots and housing than the original plan.

Lauren Bressett noted that the board sought and followed the town attorney's advice. That the revocation does not influence any future plan. That this frees the landowner to draft a plan reflecting his vision as long as it adheres to current ordinances, restrictions, and regulations.

After verifying that no one else wished to speak, Lauren Bressett closed the hearing.

The board discussed the matter. While Mr. Parisi has different ideas from the original plan, and wants to make changes, that doesn't change the original reasons for revocation: that no work was started on Phase III, that it has been over two decades, that conditions were unmet including that security for completion of that phase lapsed in the 90's, and there have been significant changes over time to regulations, best practices, and standards. That any changes discussed would have required a new plan. Kristen made a motion to uphold the revocation of the Adams farm subdivision. Alison Fissette seconded that motion. All voted in favor.

2024 Planning Board Budget

The board discussed the increasing complexity of the clerk position, requiring more time and effort. While the board increased the hearing stipend to \$100, covered by fees, monthly tasks related to the board meeting and related tasks has also increased and the board agreed that the meeting fee should be \$75. A question was raised about whether the hearing fees need to be included in the clerk line item. These were added to the line item bringing the estimate of 12 meetings and 4 hearings to \$1300. The Master Plan chair requested funds be added for a mailing to include return postage. While the board endorsed funds for printing and postage, with the availability of the town hall drop box and the fact that many would use the QR code or online survey, return postage was not included. The budget was set at \$5,634 as follows:

Clerk Fees: \$1,300

SWRPC Dues: \$1,759 or whatever the 2024 rate would be

Notices: \$150

Supplies: \$50

Postage: \$375

Printing: \$2000

Alison asked if she could represent the planning board at the select board meeting and ask for there to be budgeting for code enforcement. The board agreed.

Old Business

Alison made a motion that on behalf of the planning board, she will go to the selectmen and bring attention to the fact that the planning board is still in need of a site plan for U6-14 and U6-9 before their businesses are operating. Liana Capra seconded that motion. All voted in favor. Lauren is going to ask the municipal association if the board can put a timeline on pending applications to avoid this issue in the future.

The board has agreed to meet for an extra meeting to continue review of subdivision regulations. This will take place on 10/24/23 at 6:00 pm.

Alison made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Liana seconded that motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Recorded Kristen Riley, Clerk.