

WESTMORLAND PLANNING BOARD

February 18, 2019

Minutes

Present: Lauren Bressett, Tim Thompson, Alison Fissette, Jim Starkey, Frank Reeder-Selectman.
Excused: Larry Siegel Bruce Smith, Elaine Moore- Alt.

Jim Starkey served as Chair Pro Tem so that Lauren Bressett could be recorder. Jim called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm. The minutes of the January 21st meeting were reviewed. On page 2, third paragraph the spelling of the word significant should be corrected. Tim Thompson moved to accept the minutes as corrected, seconded by Alison Fissette, all approved. Minutes of February 4 were reviewed.

Tim Thompson moved to accept the minutes as printed, seconded by Alison Fissette, all approved.

Cathleen Watson of 1772 Rt 12 and Cori Hildreth were in for an informational session. Watson's would like to put in a multi-use building on their property in the Commercial Industrial zone. As the property is only 5 acres and already has a residence they would need a variance. The board reviewed items that would need to be addressed for a site plan and suggested they talk to Peter Remy to get information on the process and criteria for a variance. If they decide to go forward they should apply for a special exception for use at the same time.

Old Business

Ordinance changes: The board discussed how with the multiple proposed ordinance changes, it might be helpful for a brief explanation to help people understand why the changes are proposed. There was consensus that the board would request that a paragraph be added to the top of the sample ballot when posted on the town website as follows:

“One of the tasks of the Planning Board is to ensure that the town ordinances are up to date and relevant. This is ongoing work and the items on this ballot reflect the review work done over the past year. Most of the changes are proposed to correct grammatical errors, make items better match state law, give clearer definitions rather than just examples, remove items referring to private use that the board doesn't feel need regulating as long as other ordinances are complied with such as a private stables, and to better define what recreation uses are allowed in which zones. We are also proposing parameters for small solar installations. Parameters for large solar installations will be worked on over the next year. More detail can be found in the planning board minutes over the past year.”

Frank Reeder was excused from the meeting to attend to another matter.

Alternative Energy Committee: There is concern that this committee did not follow the Selectboard charge for this committee. What the Planning Board had expected was research and information gathering. The desire of the Planning Board for the committee for this year is to

focus on large solar installations. The purpose of the committee is to gather opinions from the public in various ways to identify perceptions of positives, negatives, and concerns and to summarize this for the Planning Board. This is in keeping with the original charge by the Selectboard: “The committee is expected to garner viewpoints from across the spectrum through a variety of methods to determine the level of support.....” The Board suggests that views from the public be sought on what are the pros, what are the cons, what is the feeling about a large installation beside their property? The committee should report any findings to the Planning Board no later than August.

It was also questioned whether it is appropriate for the committee to go before the Selectboard regarding establishing solar installations on town properties. The concern is they are overstepping their charge and lobbying rather than information gathering. The board is not questioning the right of any individual to do this but rather the appropriateness of a committee organized for a different purpose using the committee representation when lobbying.

A motion was made by Alison adjourn the meeting, seconded by Tim. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:57 PM.

Lauren Bressett, Recorder

THESE ARE UNAPPROVED MINUTES TO BE APPROVED AT THE MARCH 18, 2019 MEETING.