

Planning Board Minutes
March 7, 2017

Present: Chairman Pitney, Member Talbot, Member Fletcher, Member Raftery, Member Carmichael, Member Pearce. Absent: Member Cardillo

Also at the meeting were: Anita Schwerner, Shirley Talbot, Susie & Stuart Hirshfield, Christine Rasmussen, Don Chabon, Joshua Peyron, Kate McCormick (McCormick, Murtaugh & Marcus), Denny Alsop, Terry Flynn, Tony Guthrie, Bob Tublitz, and Rich Dohoney.

Chairman Pitney asked for a motion to accept the minutes from February 7th Member Pearce moved to accept the minutes as presented and Member Fletcher seconded and the vote was: Chairman Pitney – Yes, Member Raftery – Yes, Member Carmichael – Yes, Member Talbot – Yes, Member Fletcher – Yes, Member Pearce – Yes, the motion carried.

Chairman Pitney asked for a motion to accept the minutes from February 21st. Member Fletcher had additions that were incorporated into the minutes. She would like to wait to review the minutes again and have a motion at the next meeting.

Member Pitney summarized the letter from Monica's ??? concern about Town water supply and the potential impact for the proposed Desisto project, he asked Member Carmichael to forward the letter to Sewer & Water and to Conservation as it pertained more to their area.

Member Pitney: Next on the agenda we are going to discuss our meeting with the Selectmen and decide what to do with the zoning bylaws and forming a secondary board or subcommittee to work on them. Member Pearce had prepared a handout of what she thought the sub-committee might look like. It might consist of seven members: two from the Planning Board, one from ZBA and one from another board to be discussed. There could be three members of the community selected by the Planning Board based on an application process with specific criteria, three questions to be answered making the selection process transparent. This sub-committee could possibly have meetings twice per month; giving quarterly updates to the Select Board. Member Fletcher asked if the discussion of applicants would be handled at a public meeting. Member Pearce felt being able to look at the specific criteria asked for and the questions answered took the decision away from the personal level. Member Fletcher felt some who would be very good participating would be put off by the process. Member Pearce agreed but felt it was a fairer process. Member Fletcher suggested people submitting their name and their interest and the Planning Board members each reviewing the information then forwarding our comments to Gary. Member Pearce felt that was of course another way for each member to give their ranking of the three questions answered and give to Member Pitney. She above all wants a process that is transparent and clear. Member Raftery asked if what Members Pearce and Fletcher wanted was an applicant to write a letter saying they would like to be on this committee. Member Fletcher: looking at the questions and thinking of Stockbridge she could think of plenty of people who would be great at participating and she cannot see them answering the question why would I be a great candidate for the committee. Member Pearce: we can reword the questions but her hope is that many people want to be on the sub-committee. Saying it is a 7 member board does not preclude people from coming to the public hearings and being heard. No reason not to ask people why we should pick them instead of someone else. What is special

about you that makes you a better candidate than someone else. It will get away from picking someone just because they are well known in the town rather than someone who is new or not well known. Member Fletcher: still unsure about the model Member Pearce had presented and put out another possibility to consider. A smaller focused ad-hoc committee made up of 2 from planning board, 1 from zoning board of appeals, one from conservation and maybe one from preservation she would like to look at this model and see what people think about it. Member Pearce: do we have a specific goal statement for this sub-committee and if not one should be made. Member Fletcher and Member Pitney agreed that should come first. Stuart Hirshfield: What is this committee charged to do, important to look at other towns and their bylaws to see what they have done. What works in other communities and bylaws in general, may have to pull from a variety of bylaws to find what will work in this community. Member Pearce: the committee would do this, look for examples of well-functioning bylaws; but before that we need a stated goal. Mr. Hirshfield; have a small sub-committee of the Planning Board members that look at applications and meet with people individually so people so not feel exposed in front of a public forum and say why they should be picked. Member Fletcher agreed. Mr. Hirshfield: then you come up with a group of candidates that you have vetted that then come up with a group of candidates who would be exposed to the public board. Don Chabon: it would always have to be a public forum or executive session which is strict as to why you need to have one. Member Pearce: if you are not comfortable with coming to say why you are the best candidate to pick when in a public forum, how will you be in a public debate. Terry Flynn: better for the town for people who are volunteering their time to be on a sub-committee have to have a board discussing them. If the board is looking at the applications and all know our mission, rating applications and giving comments to Member Pitney and allowing him to make a decision. Member Pearce agreed but we might want to look at areas of Town and are they represented. Josh Peyron: every section of this town has a different feeling, people seek out different sections to build and invest, they buy at the lake or they buy in a specific area because of how it is zoned and has been zoned there for a reason. To have input from every area of the town you would need more than 3 people. Member Fletcher: to go back to a smaller board and still do public outreach starting small you would have that focus and then you could get bigger. Member Raftery: this will be a steering committee it will not be the committee that will change zoning. We have talked about hiring someone who can help us with zoning. Member Fletcher: sees the committee as a starting board that helps find the direction, where to go. It may have someone from the finance board on or as advisory to the sub-committee. Member Raftery: this sub-committee will help to look at the zoning and figure out how to do that. Not necessarily going to make all the decisions on our zoning bylaws. Member Fletcher: This would be the committee that would think through the process and get the thing going. Member Pearce: is the sub-committee doing zoning or outreach planning the committee is going to review zoning and in reviewing zoning part of that would be outreach. Member Pitney: needs to start here and work its way to zoning. Member Pearce: The first one or two meetings would be coming up with a plan. Member Fletcher: that is what a small focus committee would do. Member Pearce: a board of 5 members quickly goes to 3 on a regular basis and is not enough to represent the town and having all board members, though they are elected, but from the start it behooves us to have representatives from the community. Mr. Chabon: would each board select a representative to be on the sub-committee. Member Fletcher: they could or ask for someone to represent the board. Denny Alsop: the word represent is used when someone is elected, to select individuals out of the town has a higher risk of being representative as a whole where we already have had a process where people voted for certain

