

St. George Planning Board Meeting
7PM via Zoom
February 28, 2023
Minutes

The Planning Board meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. Because of a snowstorm, the meeting was held entirely by Zoom. Planning Board Members present were Chair Anne Cox, Anne Cogger, Richard Moskowitz, Jane Brown, Mary K. Hewlett and Michael B. Jordan. Also present were Terry Brackett and Van Thompson.

Quorum:

A quorum was present.

Conflict of Interest:

Chair Cox had an application creating a conflict of interest and therefore was replaced by Michael B. Jordan for that section of the meeting.

Adjustments to Agenda:

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

Review of the Minutes:

Hewlett moved to approve the February 14, 2023 Planning Board Meeting Minutes as corrected, seconded by Cogger, and by a 5-0 roll call vote, the minutes were approved (Moskowitz was elevated to voting status).

Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

Building Permits:**Anne Cox and Julie Wortman, Hedgerow Designs Hoophouse, 8 Ridge Road, Map 208- Lot 009**

Because Chair Cox is the applicant, she did not participate in its consideration, and Richard Moskowitz was elevated to voting status.

Jordan

The application is for replacement of two hoop houses and a canvas storage shed with one larger hoop house at the Hedgerow facility in Martinsville. Is the place where this is located on the same lot as the barn and your house?

Chair Cox

No, we have two adjacent lots. It's a separate lot. It's a 6.6 acre lot and the house is on a 1.5 acre lot.

Jordan

Does anybody else have questions?

Cogger

It looks like the new hoophouse will be smaller than the two combined. Is that correct?

Chair Cox

No, it will be larger.

Cogger

One shows 1041 square feet and the other one shows 2008 square feet.

Chair Cox

If you look at the property information, that is the total square feet of all the buildings.

Hewlett

It's going from 36 square feet to 1536 square feet.

Chair Cox

The number under the property information includes our sheds.

Cogger

It sounds like this is going to make it easier for watering and maybe more efficient. Would you say that is true?

Chair Cox

Yes, it will make it more efficient, give more covered area to increase the temperature for plants that need that, and will hopefully also keep some deer out.

Jordan

Do we think there is a reason to have a site visit, or do we all know what it looks like?

Cogger

I know what it looks like. It seems straightforward. I don't know if other people feel that way too.

Hewlett

My personal opinion is it is going to clean up the area. She is going from two greenhouses, one that I believe collapsed, and a canvas structure. It is going to look much nicer. It is also in the back of this property. You would have to drive in there and look down below to find it.

Moskowitz

If I read this correctly, it is at a lower elevation, so it would be less visible in a sense.

Chair Cox

Yes, it is a slightly lower height than what was there before but not significantly. It is below where the driveway is. You cannot see it from Ridge Road.

Cogger

It is a natural upgrade.

Jordan

I agree with all of you, and I've been back there a couple of times. We should dispense with a site visit. I don't think it's appropriate to refer to this as a waiver of the site visit because there is no requirement to do one.

Cogger

Terry, what do you think about that?

Terry Brackett

I do not see any reason for a site visit.

Jordan

Then we will skip the site visit and it seems to me there is no particular reason to have a public hearing.

Cogger

It looks like you are near the Dowling's right of way but other than that, what else is there?

Chair Cox

Nothing. It is the right of way that we have given the Dowling property and we are not making any incursion on it. The property that was developed is down the road and the property immediately abutting ours is not developed at all.

Cogger

Who owns that property?

Chair Cox

I believe he subdivided that property for two of his children. I believe it is his daughter who owns it.

On a motion by Hewlett, seconded by Jordan, the Board found, by a 5-0 roll call vote, that the application was complete.

Section 5A of the Site Plan Review Ordinance

1. Preserve and Enhance the Landscape

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Moskowitz, that the standard has been met as the project will improve the appearance of the structures. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

2. Relationship of the Proposed Buildings/Structures to the Environment

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Brown, that the standard has been met as it will enhance the environment. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

3. Vehicular Access

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Cogger, that the standard has been met as there will be no changes to vehicular access. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

4. Parking and Pedestrian Circulation

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Cogger, that the standard has been met as there will be no changes to parking and pedestrian circulation. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

5. Surface Water Drainage

A motion was made by Cogger, seconded by Brown, that the standard has been met as the drainage is efficient and appropriate. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

6. Existing Utilities

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Cogger, that the standard has been met as there are no utilities proposed. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

7. Advertising Features

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Cogger, that the standard has been met as there is no signage proposed. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

