

Westmoreland Planning Board
Unapproved Minutes
9/12/22

Attending: Lauren Bressett, Alison Fissette, Bruce Smith, Tim Thompson, Liana Capra, Kristen Riley (alt, clerk), John Snowdon (Selectman)

Excused: Larry Siegel

Lauren Bressett called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Planning Board Fees

John Snowdon brought to attention that the fee structures of the planning board and zoning board are different. Lauren Bressett explained that the reasoning for this is that they are two separate entities. There will be a public hearing and John Snowdon said there needs to be an explanation as to why planning board fees are different from zoning.

Lauren Bressett noted that our fee for the home business application is \$25, which does not cover the cost of publishing the notice of the application. Alison mentioned how we lowered fees to help small businesses, but we have realized it is not doable. It costs \$54 +/- just to publish a newspaper ad. John Snowdon said we do not want to profit, but the applicant should cover the costs. .

Alison Fissette makes a motion to have a site plan review at \$150. Liana Capra seconds that motion. All board members vote in favor, selectman John Snowdon abstains.

Minutes and Procedures

Town boards are required to post minutes within five business days. Minutes need to be labeled that they are a draft and that they will be approved at the next meeting. That would be where amendments will be found. Lauren Bressett suggested that all town boards should have the same procedure. The Planning Board is doing it according to the guidance given by NHMA and will wait for the select board to let us know if the Town procedure is changed to something different.

John Snowdon believed that the minutes that are posted should be the minutes that are up to date and correct. Bruce Smith said that would mean board members would have to approve them within five business days, which is not possible since the board only meets once a month.

John Snowdon also expressed that the Planning Board should budget for a consultant or a lawyer to review the ordinances and need to have better definitions. Some concerns are that some ordinances could be seventy-five years old.

Alison Fissette suggests that we organize the ordinance book before having a legal review of them. Lauren Bressett noted that in a year or so it will be time to redo the master plan, which might conflict with some of our ordinances. Bruce Smith was opposed to a consultant. He feels a lawyer needs to do at least part of it. A lawyer already has the knowledge of state laws.

Home Business and Home Occupation

Lauren Bressett emphasized the need to delineate between “home occupation” and “home business.” A home occupation needs to be defined, as if it is not stated in the town ordinances, it will not be allowed. The only difference currently between home occupation and home business, is employees and “generating no external evidence.”

In Section 403.1, Home-Based Occupation, the board has agreed to add f., which will read, “Shall be limited to one client visit at a time.”

In Section 403.2, Home Business, Bruce Smith suggested the board remove “c.,” and add:

c. Required parking must be accommodated off street, and must be screened from the view of abutters and from public ways (streets or pedestrian ways) utilizing plantings, fencing, and/or topography. When possible, parking areas shall be located at the side or rear of the residence or accessory building.

d. The activity must not change the character of the premises of the surrounding neighborhood. There shall be no window displays or other features not normally associated with residential use (such as noise, light, dust, fumes and other pollutants or safety and health hazards).

e. Be allowed to have a sign of 6 square feet with no lighting and design must be approved by the planning board.

Alison Fissette moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 pm , seconded by Liana Capra, passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Kristen Riley, Recorder

These are unapproved minutes, to be reviewed and approved at next month’s town meeting, scheduled to take place on 10/19/22