

Minutes of the Town of Lee Planning Board
February 27, 2023
6:00pm Lee Town Hall Courtroom

Present: Buck Donovan (Chair), Peg Biron, Matt Carlino, David Forrest, and Conrad Decker (alternate).

Other Present: Kathy Hall, Sean Regnier, and Gordon Bailey.

Call to Order

Chairperson Donovan called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. For the record he informed those in attendance that the meeting was being recorded.

Public Comment

Kathy Hall stated that most of the activities planned for February were cancelled due to cold temperatures. The Lee Youth Commission will plan for more indoor activities next year. Kathy Hall discussed the recent Public Forum organized by the Master Plan Committee. The Committee received a lot of great ideas and responses from Lee residents. Also, the Committee has received over 300 surveys so far.

Discussion – Lee Sign Permit Action Forms

The Building Commissioner submitted three forms regarding sign permits.
189 Water Street, East Lee Package Store, denied due to existing number of signs allowed.
55 Housatonic Street, Citgo, pending due to payment of taxes.
50 Water Street, 17 Boss, permit issued.

Update – Master Plan

Chairperson Donovan stated Member Bluhm is currently out of town. The Board briefly discussed the Public Forum. The number of residents that attended, the number of new faces wanting to be involved and the number of people that have resided in Lee for over thirty years.

Discussion – Zoning Amendments

Chairperson Donovan stated that Member Bluhm and alternate Member Decker drafted a zoning proposal for accessory dwelling units.

Chairperson Donovan read section A from the draft titled Purpose and Intent.

Alternate Member Decker stated they took out a section that implied that if you want to put up an accessory dwelling unit in a backyard the house would have to be owner occupied.

Member Biron stated that accessory dwelling units would make properties more valuable.

Member Carlino stated he likes the idea of having them owner occupied to protect the neighborhood.

Resident Bailey stated that in residential districts you have a permit by right for two family dwellings. He stated the Board needs to be careful regarding the definitions. The Town of Lee bylaw does not allow a separate second residential building on a lot.

Chairperson Donovan read section B from the draft titled Definitions.

Resident Bailey stated the Board should consider the zoning enforcement of the bylaw so there are no grey areas.

Alternate Member Decker stated that if the accessory structure or new structure did not comply with code regulations then it would have to be approved by a special permit.

Resident Bailey stated that the Board should tie together the short-term rental bylaw and the accessory dwelling bylaw. He also stated the importance of long-term rentals.

Member Carlino suggested that the square footage or percentage of accessory dwellings should be lower.

Chairperson Donovan suggested that the accessory dwelling should be under 50% of primary dwelling and no more than 1000 square feet. Anything larger would require a special permit.

The Board briefly discussed the figures and decided on 40% under by-right and special permit over 40% not exceeding 1000 square feet.

Chairperson Donovan stated that the next Planning Board meeting will be the Public Hearing on the proposed bylaw amendments for split zones and storage.

The Board discussed the proposals and will make no changes at this time.

Other Topics

Alternate Member Decker requested to find out when the permit expires for the Eagle Mill Project

Alternate Member Decker stated that Starbucks is now turning the rear wall sign of during non-business hours. He would like to know if they applied and were issued a sign permit for it.

The Board briefly discussed the sale of Greylock Mill and the process of re-applying for a marijuana license.

Alternate Member Decker discussed 300 Stockbridge Road and questioned if there was any interest in the town selling some acreage to a developer to build affordable housing.

Member Forrest stated that he thought there were stipulations regarding the use of the land.

Member Biron moved to adjourn the meeting; Member Carlino seconded. Planning Board voted (4-0) Chairperson Donovan declared the meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm.