

Westmoreland Planning Board
March 17, 2025
Approved Minutes

Attending: Liana Capra, Tim Thompson, Bruce Smith, Lauren Bressett, Bruce Smith, Larry Siegal (alt.), Kristen Riley (Clerk) Excused: John Stronk (alt.)
Lauren Bressett called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Review of Minutes, 2/17/25

Tim Thompson moved to accept minutes, Liana seconded that motion. All voted in favor.

Old Business

Lauren Bressett passed along a public advertisement of a Westmoreland business to Bill McGahie, the selectman representative. The business owner has announced that it is moving forward with projects that need approvals from the land-use administrator, Laurie Burt, the Planning Board and possibly from the Zoning Board. The owners of the business had recently come in for an informational session where they asked questions and were informed about the process involved with the proposed changes.

Scenic Road Hearing

Nick Kinslow of Eversource came in to speak of trimming on a scenic road they are seeking approval for. They would like permission to perform regular scheduled maintenance trimming on Paine Road. The work would not take place until road weight limits are removed. They notify anyone who owns property along the area to be trimmed before they begin.

They will be trimming branches that are no larger than 4 inches in diameter, unless the branch is at risk of being weighed down by snow and could cause damage to the power line. They will trim 8 feet on either side of the primary line, 15 feet above it, and 15 feet below it. There are two trees that will be removed, but they are further back, and permission has been sought from the property owner. Their goal is to maintain the clearance zone around the primary lines, so branches don't hit the power line. The contractors will be Asplundh.

Public comment:

Perry Sawyer 169 Paine Road- As far as he is concerned, they need to cut more, not less. He asked if there are dead trees, will they take them. Nick said they would not take dead trees because it is a scenic road.

John Bauer- The primary runs down to Poocham. Are there plans to do maintenance on phone lines? Lauren said that they would need to call the phone company. John Bauer was curious if the town had an agreement with the phone company to maintain the lines. Lauren Bressett suggested that he consult with the selectmen.

Lauren Bressett closed the public hearing at 6:45 pm. During board deliberations, Alison Fissette said it needs to get done. Larry Siegal said as it complies with all of the appropriate specifications that it should. Alison Fissette made a **motion to approve the trimming along Paine road for the Eversource line**. Liana Capra seconded that motion. All voted in favor.

Informational Session

Daniel Lang asked about the process to subdivide his lot on Makinen road. The board gave him suggestions on how he should proceed. It was noted that any prior issues need to be brought into conformance before an application can be considered.

Ordinance Reorganization

Alison Fissette has been working on ChatGPT to reorganize the Ordinances. ChatGPT started with the definitions in the beginning of the book, then in the definitions, it would guide the reader on where to look further. Lauren Bressett said other towns organize them by zones.

The board will look at what Chat GPT has suggested, and then meet with SWRPC to reorganize further. Lauren will see if they can come to the next meeting. The budget for their services has been approved.

Proposed Zoning Mandate Changes - Lauren noted there are a number of draft bills that are quite concerning including Senate bill 281 and Senate bill 84. One is being considered on 3/20. If folks are so inclined, they should contact their senators. Lauren also noted that if a number of the proposed bills pass, it may be advisable for the select board to organize a session with the town attorney and the planning board or the land use boards so that we move forward correctly with any needed changes.

Selectmen proposed Ordinance change - Due to some ongoing problems, the select board suggested we consider an ordinance regarding snow removal: No person shall shovel, plow, put or place or cause to be shoveled, plowed or placed, within the traveled portion of any sidewalk, street, lane, alley, or highway, any snow or ice. However, snow and ice may be banked on the sides of the public roadways incident to the cleaning thereof or banked on the sides of sidewalks incident to the cleaning thereof. During discussion it was suggested that other materials such as grass clippings or leaves should be included in the ordinance. Lauren will research potential wording.

Discussion of Resident Suggestions - The board reviewed some suggestions submitted by a resident. The board also noted other work to be addressed at future meetings including the Site Plan regulations, especially designating a time as well as day on deadlines, the home business checklist. For ordinances, definitions need to be updated on structures, to match current state term changes and clarify wording such as setbacks with some. If the state proposed ADU changes are passed, we would need to adjust our process for ADU's, it may be a permit process rather than a special exception.

Nominations of Officers

Alison made a motion to nominate Lauren Bressett as chairperson. Larry Seigal seconded that motion. All voted in favor.

Alison made a motion to nominate Bruce Smith as vice chairperson. Tim Thompson seconded that motion. All voted in Favor.

Bruce Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Liana Capra seconded that motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.