

Walpole Planning Board Minutes
March 8, 2022
Town Hall
7 pm

Roll Call: Present were board members Vice-Chair Dennis Marcom, Clerk Jason Perron, Jeff Harrington, Bill Carmody, Select Board Representative Steve Dalessio and alternate Trevor MacLachlan. Absent: Chair Jeff Miller and board member Joanna Andros and alternate Travis Adams. Mr. Marcom asked Mr. MacLachlan to sit in for an absent board members.

Also present were Kelly Hoffman of Liberty Utilities, Shanda and Steve Donovan, owners of Spencer's Tavern, Zoning Board of Adjustment Chair Jan Leclerc, Amanda Raney, abutter of the day care center on Maplewood Circle, and Shane O'Keeffe.

Recording: Secretary Marilou Blaine. **Meeting minutes are recorded. These minutes are unapproved and will be reviewed at the April 2022 meeting for corrections, and additions and/or omissions.**

Meeting coming to order: Mr. Marcom called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Minutes: There was one correction to the minutes on page 2, paragraph 2. Mr. Perron asked that the word "this" be inserted before the word "constitutes." Mr. Perron made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion and the motion passed by voice vote. Since Mr. Marcom had not read the February workshop minutes, a vote on these minutes was postponed until next month.

Old Business

Public Hearing for Liberty Utilities for additional tree removal on Farnum Road, a scenic road.

Ms. Heather Green, Vegetation Manager for Liberty Utilities, did not attend the meeting. Kelly Hoffman, a consultant for arboreal matters for Liberty Utilities represented Liberty Utilities at the hearing. Ms. Green and Ms. Hoffman were at a public hearing in December 2021 when the Planning Board approved routine maintenance on the two scenic roads in Walpole – Old Drewsville Road and Farnum Road. In February, Liberty Utilities requested another public hearing to do additional work on Farnum Road. The fee for two legals in The Keene Sentinel as required by RSA 271:172 arrived at the Town Offices on Monday, March 7, 2022.

Board members had a diagram of Farnum Road showing the existing poles that were going to be replaced by taller poles and updated lines. Ms. Hoffman handed out a list of trees that were on the December list of trees to be removed and, on the same paper, a list of additional trees to be cut when the taller poles are installed. She said that there are some well-established cherry trees along the road that bend over the existing line and they are going to be severely impacted by the installation. Ms. Hoffman said the trees could be trimmed but it would hurt the trees. She said all the trees but one, which will be removed have been tagged with pink or red tags.

What happens to the wood after the tree has been removed? Mr. Dalessio asked. Ms. Hoffman said that a Liberty Utilities person talks to the landowner to get permission to remove trees. Then they typically leave the wood on site. However, if the landowner wants to use the wood for firewood, it can be cut to log lengths, she said.

When they install the new poles do they leave the old poles behind? Mr. Dalessio asked. Ms. Hoffman said yes. The Select Board is very unhappy with Liberty Utilities leaving the poles behind, Mr. Dalessio said. He asked Ms. Hoffman if she would take that information back to the company and let them know. "We're getting tired of looking at our landscape and seeing all these poles sticking up all over the place." He said that the request would not be approved until he hears back from Liberty Utilities about what they are going to do with the poles. He suggested driving on Route 123 if anyone were interested in seeing poles that were not removed.

Mr. MacLachlan asked about the schedule for cutting. Ms. Hoffman wasn't sure but said that Liberty had to get approval from the board first and it was certainly not going to be cutting tomorrow. She could find out the schedule if that's what the board wanted.

Mr. Marcom wanted to know what kind of options the board had. They could approve or not approve tonight or continue the hearing until next month and when Heather gets here she could answer questions, Mr. Dalessio said.

Shane O'Keefe said he was acquainted with Farnum Road. He has had some knowledge of the shorter poles being abandoned after taller ones are installed. He thought maybe the Planning Board could put some kind of conditions on removal of the trees. Maybe have some kind of performance review, he said. Perhaps give them six months after the work is completed to take down the old poles, he suggested.

Mr. Marcom asked if there were any other questions from the public. He closed the public hearing. Now the question was does the board want to continue the meeting until next month when they could ask questions of Ms. Green or put conditions on a motion to approve. Mr. Dalessio said six months seemed enough time for them to remove the cables and put them on the new poles.

Mr. Dalessio made a motion to approve the removal of trees on Farnum Road on the condition that Liberty Utilities remove the old poles within six months of completing their work. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion and the board vote unanimously to approved the motion.

Mr. Dalessio told Ms. Hoffman that if Ms. Green had any questions she could come to the meeting next month.

Spencer's LLC – Outdoor seating and a handicap parking space. Mr. Spencer had a letter from The Walpole Foundation saying that his outdoor seating for the restaurant had to be approved by the Planning Board yearly. Also, The Foundation wanted the handicap space that was there before restored so it is at or near the end of the ramp. Mr. Perron recused himself from voting because he was the one who presented Mr. Spencer's plan to the board last month to be put on the agenda. Mr. Spencer said the outdoor seating at the restaurant will be the same as last year and the handicap parking space would be moved over one spot

to in front of Edward Jones. He said he would put up a handicap sign there as well. Mr. Dalessio made a motion to approve outdoor seating for Spencer's restaurant and including moving the handicap parking space. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the board.

Workshop

Mr. Marcom reminded board members that there was workshop meeting at the end of the month. It is not the usual 4th Tuesday of the month so instead of the workshop being held on the 22nd, it will be held on the 29th. Mr. Dalessio reminded the secretary that because it was not on the 4th Tuesday, the public meeting will have to be posted.

Update on day care center

Mr. Marcom told the public that the board was going into a nonpublic session to discuss an update on the day care center because it had received a letter from Town Counsel, Jeremy Hockensmith. There is an RSA that allows a board to go into nonpublic session when considering information from legal counsel, he said. He had a roll call vote of every board member and they all voted aye to go into nonpublic session.

Ms. Dalessio made a motion to go into nonpublic session to discuss based on attorney-client privilege. The motion was seconded and the motion carried. The board went into nonpublic session at 7:25 pm and Mr. Dalessio made a motion to come out of nonpublic session at 7:51 pm. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion and the rest of the board voted in the affirmative.

Public Session resumes

Mr. Marcom said it was decided that the board would like input from the abutters on Maplewood Circle on the day care situation. This would help the board make a decision on whether or not to have a site plan review. So the board intends to ask town counsel Jeremy Hockensmith about the matter and if he okays it, the Planning Board will hold a public hearing in April and invite the neighborhood of Maplewood Circle to comment on traffic and parking. Mr. Perron made a motion to invite the people on Maplewood Circle to a public hearing to discuss the day care center and a site plan. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Ms. Raney asked the board if the dumpster in the front yard of the day care center was going to be screened when spring begins on March 21. The Select Board minutes of December 2, 2021 state that the board was agreeable to wait until spring to have the dumpster screened. Mr. Dalessio said he would bring it up at the next Select Board meeting.

Mr. Perron made a motion to close the meeting. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilou Blaine
Recording Secretary

cc: WPB, ZBA, Town Offices.

Posted: Inside the Town Offices, on the bulletin board outside the Post Office,
www.walpolenh.us