members of the community and they sit on boards. On other occasions the Planning Board has requested boards send someone to participate. Member Pearce: agreed, representative is a bad choice of words; rather to get perspectives from different areas of the town. Member Pitney and Member Fletcher would like to reflect on the mission statement, work on it for the next meeting. Member Pearce: suggested a mission statement to plan the review and outreach process for a complete review of the zoning bylaws and identify specific steps and timeline for that review to take place. That is what this sub-committee would do initially. Member Pitney: when you do the bylaws, you will not take them in total but take one at a time. Member Pearce: as the Select Board said if we take the bylaws piece meal without a view of what we want the town to look like. Member Pitney: need to get a goal set first; it makes it a little easier to do, can't do them all at once. Member Raftery: would like some community members on the sub-committee as they have different ideas. We need members from boards as they know the laws but we need people from the community to put out ideas that you do not necessarily get from the boards. Member Pitney: all proposals will be put out to the community and public input will be heard so you will get input from different areas in town. Mr. Flynn: no matter who is chosen from town there will be people who are discontent, picking members of boards that controversy goes away and you can always do more. Ultimately the planning board will start to do revision and get a zoning planner to help. First the board has to shape it then a planner can come in and help. Member Pearce: once plan is created with what the steps are other groups can be involved with making those steps happen. Susie Hirshfield: how many sections of town are there and each area should be given the chance to have someone involved on the committee. Christine Rasmussen: process as to the potential person to be hired. You need a job description as to what you want that person to do, who they are going to report to; so this is developed before there is a lot of planning in the process as to how it is going to work. Good idea to go into neighborhood groups but you do not want to lose the benefit of the whole community hear from each one of these groups have both types of meetings. To make this work you need a steering committee and to be effective they will have to have a lot of planning and zoning expertise; verses the cultural heritage and that sort of thing; conservation they all have responsibilities that feed into the zoning ordinance. Planning and zoning is so complicated you need people that can be really focused on that issue. She likes Ruth's suggestion of a group and asking people who are interested to apply, those who are interested will apply. Don't forget the visioning/committee report others could work on that and implementing that. Mr. Peyron: What could add everything as a collaborative vision such as a downtown vision, getting into different areas of town; looking at people that live here and have money or decades of their lives invested in their land and when someone wants to do something different, for sale signs will go up. People seek out areas for a particular reason. Member Pearce: don't anticipate a large change in the zoning it is a review; the zoning bylaws define the town, you are saying people picked an area to live because it meets their needs, such as 4 acre zoning, there are aspects of the zoning bylaw that are getting in our way if we want to maintain ourselves as a sustainable living environment; not preclude people from being able to move and living here, do those bylaws serve us now as they did 20 years ago. Mr. Peyron: what causes sustainability in this town, the traffic is not bad on the road he lives on but some parts the traffic has doubled or tripled, if you keep bringing in the same types of stuff and you bring in extracurricular activities into the town and you get more traffic and the population is going down that does not mean you keep building upon these places that are being built upon you are just going to get more people coming using different facilities the lake and what not and leaving. Member Fletcher: part of the review process is understanding the consequences of zoning and

unintended consequences that is something we will be thinking about. Mr. Peyron: hears the argument regarding population but it seems baseless if you do not do the right thing. The town has to do the right thing to get people to stay here not just come and then leave. Member Raftery: we want to make it the kind of town that people want to come and stay. If our zoning from 20 years ago is getting in the way of that in this day and age, maybe it needs to be looked at. Ms. Rasmussen: anything that is decided by this committee has to be approved by the Planning and Select Boards and then go to Town meeting as an amendment to the zoning bylaws. Mr. Hirshfield: the purpose of the committee is to obtain information from the community through a public hearing where the community will be invited to give their point of view of whatever the committee is seeking knowledge of. The makeup of the committee is going to be people who will be assimilating that information and making a recommendation. How does that fit into the composition of the committee because the purpose is to hear from the community and the community is not going to be internally generated from the committee it will be externally generated by what the committee hears at the public hearing. Looking for members that can add skills and ability through that process will be difficult. Mr. Flynn: there are board members that have skills and could contribute in a positive way to the zoning review, the conservation committee is perfectly capable of deciding who could come on the board and contribute in a positive way, the same is true with the preservation committee and the zoning board of appeals we should trust the town's people. It will be simpler and less controversial to stay more informal. Mr. Chabon: as my good friend Steve Shatz said, this can become very political and by picking people from the community you are starting to have some of that kind of problem and as Terry said it can be avoided. Member Fletcher: would there be any harm in starting with a smaller board and see how it goes. Member Pearce: transparency that is what she is concerned about, takes Terry's point about not being overly organized but the word informal makes her nervous. When you get into informality that is when people say I do not think they are doing what they should be doing because the committee is not clear enough. Start small get going but have specific points where we are going to implement some sort of review. We need to have a plan that we are implementing, people know when we are meeting ahead of time. Chairman Pitney: everything will be filtered through the Planning Board. He suggested Ruth, Kate and he get together and go through to figure out a mission statement and come back with something more concrete. Member Talbot suggested having Marie on the committee as well. Member Pitney: if we have four we have a quorum and we have to post the meeting.

Chairman Pitney asked for a motion to adjourn, Member Fletcher moved to adjourn and Member Raftery seconded the vote was Chairman Pitney – Yes, Member Talbot - Yes, Member Raftery – Yes, Member Fletcher – Yes, Member Pearce – Yes, Member Carmichael – Yes, the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jennifer Carmichael, Secretary