

**Town of Boscawen
PLANNING BOARD
Boscawen Municipal Complex
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, April 4th, 2023**

Members Present: Mark Varney—Chair; Loren Martin—Vice Chair; Barbara Randall; Gary Tillman; Roberta Witham; Lorrie Carey—Ex-Officio; Bill Bevans—Alternate Ex-Officio

Members Excused: Rhoda Hardy

Staff Present: Kellee Jo Easler—Planning and Community Development Director; Kearsten O'Brien—Deputy Planning & Community Development Director; Kara Gallagher—Planning & Community Development Assistant; Tim Kenney—Fire Chief

Guests: Matt Taylor—Senior Planner at Central NH Regional Planning Commission; Mike Tardiff—Executive Director at Central NH Regional Planning Commission

Chair Varney opened the Public Meeting at 6:30 p.m.

PCD Director Easler completed roll call.

Minutes:

Mr. Tillman requested one change to Line 49: add the location of the Class VI Road Site Walk.

Mr. Tillman motioned to accept the 03.07.23 draft minutes as amended. Seconded by Mrs. Randall. All in favor. None opposed.

Election of Committee Officers:

Mark Varney motioned to appoint Loren Martin as Chair. Seconded by Ex-Officio Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Ex-Officio Carey motioned to appoint Barbara Randall as Vice Chair. Seconded by Loren Martin. All in favor. None opposed.

Release of Excavation Bond-Map 183D Lots 133 & 134:

Chair Varney motioned to release the excavation bond for Map 183D Lots 133 & 134 in the amount of \$16,518. Seconded by Vice Chair Martin. All in favor. None opposed.

New Business:

Central NH Regional Planning Commission InvestNH Housing Opportunity Planning Grant:
Mr. Taylor said the town of Boscawen was awarded funds through this program to update or

draft new language for the Master Plan Housing Chapter, the Mill Redevelopment District, the Planned Unit Development Ordinance, the Cluster Development Ordinance, and the Tax Increment Finance District.

The Housing Chapter of the Master Plan was last updated in 2001. This chapter focuses on housing and demographic trends and their impact on municipal services. Mr. Taylor said InvestNH is very focused on community engagement, so one of the first tasks would be to come up with a plan on how to engage residents in town to participate in the update. Mr. Taylor would like to have a Community Engagement Plan and a draft with demographic data by the May 2nd meeting, a visioning session in June, and public hearings in the summer. CNHRPC has been looking at data pertaining to school enrollment. One of the reasons many towns are concerned about affordable housing is because the school age population has declined. A lot of young families can't afford homes in many communities in NH. School enrollment peaked in 2006 and has been declining ever since. CNHRPC has been working on the Fair Share Analysis for the past year, which is a statistical analysis of housing and population trends projecting future housing needs. It is mandated by state law to be completed by Regional Planning Commissions every 5 years, and the current analysis goes through 2040. For Boscawen, the Fair Share Analysis identifies that a total of 275 housing units are needed by 2040. This would break down to about 14 new housing units per year. This is not a mandate for units to be built, and there are no penalties for communities that don't meet the targets. Mr. Taylor said each year USHUD calculates the Area Median Income for every census-designated place using census data from the American Community Survey. The AMI is the midpoint of a region's income distribution, meaning that half of the households in a town or region earn more than the median and half earn less. Mr. Taylor said he would like feedback from the Board on how the Housing Chapter should be shaped. Ex-Officio Carey asked what type of housing Boscawen is lacking. PCD Director Easler and Vice Chair Martin both said workforce housing and there are very few affordable housing options. Mr. Taylor said to think about the demographics of the town. He said to focus on housing for all age groups, but in particular age groups that are growing. The Board discussed areas in town that could be utilized for affordable housing.

Mr. Taylor said in the Mill Redevelopment District, the cleanup of the town owned site is complete but still needs EPA approval. Other work remains, on both public and private property. He thinks a design charrette would be a useful tool for this area and held this summer. If all goes well, a first draft of the new ordinance could be ready by the fall, and a possible zoning warrant article for the 2024 Town Meeting.

