

**Minutes of the
Topsfield Planning Board
Town Library Meeting Room
February 16, 2016**

Chairman Morrison called the meeting to order at 7:30PM. Board members present, in addition to Chairman Martha Morrison, were Jeanine Cunniff, Joseph Geller, Steven Hall and Josh Rownd (arrived at 8:15PM). Of the Planning Board staff Community Development Coordinator Donna Rich was in attendance. Other persons present during all or part of the meeting were Sarkis Development Company representative John Sarkis, Finance Committee member Louis Ross, Town Hall Building Committee members Gregor Smith and Boyd Jackson, residents Dave & Nicki Larson, and Dick Gandt.

Erosion problems at 131 Haverhill Road, parking area to Hood Pond Beach: Chairman Morrison noted this was not under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board and has been a long standing issue at this location.

Beals & Thomas Proposal for Independent Peer Review Services for the Definitive Subdivision Plan at 116 & 120 Hill Street: Chairman Morrison noted receipt of the letter and reviewed the contents.

Proposed Warrant Article: Chairman Morrison presented language to amend Zoning Bylaw Article 4.10, section B, which is the striking out of the word “special”, to correct an anomaly that exists. It was noted that the Planning Board would hold a Public Hearing on March 15, 2016. Chairman Morrison presented language to amend Zoning Bylaw Article IV, 4.09 sections A and C.4.A. It was agreed not to pursue this amendment this year and to research the implications of the purposed changes over the next year and present it at the 2017 Town Meeting Warrant.

Appointments:

7:45PM: Proposed Elderly Housing District at 470 Boston Street: Mr. Sarkis came forward to present revised plans for 470 Boston Street and draft Warrant Article language. Mr. Sarkis began by describing the addition of an emergency access from Route 1 in the area of old driveway that served the house that exists in the woods, and after informal discussions with Department of Transportation it appears that the curb cut meets their criteria. Mr. Sarkis explained this would serve as a secondary access/egress to the development and that the roadway would be packed gravel. Mr. Sarkis described other small revisions: the re-purposing of the existing garage to become a small community room, with a small maintenance storage space, the rotation of the septic area, the addition of some walkways in the middle with a gazebo for a small gathering area, and possibly with a fire pit. Mr. Sarkis noted that he is not pursuing connecting to Willowdale State Park and described the re-configuring of the buildings on the plan. Chairman Morrison opened it up to Board members and explained the process at Town Meeting. Finance Committee Lou Ross expressed his interest in the financial impact as revenue to the Town and also the impact on Town services. Mr. Sarkis agreed to supply the requested information. Member Jeanine Cunniff expressed concern related to how this development affects the Town. After a discussion with the Assessor’s office she reported that the Town has 251 units that are age restricted, representing over 11% of the towns stock, using the 2015 Census reporting 2,176 total households in Topsfield. Jeanine stated her concerned is more about the resale of the units in the future and how

that potentially leaves the town with a surplus housing stock unable to sell. Mr. Sarkis defended the development, which was followed by a discussion relative to the demographics of Topsfield. Member Steve Hall raised his continued concern relative to the second access/egress. Resident David Larson was recognized and expressed his continued concern on the density of the project and the impact on setting of precedence for future projects with no “give back to the Town”. Resident Nicki Larson commented on the Open Space 2009 survey that noted the commitment of residents to the schools. The date for the Public Hearing would be March 15th.

8:15PM: Town Hall Building Committee Presentation: Town Hall Building Committee members Gregor Smith and Boyd Jackson came forward. Gregor Smith began by introducing the process the Committee had followed and expressed the needs for renovating Town Hall at this time. Gregor Smith and Boyd Jackson went through the schematic design that had been chosen and explained the need of an addition. They concluded with expressing that the project would be presented at the May 2016 Annual Town Meeting.

At 9:30PM, Member Jeanine Cunniff made a motion to adjourn and Member Josh Rownd seconded the motion; so voted: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna C. Rich
Community Development Coordinator

Per the Open Meeting Law, the documents that were either distributed to the Planning Board before the meeting in a packet, or at the meeting were:

1. Agenda
2. Letter dated February 1, 2016 from Conservation Commission regarding erosion issue at 131 Haverhill Road
3. Proposed language for Warrant Article to amend Zoning Bylaw Article 4.10, section B and Amend Zoning Bylaw Article IV, 4.09 sections A and C.4.A
4. Letter from Beals & Thomas dated January 26, 2016 regarding Peer Review Services for 116-120 Hill Street
5. Schematic Design plan for Town Hall renovation project dated January 8, 2016
6. Proposed Elderly Housing District at 470 Boston Street: warrant article language, revisions to plan

Approved as amended at the April 19, 2016 Planning Board meeting.

Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law,' G.L. 39, § 23B, the approval of these minutes by the Committee constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Committee as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.

