

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Swanzey Planning Board
Meeting Minutes – July 24, 2014

Note: Draft Minutes are subject to review, correction and approval by the Board. Review and approval of Minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

The regular meeting of the Swanzey Planning Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Glenn Page. Members present: Glenn Page, June Fuerderer, Board of Selectmen Representative Bill Hutwelker, Alternate Jane Johnson, Alternate Jim McConnell and Alternate Don Skiba. The roll call and agenda for the meeting was read by Chair Page. Page seated Skiba for Self, McConnell for Smith and Johnson for Goller.

Absent: Vice Chair Scott Self, Joe Smith, Jeff Goller, Gus Lerandeanu

Others Present: Director of Planning and Community Development Sara Carbonneau

Minutes: Minutes from July 10, 2014 were reviewed. **Motion** was made by Fuerderer to accept the minutes of July 10, 2014. The motion was seconded by Skiba. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

A. DISCUSSIONS/OTHER BUSINESS

- a. **Zoning 2015** – Carbonneau presented a chart of density requirements for multi-family dwellings based on the ordinances of the Town. She noted that it is possible to have as little as 8,000 square feet of dirt and put a two family dwelling on it when connected to sewer, given the present ordinances. Carbonneau said typically a quarter acre or a half acre is required by other towns. Skiba asked if there is a bedroom requirement. Carbonneau said there isn't a bedroom requirement for projects connected to public sewers. Page said the sewer pipe is sized to handle the required flow. Johnson noted there has been a problem with getting enough water into a dwelling, which is a water system problem. Discussion occurred about the essential nature of an adequate water supply.

Page noted that the sewers are built to over-capacity in north and west Swanzey. Discussion occurred regarding how fees are structured for sewer service.

Hutwelker spoke about density requirements tied to public water and public sewer. Swanzey seems to be an exception by not including public water supply requirements for density. Tying density to public water would give the Town time to consider a course of action for the future. He said the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) is concerned because currently zoning isn't tied to public water. The ZBA is asking for the Planning Board to consider a density requirement tied to water service.

Discussion occurred about notices of meetings. Carbonneau mentioned the Town is considering installing a box outside of Town Hall for notices.

Carbonneau said an ordinance could be tied to municipal water and municipal sewer. She also noted there are a number of developments that have their own sewer and water service. Hutwelker said the ZBA's concern is another Haley Heights type building with many dwelling units. Page said the solution is to take over the West Swanzey Water Company Inc. owned by the Brown family and improve it. Page pointed out the long range plan includes a Town water supply. Discussion occurred about the water system's dependability and continued regarding whether or not the owners of a water system could shut down the system if they decided to do so.

Carbonneau raised the issue of fire suppression water needs. Carbonneau also spoke about the ZBA getting requests for special exceptions for multi-family dwellings, and the fact that developers think that there is plenty of water service available. Page suggested that the ZBA might hire a consulting engineer to see if a developer's plan is viable.

Carbonneau suggested that the Planning Board consider zoning in regards to the reasonability of a location to create multi-family dwellings. Hutwelker expressed concern over challenges that could occur because the Town cannot prove that the water system is inadequate. The ZBA is asking the Planning Board for an ordinance that ties multi-family dwellings to availability of public sewer and public water.

Discussion occurred regarding private water systems. Carbonneau said that the water system in West Swanzey is fairly unique in the State of New Hampshire. The presence of public sewer encourages more development in West Swanzey.

Carbonneau spoke about zoning amendments and how they can come about. The Planning Board can propose amendments to the ordinance and those proposals go to public hearing. And then they get voted on by the voters in March. Johnson noted that the Town is growing and that perhaps the Town needs to address the water issue because of that growth. Page noted that the Brown family would like to be out of the water business.

Carbonneau suggested that the Water Study Committee can address this issue among others, and can report back to the Planning Board and to the Board of Selectmen with any recommendations. Brief discussion occurred regarding regular water tests that must be performed for a private water system.

Carbonneau noted there is no minimum acreage required currently for two-family housing connected to public sewer and asked the Planning Board to give some thought to that. With a special exception you can build a duplex on very small lot. The only requirement today is for 8,000 square feet of dirt and 80 feet of frontage which allows for an argument for a Special Exception. If the ordinance required a ½ acre, that kind of request would not go to the ZBA at all. The Zoning Board is facing situations of existing

properties where the owner wants to add more units in dwellings on very small parcels of land.

Carbonneau said that Planning Board member Joe Smith raised a concern that Route 10 might become a “junk-store” road and asked if there are ways to improve the way it looks. The appearance of the properties is an issue for some people. She spoke about the fact that some towns regulate signs. Swanzey does have landscaping regulations which help improve the look of business properties. Carbonneau also mentioned the possibility of the Planning Board promoting business initiatives to beautify the Town.

Discussion occurred about banners and flags being used to promote business but that are not permitted by Town ordinance. Carbonneau said there are larger issues to be taken care of by Code Enforcement such as life-safety issues. Carbonneau suggested that business owners might take the lead with one another to improve the appearance of properties. Carbonneau also suggested that Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) might look into finding business oriented support groups like Swanzey Lions to achieve more compliance with the regulations and encourage beautifying their properties.

Johnson mentioned that on Route 10 there are cars with prices on them at a site which is supposed to be a car detailing business but looks like a used car lot instead. The business does not have a permit to operate a used car lot.

Carbonneau spoke about the Municipal Association Law Lecture series that is being offered this coming September and asked if anyone is interested to contact her.

b. **Other Business**

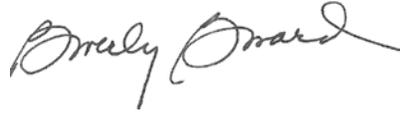
Swanzey Oil relocation – Carbonneau informed the Board members that Swanzey Oil wants to relocate from the north end of the building where they presently have their business to the other end of the building where auctions were once held. Auctions have stopped as of July 1, 2014. Carbonneau said the Fire Department and Code Enforcement Officer will need to visit the property to make sure safety requirements are met but it is up to the Planning Board to determine if a public hearing is necessary. Page noted that Swanzey Oil would have new neighbors and perhaps some building renovation might be needed. Page suggested that the applicant should come in with new revision to their site plan. Carbonneau agreed that it might be useful to have a public hearing. Skiba and Johnson agreed that it would be prudent to have a public hearing and it was generally agreed by the entire Board that a public hearing is appropriate.

Ground-breaking for Safford Drive extension project

Carbonneau mentioned the successful ground-breaking ceremony for the Safford Drive extension project and the publicity associated with it.

Motion to adjourn was made by Johnson, seconded by Fuerderer, with all in favor. **Motion passed.**
Adjournment occurred at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Beverly Bernard".

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary