The Public Meeting of the Town of Essex Planning Board is held at the Essex Town Hall 2nd Floor Auditorium, 30 Martin Street, and commences at 7:30 p.m.

In person attendance restriction has been lifted and Town Hall is open to the public as of June 1, 2021.

At 7:31 PM the Planning Board meeting was called to order by Chair, Kimberly Drake.

**Board Members present at Town Hall:** Kim Drake, Lisa O’Donnell, Westley Burnham, Michael McConnell, Matt Greco, Shelly Bradbury, S.Sturgis Crocker

**Administrative Assistant**: Mary Heeney

**Attendees**: Ruth Pereen, Selectmen Chair

**BUILDING INSPECTOR’S REPORT:**

 The Building Inspector did not have any Permit Applications which required review by the Planning Board.

**BOARD REVIEW:**

**6 Lowland Farm, Map 141--2-1, 2.2, Matthew Roman**

At 7:40 p.m. Lisa O’Donnell recused herself from the discussion.

Matthew Roman presented plans for 6 Lowland Farm Road, Lot B and C. He is proposing to build a house on each property. Mr. Roman informed the board that the Building Inspector recommended that he review the plans with the Planning Board. It was determined that he did not need a Site Plan Review. The board reviewed the presented plans and determined that they were acceptable for a siting approval.

Wes Burnham made a motion to approve the siting of 2 houses on lots B (141-2.1) and C (141-2.2) located at 6 Lowland Farm Road stating that it met the proposed minimum standards of the Town of Essex bylaws.

 Michael McConnell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

At 7:45 Lisa O’Donnell returned to the meeting.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

 At 7:45 pm, Chair, Kim Drake recused herself from the discussion.

 At 7:47 the Vice Chair, Lisa O’Donnell made a motion to open a Public Hearing on an application filed by Tower North Development, LLC for the construction of a 150’ free standing Monopole Tower and fencing.

Michael McConnell seconded the motion.

Michael McConnell made a motion to continue the Public Hearing on an application filed by Tower North Development, LLC to 10/6/2021.

S. Sturgis Crocker seconded the motion. There was no board discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

There was additional board discussion on the process for variants that the ZBA is reviewing. Also, the time limits that the board has for review and decision making.

At 7:52 Chair, Kim Drake returned to the meeting.

At 7:55 Shelly Bradbury joined the meeting.

**Board review of Meeting Minutes:**

The board reviewed the Meeting Minutes of August 18, 2021.

Lisa O’Donnell made a change to the minutes.

Michael McConnell made a motion to approve the minutes as amended

Lisa O’Donnell seconded the motion. The board approved unanimously.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

* Community Preservation Committee – Kim Drake informed the board that the Committee has not met.
* Strategic Planning Committee Update –Wes Burnham said that the committee had met but there was nothing to report
* Economic Development Committee –Wes Burnham informed the board that the Committee has not met.
* Housing Coalition—Shelly Bradbury informed the board that the coalition had met and there was discussion on how to approach affordable housing. Also discussion on existing parcels.

**BOARD DISCUSSION:**

At the Planning Board meeting 8/18/2021 there was a discussion on correspondence from the Town of Hamilton on a proposed development that could possibly have an effect on groundwater resources in Essex. Board member Shelly Bradbury offered to explore the aspects of the information presented. Shelly reported that the proposed development could possibly have environmental impacts as well as impacts on the watershed. She felt that the Essex Planning Board could address their concerns in writing to the Hamilton Planning Board.

Wes Burnham made a motion for the Essex Planning Board to send a letter to the Hamilton Planning Board requesting that we be kept informed on the proposed development.

Lisa O’Donnell seconded the motion. The board approved unanimously.

At The 8/18/2021 meeting, the Chair presented updated legislation from the Governor that extends certain pandemic-related relief provisions that had expired with the State of Emergency, including the ability of public bodies to continue to hold virtual meetings under the Open Meeting Law. This Legislation is in effect until April 1, 2022. There was discussion by board members on the various ways that meetings could be held and what would be the most effective for the board as well as the public.

The Chair reviewed the updated legislation again and asked the Board how they wanted to conduct meetings.

The board agreed unanimously to continue in person only participation.

Ruth Pereen informed the Board that the town had hired a new Town Planner, Dana Menon, from Manchester. She will start in September and will be spending time working with the various boards.

Kim Drake noted that there are several items the Planning Board is working on and that the new Town Planner could possibly be available to work with the Board.

Ruth Pereen also informed the Board that the Town is currently waiting for a contract from the MAPC on a grant request to assist the Town in the process for revising and updating its Zoning-By-Law. There was discussion on the possible ways that the Planning Board would be able to utilize the MAPC. One suggestion was getting the MAPC’s input on the Planning Board’s project list.

There was a brief discussion on the proposed cell tower bylaw changes to be presented at the Fall Town Meeting. There was discussion on whether the Board should review first and make any necessary changes or present to Town Counsel for their review first. A majority of the Board agreed it should go to Town Counsel first.

The Board discussed changing the start time of the Planning Board’s Meetings from 7:30 PM to 7:00 PM.

Wes Burnham made a motion to change the start time to 7:00 PM. Shelly Bradbury seconded the motion. The Board approved unanimously to change the start time from 7:30 PM to 7:00 PM effective 11/17/2021.

**Adjourn:**

Westley Burnham made a motion to adjourn the meeting

Michael McConnell seconded the motion

The motion was unanimously approved by the Board Members The Chair declared the Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.