Mr. Taylor suggested the Board review the current Cluster Development Ordinance before the update commences. He is planning on the first draft of this update to be ready by the fall, with a possible warrant article for Town Meeting 2024.

The Planned Unit Development Ordinance has not yet been created. PCD Director Easler said she'd really like to get this done, because the town has already had developers use PUDs, with more applications coming in that would like to incorporate PUDs. A PUD would help create new village centers, integrate multi-unit housing with commerce and industry, reduce cost of infrastructure and promote more efficient use of land. Mr. Taylor would like the first draft to be completed by the fall, with a possible warrant article for Town Meeting 2024.

The last update to the Housing Chapter would include adding a section on Tax Increment Finance Districts. A TIF District would be a way to fund infrastructure needed for new development without placing a burden on the tax base or current taxpayers. Towns may set aside revenue generated from the increase in property values within a district for specific purposes. This works by a municipality issuing bonds, or otherwise agreeing to fund public improvements needed for new development. The increase in tax revenue collected from the new development is used to make the bond payments. Reasons many communities adopt a TIF District include diversifying the tax base, creating incentives for new business development, acceleration of economic development, and funding of infrastructure improvements. Chair Varney said a problem with upgrading infrastructure could be that the town doesn't have control over the water, as the Water Precinct is its own entity. Mr. Tardiff said this is the case in many communities, and a TIF could be a great way to improve the relationship between the Commissioners and the town. This separation would not stop the TIF District process.

Vice Chair Martin said something they had discussed editing within the Ordinances was the restrictions on Accessory Dwelling Units. Currently, ADUs must be attached to a current structure. She said loosening up these restrictions could entice more housing. PCD Director Easler asked if there were any issues concerning this update. None heard.

Mr. Taylor said for the next meeting, he'd like the Board to think about how they can engage the community. The skeleton of the chapter should be done by then, and then a visioning session should be scheduled.

Other Business:

Impact Fees for the Fire Department: Chief Kenney said the fire department is not currently receiving impact fees. He said due to growth, the fire department has fallen on difficult times. There needs to be a change to the fire station in order to fit the community, whether it be build new or add on to the current building, because as it stands, the fire station cannot support the growth of the town. He said currently the department is 77 calls ahead of 2020, as of 2022. There were a total of 273 calls in 2022. Chief Kenney said they are on track to be at approximately 341 calls for 2023. He said Boscawen is one of only two communities that doesn't have a tankard truck, so with continued growth outside the Water District, that is a potential purchase in the future. Having impact fees will help offset these costs. The impact fees may only amount to a few thousand dollars, but that is money the taxpayers won't have to come up with. Mr. Taylor said in order to have impact fees, qualifying infrastructure needs to be included in the Capital Improvement Plan and would need to provide capacity for new growth. The town does have an Impact Fee Ordinance, so the Planning Board would need to adopt an Assessment Methodology in order to move forward. Mr. Taylor discussed the process and what would be involved. PCD Director Easler asked what the next step should be. Mr. Taylor said the Board will need to hold a Public Hearing to add impact fees for the fire department to the CIP. Fire Chief Kenney will get updated plans for an expansion of the existing fire station. Vice Chair Martin asked if the old police station located next door could be utilized. Discussion ensued. Code Enforcement Officer Alan Hardy is scheduled to do a site walk next week. PCD Director Easler will follow up. Vice Chair Martin suggested reaching out to surrounding communities that have newer safety complexes to see what their process was.

Planning and Community Development Department Update: The NH Office of Planning and Development Spring 2023 Planning & Zoning Conference is Saturday, April 29th. This training is virtual and will be recorded to be viewed at a later date if there are scheduling conflicts.

There will be a 91A training on April 19th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Municipal Office. This training will also be recorded for those who can't attend.

Chair Varney will not be present for the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on May 2nd, 2023 @ 6:30 p.m.

Motioned to adjourn made by Vice Chair Martin. Seconded by Mr. Tillman. All in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Kara Gallagher.