

Thorndike Planning Board
1-10-18 Meeting Minutes
Town Office

[Decisions and commitments made in bold italic type.]

Members Attending: Michael Berry, Bob Carter, Mary Ann Hayes, Darryl Raven

Members Absent: Erin Bibles (sick), Doug Nye (car problem), Liz Sullivan

Others Attending: Charlie Porter, CEO, Brian Croft, LPI & Deputy CEO (part)

Call to Order, Agenda Review and Updates: Mike called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. No changes were made to the prepared agenda.

Minutes: *On a motion by Darryl, seconded by Bob, the minutes of the April 12 board meeting were approved as presented 4-0.*

Proposed Health & Sanitation Ordinance & Occupancy Permit System: Brian shared a recommended ordinance for potential adoption that would govern an occupancy permit requirement after a building had been vacant for a year or more. Burnham has been using it successfully to address faulty septic systems that might otherwise go unaddressed for many years.

The board expressed concerns about determining that a building had been vacant and the general anti-regulation sentiment in the town. The alternative regarding awaiting evidence of subsurface failure and civil actions were also discussed. Mary Ann expressed concern about requiring a finding of “adequate water supply” which was not defined in the ordinance and beyond what the Town currently regulated. She also suggested that an Occupancy Permit include other sanitation elements such as garbage and vermin. Charlie countered that current nuisance law gave him the legal backing to pursue such issues as long as the Selectmen were serious and backed him up. Brian indicated that he wanted the ordinance to only cover subsurface wastewater.

A motion by Mary Ann to drop the water finding and add a garbage/vermin element failed for lack of a second.

On a motion by Mike, seconded by Darryl, the Board voted to hold a public hearing on the proposed ordinance and Occupancy Permit system at 6:30 PM on February 14. Valentine’s Day was determined to be no problem. The vote passed 3-0-1 with Bob abstaining.

Brian shared information regarding a Floodplain Management Training Session that he and Charlie were co-sponsoring at the Unity Community Center with Sue Baker, head of the State Floodplain Management Program. One of the options that a town can adopt is exempting an applicant from needing a survey if they propose to build 2 feet above the 100 year flood elevation, rather than just 1 foot. The Board felt that there is so little floodplain in Thorndike that the ordinance change after just having updated it and training session were not worth addressing at this time.

Budget Request: It was agreed that the Planning Board did not need a separate budget line and that there were no anticipated expenses for 2018 other than routine copying, training fees (no specific training on the radar) or legal notices. No more map upgrades were expected in the near future.

Annual Report: it was agreed the Board had little to report this year. Mary Ann will do a draft for review at Feb. 14 meeting.

Finalize Maps: The Board reviewed the latest map revisions and made a few revisions, including switching the public/private cemetery symbols and adjusting labels that were difficult to read. Mary Ann and Doreen will finalize the changes and send to Gretchen. Mary Ann noted that she had touched base with Roy Corson, Gretchen's boss, to discuss dissatisfaction with how things had been going and he had pledged to make it right. Copies of all digital files will be in hand before checks are released.

Other Business: Michael expressed concern about traffic safety during the Halloween and Tree Lighting events held recently downtown. He wondered if the Town should have some kind of Event Management Ordinance and permit system. It was agreed to consider it for the 2019 workplan.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.