

ALSTEAD PLANNING BOARD
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MEETING MINUTES
September 12, 2022

Note: These minutes are furnished for public inspection in accordance with RSA 91-A:2 and are unapproved until offered for disposition by the Board at a regular meeting. **ACCEPTED AS CORRECTED 10/17/22.**

PB Members Present: Peter Rhoades/Chairman, Gordon Kemp, Justin Falango, David Konesko, and Ellen Chase.

At 7:00pm Rhoades/ Chairman opened the meeting. Review/Approve 8/8/22 Minutes. Minutes reviewed. Motion to approve as read (Falango/Kemp) passed. Marsden announced there had been a recent postage increase; *will change all Applications and get them posted on the Town Website. *Marsden to re-check with Mary Schoppmeyer regarding changing the newspaper that legal line ads are placed in, as Schoppmeyer did not think the Bellows Falls The Shopper was cheaper than the Keene Sentinel.

Several persons in attendance – Jim Gordon, Kathryn Wright, Nick Sintros, Steffan Hofer, Sarah Webb/Conservation Commission, Barry Bush/representing Hertel, the current owner of Lot 52/2, Kristen Nace and Peter Renzelman. Webb stated she was present representing the Town’s Conservation Commission with a concern of a logging operation in town happening around Lily Pond, and that best measures are not being followed – example – water bars and filtration concerns. Webb stated that Lily Pond is the headwater for Thompson Brook. Webb suggested that the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board work together to create a pamphlet for future landowners to state the importance of this water body.

Bush spoke, stating that 500-acres of wood is getting harvested down to a 10” diameter cut on a property (Map 52, Lot 2) off Rt 12A and Pratt Road – and that the area is not getting clear cut. Bush stated that all State laws that apply were being followed, and that it is private property. Bush expressed concern that people are entering the property without first gaining permission from the landowner. Webb asked if it was posted ‘No Trespassing’? Falango asked if this property has recently sold. Bush stated that Lions and Tenney are doing the logging, and that Van Hertel owns the land.

Rhoades stated that the Planning Board does not regulate logging projects, but would be happy to host the conversation. Hofer stated that he was a direct Abutter to the property, and was interested in having any information about future plans of the Hertel parcel. Hofer added that before the logging began he often saw people hiking/walking/biking on the land, and he is having a hard time knowing that the land is being used only for financial gain for the new owner. Rhoades asked if the property had the 10% current recreational use discount. Hofer stated he is not aware of a change. Sintros stated he was concerned that a development will go in. Rhoades stated that the Planning Board would oversee/regulate any development or Subdivision proposal on the land. Webb read the sale ad in the Fountains Land which referenced the land was great for recreational use. Kemp stated that does not speak to the current owner’s intentions.

Bush stated he wanted to have a preliminary discussion of a two-lot Subdivision on the property (Map 52-Lot 2), which has 1550’ of road frontage on Pratt Road and 1050’ road frontage on Rt 12A. Rhoades stated that a subdivision proposal needs to meet road frontage requirements, acreage requirements, have a stamped surveyors map, and there was an Application fee and Certified letters needed to be sent to all Abutters and involved parties. Rhoades stated the public was welcome at the Public Hearing, but that the Board could only consider valid concerns (such as legal ones), not just that people don’t like the proposal.

Wright asked who one should ask about concerns of Lily Pond. Webb spoke up and said concerns can be brought to the Conservation Commission – as there are Regulations (example - buffer requirements) on it as it is a 10+-acre pond. Wright asked who one should ask if she still wanted to walk the land. Webb stated it had to be the current, or any future, landowner(s). Wright asked about the anticipated end to the logging operation. Bush stated he hoped it was done before the snow comes, but that it would need to stop if too much rain comes.

At 7:35pm Renzelman came – he was brought up to date on the discussion. He commented on the logging operation and stated he had walked out to Lily Pond. Renzelman stated it was a liquidation harvest, and it was his understanding that it was currently under Current Use for a managed hardwood forest. Renzelman stated that there should be a management plan on file with the Town. Bush was not sure if there was one. Bush stated the landowner was aware that he will be responsible for a severance tax. Renzelman stated that was not the same as Current Use, and that he felt the new/current owner was only concerned with the financial gain of the property and its logging operation. Rhoades suggested Renzelman bring this concern to the Select Board, because if the management plan was not being followed the Select Board need to address that.

Renzelman stated it was an aggressive cut, and it went pretty close to Lily Pond. Webb stated it was a 10.6-acre pond. Webb stated that a 150' setback was required from the edge of the pond as it was considered a 'great pond' (over 10-acres in size; and that the basal area law allowed 50% volume to be cut). Renzelman stated that it would be appropriate to contact the NH State District Forest Ranger if there is concern that a violation has occurred. If one had occurred it would then become a DES issue (which he acknowledged that Department was very overwhelmed with work now). *Renzelman stated that he planned to go to the next Select Board Meeting to tell them what he found.

Konesko asked if Alstead had anyone that oversaw logging operations, or were concerns only reported by Abutters. Rhoades stated the Town's concern was the Timber Tax it collected off logging operations, and that the Conservation Commission makes sure the process is correct. Konesko gave an overview, as he understood the previous discussion to entail: subdivision proposal, Lily Pond and the basal area law that allowed 50% volume to be cut.

Marsden gave an update on the Walpole Valley Road situation, that the 911 address is in the process of being fixed. Konesko stated he went out to see the driveway, and met with the new landowners. Konesko stated he asked the landowners and the Road Agent to come to this meeting, but neither did. Konesko stated that the driveway that exists is not the one that was approved. He stated it looks nice, but is not correct. Blasting is required to do it the way the driveway was approved. The current owners told Konesko that all the work was done by the previous owner, and was a contingency of the sale. Konesko stated that the Road Agent issued the Driveway Permit before Konesko's visit – and that they were supposed to meet together to discuss, but the Road Agent did not return Konesko's calls. Falango asked what the overall problem was – Konesko stated the driveway location was okay, but the vertical slope was not correct; and that there is a culvert, but not sure if it will drain correctly and function as needed.

Konesko stated the current owners are concerned with penalties and if they'll be held financially responsible for fixing the problem. Next steps were discussed – Konesko reminded the Board of the original proposed location of the driveway, and the possibility of putting a different entry access point in. *The Road Agent to be invited to the next meeting. It was noted that a Driveway Permit has been issued for the lot that does not comply with the requirements of the subdivision. Rhoades stated *the Select Board will need to stay on top of this issue regarding concerns for safety, but *a discussion needs to happen with the Road Agent.

A Motion (Kemp/Chase) was made to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed. The Meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melanie Marsden