

FINAL 1/6/25 MINUTES

APPROVED ON 2/3/25

On 2/3/25, Don Wells moved to approve the 1/6/25 minutes as drafted and Julia Callan seconded. The Board unanimously approved and on 2/3/25, Melissa Manson signed the 1/6/25 minutes as drafted and submitted them to the clerk for publication.

**TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
PLANNING COMMISSION AND ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, January 6, 2025, 7:00 PM**

Members Present: Aaron Forbes, Dan Pipes, Melissa Manson (Chair), Don Wells, Vanessa Kittell, Julia Callan, Demetrius Bolduc

Minute Taker: Vanessa Kittell

Public Present: Cristian Jablonski, Dawn & Albert Menard; Chuck Verderber., Lynda Ulrich, Josh Menard, Robert Karmin, (Town Zoning Administrator), VIA ZOOM: Cathy Branon, Emily Biron,

1. **Meeting, Called to Order**, 7:02 p.m. and the Board determined that a quorum was established.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda**: Melissa Manson, requested that Board amend agenda to include discussion of public forum and a brief Executive Session to discuss a legal matter. Dan Pipes moved to accept agenda as amended. Don Wells seconded and the Board unanimously approved.
3. **Approval of Minutes from 12/16/24 Meeting**: Vanessa Kittell moved to approve the 12/16/24 minutes as drafted and Don Wells seconded. The Board unanimously approved.
4. **Public Comment not related to the agenda**: None.
5. **Public Hearing Application: #24-425, Bennett Petition**: Final Major Subdivision Plan for 3-lot subdivision at 261 Swamp Rd. Pond/Swamp district:
 - a. Cristian Jablonski on behalf of petitioner provided plat with proposed 3-lot subdivision with elevation contours as requested by Board.
 - b. Robert Karim, Zoning Administrator confirmed that petitioner completed their pre-application meeting with the Zoning Administrator and that the application was now complete.
 - c. Demetrius Bolduc moved to approve the petition as drafted, Dan Pipes seconded and the Board unanimously approved final permit.

6. Discussion of Select Board Letter of 12/18/24:

- a. Aaron Forbes requested that the letter be read aloud and attached to the meeting minutes. See attached.
- b. Board discussed whether Select Board indicating that it would likely reject proposed by-law amendment(s) subsequent to the anticipated public forum. Melissa Manson stated that the Board had autonomy to undertake the public forum and propose possible amendments to the Select Board but the Select Board had ultimate authority to accept or reject any proposed amendments to by-laws.
- c. Vanessa Kittell stated that the Select Board's encouragement that the Board focus on affordability was within the stated purpose of the Town's by-laws, but not the exclusive focus, referring to By-Law Section 1.2, "Purpose."

It is the purpose of these regulations to encourage the appropriate development of all lands in this community in a manner which will promote the public health, safety, morals, prosperity, comfort, convenience, efficiency, economy and general welfare; to provide means and methods for the community to effect the prevention, minimization and future elimination of such land development problems as may presently exist or which may be foreseen; and to particularly implement the goals and policies of the Fairfield Town Plan.

Preparation of these regulations has been based upon surveys of existing conditions and probable future trends, with reasonable consideration for the landowner; topography; to needs and trends of Fairfield; to the character of each area and to its peculiar suitability for particular uses in relationship to surrounding areas, and with a view to conserving the value of property.

- d. Dan Pipes stated that the Board's consistent and equal application of the existing by-laws or any future amended by-laws was one way the Board's activity was supporting affordability and encouraging the conservation of the value of property.
- e. Public comment from Chuck Verderber included that taxation rates were informed by a variety of externalities. The volume of properties on a municipality's grand list did not necessarily correlate to reducing tax burden.
- f. The Board discussed that possible development of land and land use were factors in property valuation but were not singular determinants of property value.
- g. The Board noted that amendments to the by-laws would not trigger a new Town-wide reassessment of property.
- h. Vanessa Kittell stated that the "restriction" maps did not exclude development in shaded areas and would not be explanatory of permissible development areas.
- i. Demetrius Bolduc stated that the Board requested the "restriction" maps to show existing constraints of varying types.
- j. Lynda Ulrich stated that the NWRP maps lacked context to describe the by-law review discussion including density standards and sub-division standards.

7. **By-Law Review Public Forum Discussion:** Board discussed and agreed to moving the public forum to a date in February to permit more time to advertise the event in order to encourage greater attendance. Board discussed having facilitator Paul Costello lead the public forum. Melissa Manson stated that Emily Kloft provided the Board an amended draft power point the for the public forum. The Board agreed to discuss the amended draft with Emily Kloft at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, a meeting set for Feb. 3, 2025.
8. **Confirmation of Upcoming Meetings:**
 - a) Regular Hearing Date: Feb. 3, 2025, at 7:00 P.M.
 - b) Public Forum: Feb. 17, 2025, at 7:00 P.M. at Fairfield Elementary Gymnasium
9. **Executive Session:** Motion to go into executive session made by Vanessa Kittell and seconded by Dan Pipes and unanimously approved by Board at 8:12 P.M. Board exited deliberative session at 8:52 P.M.
10. **Adjourn:**
 - a. Motion to adjourn raised by Dan Pipes and seconded by Don Wells. Meeting adjourned at 8:52 P.M.