

**TOWN OF BARTLETT PLANNING BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING**

October 7, 2019

Members Present: Scott Grant; David L. Patch; David A. Patch; David Shedd; Kevin Bennett; Barry Trudeau; Kevin McEnaney. **Members Absent:** None.

Also Present: Loralie Gerard of Thorne Surveys; Marie and Loel Raymond; Victoria Laracy of Mt. Washington Valley Housing Coalition; Andrew Light.

Chairman Scott Grant called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and reviewed the agenda.

1. Pledge of Allegiance. The Chairman led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The representative for agenda Item 2 had not yet arrived, so the Chairman asked if the board would be willing to proceed to Item 3. The board agreed.

3. Presentation by Victoria Laracy of the Mt. Washington Valley Housing Coalition: Victoria Laracy presented and provided a hand-out which explained the conditions of a Municipal Technical Assistant Grant (MTAG) which she hoped the board would consider applying for. She acknowledged the planning board consisted of volunteer members whose time was often limited, and explained the grant would help alleviate this problem by providing funds for an outside consultant to independently review the town's master plan and zoning ordinance to identify areas which could perhaps be changed to help create incentives or opportunities for affordable housing to be built. Ms. Laracy explained the aging population of the valley, the incredibly low inventory of homes available for younger families and workers, and how local businesses were unable to retain employees because they were unable to find housing in the valley, despite a very low unemployment rate. David L. Patch asked whether local businesses always paid their workers a high-enough wage for them to be able to afford a home. Ms. Laracy said probably not. She noted we are a hospitality area and wages were traditionally lower than the NH average of \$15 per hour, and the cost of living was higher. It was noted that some businesses such as Story Land and Attitash provided housing for their workers.

Ms. Laracy said homes in the \$220,000 range were simply not being built, with contractors tending to build higher-end homes which provided them a better return. She said the valley needs a well-balanced and diverse housing stock. She acknowledged Bartlett's reluctance to lower density standards, but felt there could be other avenues available to offer incentives for contractors to provide this more-affordable type of housing. She suggested perhaps a density bonus could be offered to a developer who was willing to include some affordable housing units in their project, or perhaps a reduction in setbacks or frontage or a lower density standard for properties with municipal sewer, could be considered. She said every builder they had spoken to had suggested two things were needed to provide affordable housing, those being reduced frontage and a density bonus. The Chairman asked what the term "affordable housing" meant. Ms. Laracy said it was housing where the monthly cost was no greater than 30% of the median income, as determined by the state. David Shedd asked what would stop someone from buying an affordable workforce house and then turning around and selling it a few years later at a higher price. Ms. Laracy agreed this needed to be looked at and also felt some measures should also be implemented in the zoning to legally prevent these units from ever becoming short-term rentals, such as requiring that they only be occupied by the primary owner or by deed restrictions. She said she was meeting with Conway tomorrow to discuss how this could be achieved since they were very conscious of the impact short-term rentals had on their town. Kevin McEnaney asked what the grant entailed. Ms. Laracy directed him to her handout. She said the maximum grant amount available was \$20,000, and if the town was successful in obtaining any funding they would be required to make a 25% match of whatever money they received. She said she had spoken to some local business owners who were having difficulty retaining staff and advised these owners had expressed an interest in fundraising to offset this 25% cost so that it would not come out of town funds. Additionally, she said the town was under no obligation to accept any of the suggestions made by the consultant. Both Mr. McEnaney and Barry Trudeau felt if it involved no cost to the town, that applying for this grant was a no-brainer, especially if there was no obligation for the town to adopt any of the consultant's suggestions. They suggested the board would be remiss not to take advantage of this offer.

The Chairman asked Ms. Laracy what the difference between workforce housing and affordable housing was. She said they were basically one and the same in that it was housing which the workforce could afford to live in. Kevin McEnaney pointed-out affordable housing could also apply to the elderly, who were likely not in the workforce. He commented on the high turnover in our local police department because officers could not find affordable homes in town, or had to commute great distances from the southern part of the state. David Shedd asked whether Jackson had moved forward with their affordable program since they had been awarded this grant a year or two ago. Ms. Laracy said three zoning amendments had been placed on the ballot and voters had passed all three, but so far there had been no development which had taken advantage of them.

Barry Trudeau asked Ms. Laracy what the next steps would be if we wanted to pursue this. She suggested the board look over the literature she had supplied, and if they decided to go ahead and apply for the grant that she would be happy to assist with the process. She said she was also happy to come back and talk to the board further, if they so desired. The board decided to take the information home and review it, and discuss the issue further at the next meeting. Ms. Laracy thanked the board for their time. After Ms. Laracy left, the board briefly discussed this issue again with opinions being expressed that the board would be remiss not to explore this offer, while others felt what was trying to be done did not correlate with the reality of the situation. The difficulty of preventing basements or attics from being converted into crowded sleeping quarters for short-term rentals was discussed, and strong opinions expressed that our density restrictions were there for a purpose and for that very reason, and a density bonus should not be considered if it perpetuated that happening. Another item mentioned was the fact that the board was not required to adopt or accept any of the outside consultant's suggestions, and it was wondered whether the board would feel a sense of obligation to follow-up on the suggestions and not be comfortable saying no, especially after outside people had been involved and worked hard to raise funds to undertake this review.

2. Public Hearing: Marie W. & Loel A. Raymond, Jr. and Amanda Clementson, Wild View Drive, Intervale. File: 2019-1257. This is an application for an equal-area boundary-line adjustment involving 0.25-acres to allow the well radius on the Raymond property to be contained entirely on the Raymond lot. Tax Map 1RT16A, Lot 101-H14A (Raymond) and Lot 101-H14B (Clementson).

Loralie Gerard of Thorne Surveys presented. She explained the purpose of this boundary adjustment and said because this was an equal-area exchange, that the size of the lots and density remained the same. She provided a plan which she said was the same as the board had reviewed at the pre-application meeting, with the exception that a few minor typos involving abutter names had been corrected, and a line between two of the abutting properties had been added, none of which affected or changed the boundary adjustment in any way. Since the board had already reviewed the plan at the pre-application meeting and had found no issues or problems, there were no further board questions. A motion was made by David L. Patch; seconded by Kevin McEnaney to accept the application. Vote: All in favor. The Chairman then opened the public comment period, which was subsequently closed when no comments were offered. A motion to approve the application was made by Kevin McEnaney; seconded by David A. Patch. Vote: All in favor. A mylar was provided for recording which the Chairman signed.

4. Continuation/Final Approval: RSM Bartlett Properties, LLC, (Richard Girardin), 590 US Route 302. File: 2018-1251. This is an application for a 14-unit subdivision (7 duplexes) on a 13-acre parcel identified as Tax Map 3RT302, Lot 53R00.

This application is still waiting for state subdivision and septic approvals. Additionally, the road design is being revised to relocate the catchbasins out of the road right-of-way. A letter had been received from the DES which requested the applicant provide additional information before a final determination on their Alteration of Terrain application was made. A letter had also been received from the Fire Chief offering his input on fire safety issues. He was provided a copy of the plans for review. A motion was made by David L. Patch; seconded by Kevin McEnaney to continue the application to the November 4 public hearing. Vote: All in favor.

5. Continuation/Final Approval: River Run Co., Inc., Route 302/Haystack Loop. File: 2018-1252. This is an application for a 3-lot subdivision of a 10.29-acre parcel of land. Tax Map 3ATTDV, Lot UND-D00.

This application is also waiting for state subdivision approval. A motion to continue the application to the November 4 public hearing was made by Kevin McEnaney; seconded by David A. Patch. Vote: All in favor.

6. Informal discussion with Andrew Light: Mr. Light apologized for not being on the agenda but said he would like to discuss with the board the issue of hiring a town building inspector. He shared how he had witnessed many instances of shoddy workmanship in residential construction and felt there needed to be someone looking over things, as otherwise there were no checks and balances. He said he was not only concerned about haphazard work but also the fact that homeowner were not getting the quality work they paid for. Mr. Light expressed concern that substandard workmanship could produce “sick” buildings where not enough fresh air was provided for furnace combustion, etc.. He said he had also seen instances of poorly installed gas equipment which had the potential to be life-threatening. He said gas companies did their own leak and pressure testing at the end of their work, but the installation was not independently inspected any further to ensure it complied with codes. He said this was the only facet of the construction business which required the installer to be licensed. David L. Patch expressed surprise at Mr. Light’s comments about gas companies, saying in his experience he had found their inspection process to be pretty tough. Mr. Light said that the gas companies oversaw themselves and provided the fuel. He suggested they were doing not installations to code because nobody was there to stop them. He said it may be something as simple as the combustion air and vent not having the proper separation causing exhaust gas to be pulled into the combustion, or the gas vent being too close to the ground and becoming covered in snow. Kevin Bennett, who is Jackson’s building inspector, said it came down to liability as, basically, the liability falls back on whoever issued the building permit, in this case the selectmen. He said a lot of towns pay for their building inspector through fees collected from permits so it is not an increase in taxes. Mr. Bennett said he works with a lot of tradesmen and for the most part the work they do is done correctly. However, he said the work that was done wrong, was really wrong and really bad. Mr. Bennett noted in the state of New Hampshire, a homeowner can do whatever work they want in their own home, be it plumbing, electrical, carpentry, etc., but they are not permitted to do their own gas installations. He agreed with Mr. Light that without inspections, in many cases the homeowner does not get the quality of work that they pay for.

David Shedd noted that the town contracts commercial inspections out to Shawn Bergeron. Mr. Light said that was correct and said Mr. Bergeron did a very good job and was very thorough, but he felt the town should be looking at residential construction more closely as well. He asked where he would go to start this process. When Kevin McEnaney said he should start with the selectman, Mr. Light said he would make an appointment to get on their agenda. Barry Trudeau asked whether it would need to go on the town ballot since it would involve creating a new town position. Selectmen’s representative David A. Patch said he was not sure of the answer to that question.

7. Review and Approve Minutes: The minutes of the September 17th meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes, as written, was made by Kevin McEnaney; seconded by David L. Patch. Vote: All in favor.

8. Mail and Other Business:

- Mail listed on the agenda was reviewed, including a courtesy copy of a NHDES wetlands permit to repair storm damage on the Saco River, as prepared by HEB Engineers.
- The board decided to forego ordering copies of the 2020 planning board handbook.
- The Chairman updated the board on the Federal Spice ZBA appeal and noted that there had been no formal appeal to the decision to allow the silo to remain in its current location. David Shedd shared that he had been approached by a town official who had asked whether the planning board was going to appeal the decision. Mr. Shedd said no. This person felt that a boundary-line adjustment should have been used to correct the situation of the silo being in the greenspace. Mr. Shedd had expressed that this would be problematic since it involved an adjustment between residential and commercial land. Mr. Shedd also noted that the brewery has been very good about not allowing parking in the green space.

- The Chairman updated the board about the school/museum sale and said they would be closing on the property shortly. He noted he had emailed copies of the deed to board members which documented only two lots, and said that the school lawyers had found no evidence so far that the lots had been previously merged.

There being no other business, a motion to adjourn was made by David L. Patch; seconded by Kevin McEnaney.
Vote: All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Bush, Recording Secretary