

Board Present: Bill Rescsanski, Alissa Bascom, Stacy Hassett, Richard Carter

Board Present via Zoom: Alan Putnam – Chair, Patty Chaffee

Alternate: Lenny Ostasiewski

Public: Duane Wetherby, Terry Spilsbury, Evelyn & Paul Belliveau, Philip Turner & Tamara Golden

Public via Zoom: Sharon Francis

Alissa Bascom called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Lenny Ostasiewski sat as a voting member for this meeting.

Approval of minutes of January 2, 2024

Motion by Mr. Rescsanski to approve the meeting minutes of January 2, 2024, as amended, seconded by Mr. Ostasiewski.

Roll Call Vote: Rescsanski - aye, Ostasiewski - aye, Bascom – aye, Putnam – aye, Chaffee – aye; 5-0-0, motion approved.

Applications:

None at this time.

Continued Business:

1. Proposed Sign Ordinance

Stacy Hassett and Richard Carter joined the meeting.

Ms. Emerson reviewed the changes made to the document.

The Board discussed other potential changes and amendments to the document. Members of the Board and public considered tabling this item but ultimately decided to move forward with approving it.

Motion by Ms. Chaffee to approve the proposed Sign Ordinance with grammatical corrections, seconded by Mr. Ostasiewski.

Roll Call Vote: Rescsanski - aye, Ostasiewski - aye, Hassett – aye, Carter – aye, Bascom – aye, Putnam – aye, Chaffee – aye; 7-0-0, motion approved.

2. Proposed Historic District Ordinance

Philip Turner and Tamara Golden reviewed the proposed changes to the document.

Ms. Bascom noted that the map of the North Charlestown Historic District is a concern, as it contains a recently approved 20 subdivision lot. She does not want the relatively affordable houses on this property to be subject to historical review through this ordinance. Ms. Emerson suggested amending the map to only include the one historical home that currently exists on that property. The Board discussed amending the map for this area of Town.

Terry Spilsbury noted that there have never historically been regulations for the Historic District in Town. The current Historic District is a result of people moving forward with their homes in an unregulated way. This ordinance only applies to two tiny portions of the Town and treats them completely differently. It

represents a completely different set of rules than anywhere else in the Town's ordinances. This sort of ordinance is vulnerable to legal challenge because, within the District, if non-conforming structures are removed along with public buildings and empty lots, there are a very small number of properties this will regulate. He recommended this not be approved to send to the voters unless it is clearly the right thing to do. There has not yet been a chance to shake out the details of this ordinance. It is difficult to find the decision criteria within the document, but the language is clear that the Commission can make decisions regarding whether to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness based on the purposes of the ordinance.

Mr. Turner stated that there was a suggestion that the design guidelines need to be in place in the ordinance to satisfy the judgment calls that will need to be made by the Commission. This leads the Commission to a place where hairs will need to be split before applications are before it.

There was discussion regarding guidelines being included in the document itself and potential variances.

Motion by Ms. Chaffee to move the proposed Historic District Ordinance to the Select Board for approval to place on the warrant, seconded by Ms. Bascom.

Roll Call Vote: Rescsanski - nay, Ostasiewski - nay, Hassett - nay, Carter - nay, Bascom - nay, Putnam - nay, Chaffee - aye; 1-6-0, motion failed.

Mr. Putnam stated that he would like for Mr. Spilsbury to work with the Historic District Commission in order to craft an ordinance that could be brought before the voters next year.

Administration:

None at this time.

New Business:

None at this time.

Communications: None at this time.

a) Board – Master Plan Discussion

b) Public Participation:

Motion by Mr. Rescsanski to adjourn at 8:54pm, seconded by Mr. Hassett.

Roll Call Vote: Rescsanski - aye, Ostasiewski - aye, Hassett - aye, Carter - aye, Bascom - aye, Putnam - aye, Chaffee - aye; 7-0-0, motion approved.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristan Patenaude
Recording Secretary