

PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 20, 2023, 7:00 PM AT DUNBARTON TOWN OFFICES

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call Attendance

Ex-Officio Justin Nault, Vice-Chair George Holt, Chair Chuck Frost, Ken Swayze, Secretary Alison Vallieres, and Jeff Crosby

Business

The chair confirmed with the secretary that this meeting was posted in two places and on the Town's website.

1. Approval of Minutes: **Justin Nault moved to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2023 regular meeting; Ken Swayze seconded the motion. All were in favor.**
2. Correspondence – None
3. Selectmen's Report – Selectman Nault said he did not have anything to report. Donna asked about a public hearing being held at the BOS meeting on December 28th about community power. Selectman Nault said the BOS has been talking with a company about a program that allows a municipality to procure electricity for its residents. George Holt said he has been part of the discussions as a member of the Energy Committee. They spoke about the goals of the program and how it would work. There is a community survey available on the Town's website. The program would require a vote of the townspeople and would only be launched if the rate is lower than current utility rates. Residents would have to opt-out if they chose to stay with their current provider.
4. Building, Planning & Zoning Department Report – Donna provided an update on the Kelsea Road turn-around matter.

Old Business - None

New Business - None

Other Business

Zoning Amendment – Board members reviewed language changes to Article 10, Floodplain Development Ordinance. The changes were recommended by the Office of Planning and Development after their compliance review of the Town's current ordinance and are necessary to comply with requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program. There was a brief discussion about the changes and the need for a public hearing. **Ken Swayze made a motion to present the changes at a public hearing to be held on January 17, 2024, during the Board's regular monthly meeting; George Holt seconded the motion. All were in favor.** Donna will prepare the document for the public's viewing and do the required postings for the public hearing.

Driveway regulations – Donna presented a draft of recommended driveway regulations, created from examples of other towns' regulations and with input from the road agent and fire chief. Board members discussed concerns with the steepness of driveways on a recent subdivision plan. Discussion ensued about the need for some amount of guidance and regulation, without being oppressive to developers and homeowners. Road agent

Jeff Crosby spoke about the points that he is most involved with, those being the slope away from the road, sight distance, and the angle of intersection with the road. Jeff said driveways are to be perpendicular to the road, not angled as allowed in some towns. He spoke about the need to keep a driveway away from the property line so that maintenance can be done without impacting a neighboring property. It was agreed that 15' from a side property line would be adequate for this purpose. There was discussion about the maximum grade, with most towns having a maximum of 10%. Members of the board spoke about problematic driveways around town, noting concerns about fire department access, safety, and environmental impacts. Fire Chief Jon Wiggin spoke about the need for turnarounds and/or bypass areas on longer driveways. He said he would like to see a minimum of a 12' travel way. There was some discussion about the length/depth of a platform where the driveway approaches the road. Jeff Crosby said it makes a difference whether the driveway is sloping down to the road or coming up to the road. This is something that will be looked at in more detail. It was agreed that there may be situations where engineered plans are needed, with guardrails or barriers, side slopes, etc. being addressed. The regulations should include a reference to this as a possible requirement which would be covered at the applicant's expense.

Jon Wiggin offered the following on the Fire Department considerations section of the draft:

Driveways over 300 feet must meet NFPA-1 and NFPA-1141 Standards and be approved by the Dunbarton Fire Department. Key design criteria include:

- (1) Minimum driveway width shall be ~~16~~ **18** feet, including shoulders.
- ~~(2) Minimum "clear fire access" shall be 20 feet wide, centered over the driveway. There shall be no obstructions within this clear fire access, including trees, utility poles, stonewalls, ledge, or other obstructions.~~
- (3) Turning radii on the driveway shall be a minimum of 25 feet on the inside curve and 50 feet on the outside curve.**

Jon spoke about the NFPA references, the need for safe travel and access, and some specifics he has seen in the driveway regulations of other towns. Donna will make suggested revisions to the draft and have Jeff and Jon review it again before the next meeting.

Donna said not all new driveways are part of a subdivision process, and it is important to have a document applicable to existing lots of record, as well as newly created lots. It was agreed by those present that the best option for these requirements would be a Town-adopted set of regulations, separate from the subdivision regulations. Once the draft has been finalized, the Planning Board will recommend to the Board of Selectmen that it be adopted as a Town Ordinance.

Justin Nault moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.; seconded by Ken Swayze. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna White