

Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Development Review Board Meeting
December 8, 2021
Adopted Minutes

PRESENT: Janice Walrafen (DRB Chair), Jim Volz (DRB Member), Seth Mullendore (DRB Member), Mary Niebling (DRB Member), Alice Sky (DRB Member), Karen Storey (Zoning Administrator), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), Scott Stewart (Permit Hearing Applicant), Alice Merrill (Plainfield Coop Discussion), Bob Fancher (Plainfield Coop Discussion), and Christine Farren (Abutter, Stewart Permit Hearing).

NOTE: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the DRB convened its meeting remotely via Zoom.

Janice Walrafen called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

AGENDA

- Call Meeting to Order
- Review Agenda; Make any Adjustments
- Public Comments
- Review and Adopt Meeting Minutes from October 13, 2021
- Scott Stewart Hearing ZPA 2021-32 Right of Way Approval. 2011 Plainfield Zoning Regulation Section 3.4 Required Frontage on or Access to Public Roads to Access Proposed "Lot 3" of ZPA 2021-34 Minor Subdivision. 2010 Plainfield Subdivision Regulation Section 210 Minor Subdivision
- Update about the Plainfield Coop with Alice Merrill and Bob Fancher
- Adjourn

REVIEW AGENDA; MAKE ANY ADJUSTMENTS

- Walrafen added the following items to be added to the agenda: review the DRB report for the Town Report; review the next fiscal year's DRB budget; discuss the appointment of a clerk to the DRB; and welcome Mary Niebling as a new member of the DRB. Walrafen welcomed Niebling to the DRB. Niebling noted various areas regarding both her past and ongoing involvement with Town activities.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- There were no public comments.

SCOTT STEWART HEARING ZPA 2021-32 RIGHT OF WAY APPROVAL. 2011 PLAINFIELD ZONING REGULATION SECTION 3.4 REQUIRED FRONTAGE ON OR ACCESS TO PUBLIC ROADS TO ACCESS PROPOSED "LOT 3" OF ZPA 2021-34 MINOR SUBDIVISION. 2010 PLAINFIELD SUBDIVISION REGULATION SECTION 210 MINOR SUBDIVISION

- Walrafen opened the public hearing at 7:10pm and administered an evidence affirmation oath, to which public hearing participants affirmed. Scott Stewart was the only public hearing participant present at the time.

- Zoning Administrator Karen Storey noted that she has been contacted by only one abutter, Christine Farren, who posed questions, but did not ask to have the conversation become part of the record.
- Regarding the approval of the right-of-way, Stewart explained that there is already an easement (right-of-way) that was granted as part of a previous subdivision for Lot 2. This request proposes a new right-of-way that would continue access to Lot 1 so that does not become landlocked with this subdivision or, if there is a sale of Lot 1, there still will be access to it. Stewart noted that Lot 1 is all the land that is currently behind his house and up to the top of the hill. **Jim Volz made a motion to approve the permit application for a right-of-way. Niebling seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.**
- Walrafen noted that the second permit request was for approval of a minor subdivision. Storey explained that the DRB had previously deemed it to be a “minor” subdivision. Discussion followed with Storey going through the minimum standards that need to be met in the Village District, which the proposed subdivision meets. **Volz made a motion to approve the Stewart permit application request for a minor subdivision. Seth Mullendore seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.** Stewart asked for clarification regarding the allowed length of time after a DRB decision to appeal it. Storey clarified that the decision will not be final until the DRB approves the written decision at the January 2022 meeting, which will then begin the 15-day appeal period. During the above discussion, Farren joined the meeting. Storey noted that Farren was the only person who could appeal because she was the only abutter to participate in the public hearing.
- Walrafen closed the public hearing portion of the meeting at 7:33pm.

APPOINTMENT OF A CLERK TO THE DRB

- Walrafen stated the need to appoint a new clerk, specifically to draft DRB decisions. Volz outlined the process involved in creating the written decisions. After a brief discussion with no DRB members volunteering, Volz offered to draft the Stewart decision, but stated that he is not able to take on the role of clerk or in drafting all future decisions, and suggested waiting until the next meeting to see if anyone volunteers to take on the role of clerk.

UPDATE ABOUT THE PLAINFIELD COOP WITH ALICE MERRILL AND BOB FANCHER

- Bob Fancher and Alice Merrill were present to discuss the possibility of expanding the current space of the Plainfield Coop as an additional option to relocation. Fancher provided background on the Coop’s exploration in 2016 of expanding in its current location in the Village off the back of the building toward the Winooski River, an option which the Coop board at that time was in favor of; however, questions regarding the impacts of impending new flood-plain regulations and setback issues requiring a variance from the DRB resulted in the effort not moving forward at the time. Recently, the Coop’s membership decided that it would look at relocation, but other members are still interested in expanding at the current site. Fancher and Merrill asked if the DRB is willing to consider the possibility that the Coop could expand out toward the Winooski River. Volz, Walrafen, Niebling, and Mullendore noted their willingness to look further at the issue. Fancher noted that he and Merrill do not represent the Coop at this meeting, but rather a group interested in, at a minimum, keeping the current Coop building going if not keeping the Coop at that location. He noted that they were exploring such ideas as forming a nonprofit organization that would buy the building from the Coop and rent it back, enabling eligibility for various grants. Storey suggested

consulting with Ned Swanberg at the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, who is involved with permitting around floodplains, floodways, and river corridors, to determine if a variance is needed. Responding to a question from Niebling, Fancher noted that there was no further action after the Coop originally presented the issue to the DRB in September 2016 because of the possibility that the Town was going to adopt regulations that would not allow the Coop to do what it wanted to do as well as that the Coop would be required to start construction within a certain amount of time, which it was not prepared to do. Discussion concluded with the next step being that Fancher or Merrill would contact Swanberg to determine if a variance would be needed.

REVIEW AND ADOPT MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2021

- **Volz made a motion to adopt the minutes from the 10/13/21 meeting as written. Alice Sky seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with the exception of Niebling, who was not yet a DRB member at the time of the October meeting.**

DRAFT TOWN REPORT

- Walrafen requested comments from DRB members on her draft of the DRB report for the *Town Report*. It was decided that the information regarding the seven public hearings that the DRB conducted would be general and not include such specifics as the names of those who submitted the permit applications. In the text, Walrafen will clarify that the Unified Regulations waiting for adoption will combine the Zoning Regulations, Subdivision Regulations, and Flood Inundation Regulations into one document to make the rules more accessible to both the DRB and Plainfield residents. Walrafen stated that she will make these edits and circulate the new draft before sending it to the Town Clerk on 12/10/21.

DRB BUDGET FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR

- Walrafen reviewed expenses from the previous year's budget leaving all line item figures the same except for postage, which she suggested raising from \$50 to \$100. The DRB members agreed.

UPDATE ON MELANIE SARGENT PROPERTY

- Storey provided an update on the issues relating to the Melanie Sargent property on Bean Road, noting that Ryan McCall from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources had contacted Storey recently saying that he had exhausted all avenues to help Sargent with her septic system and has issued a violation letter from the State regarding the non-certified septic system. Volz asked for confirmation that the violation letter had been sent because the Plainfield Select Board is looking into speaking with a lawyer about getting advice on how to deal with the situation. Storey will let Volz know when the letter was sent and if Sargent accepted it as well as try to obtain a copy of McCall's violation letter itself.

ADJOURN

- **Niebling made a motion to adjourn at 8:20pm. Volz seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff