

Town of Tamworth

Planning Board

*** draft PLANNING BOARD ABOLISHMENT

HEARING MINUTES ***

January 5, 2011

Hearing opened at 7:30 pm at the Brett School Cafeteria

Members Present: Dom Bergen Chairman, David Little, Steve Gray, Becca Boyden, John Roberts, Skip Nason, Nicole Maher-Whiteside

Members Absent: none

The procedure for the meeting was outlined, and the Board was introduced.

David read a copy of the Secretary's report. Dom reported that the Planning Board is made up of 6 members, with 2 new members voted in each 3 years.

Ernie Mills: said that the items in David's report were posted on the Exchange and he would like to know when the meeting was held. Dom replied that there was no meeting. Ernie stated that plats are not required on a subdivision, that you can obtain a clear title without a plat. We are dealing with an illegal cell tower ordinance. So what if the Master Plan expires. An RSA could address the issues quickly if they came up.

Alexandra Cook: There are a lot of environmentalists here. Go for abolishment then nobody can do anything. Is for abolishment. A lot of "Chicken Little" stuff.

Sally Ann Garcia: problem isn't that we need to dissolve the planning board, problem is recognizing that the planning board was established, has mandates to follow. Vote in new members or change the laws they are trying to enforce. Does not want racetrack, but Planning Board won't stand in their way if they meet the requirements. The Planning Board is simply trying to do a job we gave them to do. Try to educate, how can I as a citizen help them do their job?

Michael Stepien: CMI is not a racetrack, is a road course or country club.

Doc Lowe: for abolishment because Planning Board (PB) is unfair and not impartial. Club Motorsports or FOCUS won't get a fair shake. The PB is controlled by FOCUS. Get a new PB, not prejudiced or biased. Imagine what they can do with the new zoning and code enforcement officer. Let Selectmen take control of the town again.

Jeff Libby: there is no American flag at another meeting. Shame on you people. Why does this committee feel it needs to create more legislation than the State has?

Wendell Dicey: Don't abolish the PB. PB should not be influenced by your friends. He had a business prior to this. It cost \$80,000 to get the permit to build a building. Think what you are doing to the people. Give Club Motorsports a little more thought. Don't be in somebody's pocket.

Jeff Libby – would like his question answered before any more comments are taken.

Dom replied that this format is to hear why they want to abolish the PB.

Sally Ann Garcia: There is a flag that the kids did.

Alexandra Cook: VOTE. Everybody vote. Speak with your vote. PB should go away for a while.

Mark Albee: Who would we rather have making decisions, people in our town or state?

Bill Bachelder: wrote the cell tower ordinance. At no time did anyone think or say they were doing anything illegal. You can fire the PB and Conservation Commission, but rules and regulations still exist and still need to be enforced. You are shooting the messenger.

Herb Cooper: There are minutes from the meetings (regarding the cell tower ordinance). Check to see if any of this is a fact. Was involved with the PB for a dozen years, and this never occurred. Takes exception to Mr. Mills' comments.

Ernie Mills: I was at a meeting. Stan Colville, Chief Poirier, Dick Swan were there. "We know it is illegal" was said. You wrote a letter to the editor saying we have been lying from the beginning.

Dom redirected Mr. Mills to address the Board.

Ernie Mills: the cell tower ordinance was known and said to be illegal.

Sally Ann Garcia: Illegal cell towers can be addressed through TURF laws.

Ned Beecher: There is a lot of divisiveness and anger in town. The PB, Conservation Commission, and Selectmen are volunteers that gave their time for town duties. They are the messengers and are wrongly accused. These groups have made mistakes. We learn and move on. Selectmen at town meetings said that this is a business run by volunteers with a budget of 2.5 million dollars. They are volunteers trying to help the town. Those who are angry are trying to help the town in their own way. Let's talk about the issues, go to meetings, and express our issues.

John Mersfelder: This town runs on volunteers. He has considerable respect for the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission. Wondering if the PB and CC are abolished, what does that say about the way that volunteers are valued? How unique will we be when we start undervaluing the work of volunteers?

Doc Lowe: About volunteering, but why? Too good to be true usually is. These people are power hungry and want control. Show respect Becca, or we might start investigating. The PB thinks they are above the rest of us. David Little has been pushing for zoning since 1995. Why do we have to have zoning? The bottom line is money. Who is going to pay? Volunteers? I don't think so.

Geoffrey Cunningham: So much ignorance about how this process works. Not about power, no power in these jobs. There is very little support. Guessing that half of the people here are in favor of keeping the boards. This is a lot of work, not done in self interest. To say they are in it for some reason, power, hunger, etc. means that you don't understand how these boards work. Is not worried about the boards being abolished, but is worried about perceptions of why they are in it. The Master Plan said a huge percentage of people wanted some type of control. Learn about it, work with it and appreciate it. Don't badmouth it.

David Bowles: 20% of the surveys came back. A lot of people did not fill it out. That 20% does not represent natives. This town got along. 90% of the divisiveness in town is caused by the Wetlands Ordinance. Get rid of that and a lot more people will be getting along.

Bill McKay: not a native, came from NY. Has seen both sides of the issue. Was on the CMI side when he presented a trailer park for Tamworth. Struggled to convince the town that it was an OK project. If you are going to start a business you are going to rely on integrity of the people working on the board. Is in favor of zoning now, it makes everybody's life on both sides easier, gives them the rules. Give these people better tools to make out lives easier. Try to get along. Be neighbors.

Michael Stepien: has been here 13 years. Natives have voted down zoning 3 times. If you want zoning go back to whence you came.

John Mersfelder: There seems to be a suggestion that there are those who are more interested in living free than others. We are all here because we value the independence and freedom we have in this type of area. It is a privilege to be here.. We are united by the fact that we value what we have. Work with what we have got. Be constructive, not in a radical way. Let's work together.

Emily Major: as a younger person, why would I want to come to Tamworth where there is so much discontent? This is unwelcoming. Why can't we work together, have groups that the mechanics, engineers, mathematicians and environmentalists work on. Do surveys now. Put a survey together while it is on everyone's mind. Bring it up now and re-evaluate.

Kathy Arsenault Shea: Wishes Somerville had had a PB and CC. Perhaps Paradise would not have been lost. Lots of money was spent to clean up a mess. Keep the mess from happening in the first place. Volunteers donate their time to make this a better place. All have to abide by the same rules.

The public hearing was closed at 8:27 pm.

The PB now has to vote whether it is in favor of abolishment.

Nicole Maher-Whiteside: The public deserves comments from the PB before the vote. Everyone is here because they care about Tamworth. This board did not partake in many of the decisions criticized tonight. Everyone spoke from a real place on something they believe to be true. We have allowed this town to become very divisive. The learning curve for sitting here is huge. PB is trying hard to be fair, have tried to listen to criticism. Nicole honors everything that was said in this room tonight. How do we embrace neighborliness? Does not approve of abolishing the Planning Board, it will not make things easier for anybody.

Becca motioned: Does the Planning Board support the warrant article to abolish the Planning Board? Steve seconded. 0 members voted in favor of this, 6 members voted against the abolishment.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Donaldson

Planning Board Clerk