8. Special Features

A motion was made by Brown, seconded by Hewlett, that the standard has been met as no special features are proposed. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

9. Exterior Lighting

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Cogger, that the standard has been met as no exterior lighting is proposed. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

10. Emergency Vehicle Access

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Brown, that the standard has been met as there no changes are proposed. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

11. Municipal Services

A motion was made by Moskowitz, seconded by Cogger, that the standard has been met as there will be no changes made. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

12. Water/Air Protection

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Cogger, that the standard has been met as the methods will be organic and plants add oxygen to the environment. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

13. Water Supply

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Moskowitz, that the standard has been met as the water supply is sufficient for the project. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

14. Soil Erosion

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Cogger, that the standard has been met as soil erosion will not be an issue for the project. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

15. Sewage Waste Disposal

A motion was made by Brown, seconded by Jordan, that the standard has been met as there will be no sewage waste. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

16. Hazardous, Special and Radioactive Materials

A motion was made by Moskowitz, seconded by Cogger, that the standard has been met as there will be no such materials. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

17. Financial/Technical Capacity

A motion was made by Hewlett seconded by Brown, that the standard has been met as the structure has already been paid for. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

18. Shoreland Zone

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Cogger, that the standard is not applicable as this site is not in the Shoreland Zone. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

19. Flood Plain

A motion was made by Cogger, seconded by Hewlett, that the standard is not applicable as the site is not in a flood plain zone. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

20. Lot Standards

A motion was made by Hewlett, seconded by Cogger, that the standard has been met as the setbacks have been adhered to. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

Jordan

The vote seems to be unanimous on all twenty standards.

On a motion by Cogger, seconded by Moskowitz, the Board, by a 5-0 roll call vote, approved the application.

Discuss Public Hearing for Land Use Ordinance

Chair Cox

We have one more item which is to discuss the public hearing for the Land Use Ordinance. Michael, you have sent out a notice of the public hearing. Why don't you talk us through what we need to do.

Jordan

Here is my report. This is a little bit different schedule from what was outlined in the timeline that I sent before and I think I should tell you why. The original time schedule called for the Select Board to approve the ordinance yesterday and call for the hearing. The reason that the schedule said that was based on previous advice from the last time we did an ordinance, stating that we really were not free to make changes to the proposed ordinance after the public hearing, unless they were truly minor. I thought when the public hearing was called by the Select Board, that document had to be set in stone. The Town attorney has told us now that it used to be true, but it's not any more. It was never actually the law. It was an interpretation by the Maine Municipal Association, and they changed their view on the basis of some discussion and input from towns. If you cannot make changes after a public hearing without holding another public hearing it creates a terrible incentive for the municipality to just ignore any good

ideas that came out of the public hearing. The public hearing's purpose is to obtain good ideas this change pushed back the time when the document has to be finalized. That was important to us, because we were not sure how much longer it was going to take to get feedback from the Department of Environmental Protection about some of the changes that we were making. That bought us another month to hear back from the DEP. As it turns out, we heard back from the DEP in time anyway. What we are doing now is following Bill Kelly's advice, the town attorney, which allows the Planning Board to notice the hearing. We will schedule the hearing for March 21st, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. between regular meetings to the Planning Board. I've sent you all the schedule. The actual date on which the text must be finalized is in time for it to be posted on the website, when vote by mail ballots first go out, on the theory that people really should know what they're voting on.

Cogger

When is that?

Jordan

That is 30 days before the election, April 7th, 2023. We hold the public hearing on the 21st of March, 2023 and if some really good ideas come out, we can still change it up to April 7th. So that is the new schedule, and I was able to get the revised text. We can forget about that long motion I made last meeting. You have the actual text. I think the two issues on the table would be to approve the text of the ordinance to go to the voters and to call a public hearing for March 21, 2023 At 6p.m. at the Town Office and by Zoom.

Chair Cox

On a motion by Jordan to approve the ordinance and call for a public hearing for March 21, 2023 at 6 p.m. at the Town Office, seconded by Hewlett, and by a unanimous roll call vote, the motion was approved.

Hewlett

It has been an amazing project. Thank you very much to both Michael and Anne for really buckling down on this and spending years on doing it. It's a great document to be able to present to the voters of St. George.

Chair Cox

When people delve into it, they'll understand the importance of how it impinges all of our activities.

Cogger

It will be easier to use.

Chair Cox

It will be much easier and clearer. Does anybody have anything else?

Adjourn

On a motion by Chair Cox, seconded by Hewlett, the Board decided by a unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting and at 7:39 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Taylor
Recording Secretary
Town of St. George, Maine