Village of Old Bennington

Minutes of the Planning Commission Meeting

June 9, 2025

*zoom recording link attached below*

***DRAFT COPY***

June 9, 2025

Members Present: Renny Ponvert, Brian Scheetz, Chris Ponnesi,

Others Present: David Kiernan (Zoning Administrator), Geoffrey Metcalf, Galen Jones, Mark Zotto

1. Call to Order at 7:06PM
2. Changes/Updates to the Agenda - none
3. Approval of minutes 5.12.25 – Motion to approve by Mr. Ponvert, seconded by Mr. Ponessi. Motion passes 3-0-0
4. Citizen comments not related to Agenda - None
5. Design Review Hearing 16 Walloomsac Road – Hearing opened at 7:10 PM. Mr. Metcalf presented application for pool and patio. This is a separate application from the ongoing permitted work. They are not looking to change grade. Mr. Jones asked if the patio was a replacement in kind and Mr. Metcalf responded yes. Mr. Ponvert asked about drainage. Mr. Metcalf stated that some new drains are being put in. The pool needs a drain to daylight. The patio will be sloped 3% away from the pool. Mr. Jones asked where is daylight on the property. Mr. Metcalf responded that the pool is 150 yards from the rear property line and no drywells will be installed. Mr. Scheetz questioned planned screening to prevent view from street. Property owners have engaged Ron Pembroke to design appropriate screening. Mr. Ponessi asked how far below street level the pool was. Mr. Metcalf responded about 40 inches. In response to a question by Mr. Ponessi, Mr. Jones stated one of his concerns was how the runoff would be addressed. Mr. Ponvert then continued discussion on drainage. Mr. Ponvert and Megan Schwarzkopf expressed concern over the proximity of State wetlands and drainage.

Mr. Metcalf stated that there was a significant distance to the State wetlands and runoff would be absorbed over the property. Mr. Ponessi reported that the State requires a 50ft buffer around the wetlands and noted the significant distance of this project to the wetlands. Mr. Ponessi also noted that no State Storm Water permit would be needed for the project as the total square footage of the project and main house is below the statutory requirement.. Mr. Scheetz asked Mr. Jones if he had additional questions or comments. Mr. Jones asked if there was any undisclosed reason for some of the new drainage systems. Mr. Metcalf stated no, it was just for surface drain off. Motion to close the hearing at 7:38PM by Mr. Ponessi, seconded by Mr. Ponvert. Motion passes 3-0-0.

1. Design Review Hearing 43 Monument Ave- Hearing opened at 7:40PM. Mr. Zotto presented descriptions and pictures of projects including replacement of entrance steps to three doorways of the house, installation of fencing, and stone bench. Mr. Zotto explained that he went ahead with installing the fence before having a permit to address an allegation that his dogs had left the property and was in contact with a neighboring child. All fencing is permanent. The presentation is included in the zoom link below. Board members did not have any questions. Ms. Schwarzkopf stated that the fence was visible from the garage back along the north side. Mr. Ponvert asked if Mr. Zotto would consider a different type of fence along the northside. He stated no, he had spent $1200 installing that fence. Ms. Schwarzkopf asked if that fence was going to keep his dogs in. Mr. Scheetz stated that the dog issue is not one the Planning Commission can address. Mr. Scheetz asked Ms. Schwarzkopf if her concern was about the aesthetic of the fence or the permitting process. Ms Schwarzkopf stated that it was not about style. More about securing animals. Mr. Jones asked what the bylaws stated about fencing materials. Mr. Scheetz stated that metal was an approved material. Motion to close hearing at 8:01PM by Mr. Ponessi, second Mr. Ponvert. Motion passes 3-0-0.
2. Motion to go to Deliberative Session at 8:02PMby Mr. Ponvert. Seconded by Mr. Ponessi. Motion passes 3-0-0.
3. Motion to return to public session by Mr. Ponessi at 8:25PM. Seconded by Mr.Scheetz. Motion passes 3-0-0.
4. Design Review Hearings Decisions:

* Motion by Mr. Scheetz to approve application from Mark Zotto for 43 Monument Ave as submitted. Seconded by Mr. Ponvert. Motion passes 3-0-0
* Mr. Sheetz makes motion to approve application for 16 Walloomsac Road as submitted with the following conditions:

1. Subject to certification that property owner will obtain State permits if encroachment on State wetlands or buffers.
2. Pool equipment and HVAC units be placed behind house or garage and not visible from the street.

Motion seconded by Mr. Ponessi. Motion passes 3-0-0.

1. Schedule BCRC Grant meetings – PC will hold a Special Meeting Monday June 16 at 7PM with BCRC to discuss schedule and details of creating new Town Plan.
2. Update Old First Church Steeple Project – The area in front of the Church will be blocked off for crane as work is done on the steeple.
3. Old Business – Deck being built on Fairview. Mr. Ponvert spoke to the owner on Saturday and they will contact ZA.
4. Adjournment - Motion to adjourn by Mr. Scheetz at 8:41PM, seconded by Mr. Ponnessi. Motion passes.

ZOOM

<https://zoom.us/rec/share/Awt-yKbPfwRe2cjI7heNa4NKg9rbslzZoiuT1YRILaKc_kVF6oqQBLwiX483-Pig.1jAgdTYkYjfBuQC0>

Passcode: #PFpKc8k