

Town of Sullivan, NH
Planning Board
Meeting Minutes, April 6, 2022
Sullivan Town Hall

Members present: Leslie Casey (chair), Laura Lewandowski, Tim Newcombe, Christopher Pratt, Paul Bolduc (ex officio), Adam Cullis (alternate), Laurie Goldsmith (alternate), and Ann Sweet (alternate)

Public present: Roger Sweet (ZBA, Conservation Commission)

A. L. Casey called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. T. Newcombe volunteered to serve as secretary pro tem. Chair Casey invited the new members to introduce themselves to the group. She welcomed L. Goldsmith, A. Cullis and T. Newcombe to the planning board.

B. Organizational Meeting

L. Casey stated that at the 2022 Town Meeting a warrant article had been approved (by voice vote) to change the planning board from 7 members to 5 members. The board still has 3 alternate member seats. Vacancies on the board were created when the term of one member (Peter Miles) expired, and two other members (Dorothy Miles and Milton Trimitsis) tendered their resignations. Casey explained that the terms of some new members are shorter than the statutory 3 years, in order to ensure that both full member and alternate member terms would have staggered expirations. After this year, all appointments will be for 3-year terms. Casey explained that the impetus for creating a smaller board was that in recent years the board had not had a full complement of members despite recruitment efforts, and on several occasions had come close to failing to convene a quorum.

The board then undertook election of officers. C. Pratt nominated L. Casey for Chair, and it was seconded by T. Newcombe. There were no other nominations. L. Casey accepted the nomination. There was no further discussion. All voted "aye."

L. Casey said that an effort was underway to hire a part-time planning clerk who would be expected to take notes at meetings and draft minutes. She asked whether there was a statutory requirement to have a member secretary. C. Pratt responded that it is in the board's Rules of Procedure, but there is no mention of a secretary in RSA 673:8. Casey moved to nominate T. Newcombe as Secretary Pro-Tem until the clerk can take over those responsibilities. Seconded by C. Pratt. There were no other nominations. T. Newcombe accepted the nomination. All voted "aye."

L. Casey remarked that the planning board provides 2 members to serve on the Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC), of which Sullivan is a member. Currently, Sullivan's long-time commissioners are L. Casey and A. Sweet. The SWRPC holds quarterly meetings at which there are speakers presenting on topics of regional interest. Commissioners must attend 2 quarterly meetings a year to remain in good standing. In addition, commissioners usually serve on an advisory committee.

The new members were asked if they might be willing and able to serve as commissioners, and they responded that more information was needed regarding the committee work commitment. L. Casey agreed to reach out to the SWRPC and come back with more information.

C. Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting, March 2, 2022

C. Pratt moved to approve the minutes of March 2, 2022, as written. L. Casey seconded. In discussion, L. Casey proposed the following amendments and corrections:

1. Public Present - Change Roger Sweet's affiliation from "358 Centre Street" to "Conservation Commission"
2. Section A – Correct "step in as voting member" to "step in as a voting member," and add "...and agreed to serve as secretary pro tem" to the end of that sentence.
3. Section B – Change "C. Pratt suggested that the next item..." to "C. Pratt suggested that the following item..."
4. Section G.2 – Correct "...Request for Proposal this for the 2025 Master Plan..." to "...Request for Proposal for the 2025 Master Plan..."
5. Section H – Correct "...but not agenda yet" to "...but no agenda yet." Also, correct "C.Pratt" to "C. Pratt"

There was no further discussion. P. Bolduc moved to approve the minutes for March 2nd as amended; C. Pratt seconded. All members who had been present at the meeting voted "aye."

D. Site Plan Review Regulation, certification of 2022 amendment

Leslie C. reviewed the Site Plan Review Regulations and the certification of the 2022 amendments. She shared the cover sheet to be signed by a majority of full members to certify the official copy of the regulations that will be submitted to the Town Clerk. L. Casey moved to table the certification until the next meeting due to a mistyped name on the form. Seconded by Chris P. Voice Vote: Unanimous.

E. Site Plan Review Checklist, final review for adoption

C. Pratt suggested that the checklist include the citations that are in the draft to help an applicant navigate requirements and research. L. Casey reviewed the purpose and nature of site plan review and the importance of the process, as well as the value of the checklist for applicants and the application review committee. Since final versions of the checklist were not available for the meeting, final review will be deferred until the May regular meeting.

F. Floodplain Development Ordinance, updating

The Town of Sullivan is currently working on an update to the current Hazard Mitigation Plan. FEMA requires the town to have an up-to-date Flood Plain Ordinance. L. Casey shared the current town ordinance from 2008 compared to the State-issued model ordinance of 2018. She had found in an initial review that Sullivan's current ordinance does not track with the model ordinance, so she proposed that a draft updated document be produced by using the state model and adding Sullivan-related information.

L. Casey also shared the current FEMA flood maps of the town. A. Sweet and C. Pratt noted the trouble with the maps missing data and the importance of identifying flood hazard zones as it relates to property loss and flood insurance. L. Casey commented that FEMA's algorithm for defining flood zones seems to emphasize risk of loss of life and property, as opposed to washouts of roads and bridges. She expressed her hope that FEMA will update the algorithm to more accurately reflect Sullivan's flood hazard. She said she would look into getting "FIRM" maps printed for East Sullivan, which has experienced repeated flooding.

G. Planning Board Items

1. Community Planning Ordinance, certification of 2022 amendment. Since the Town adopts the CPO amendments, it does not fall to the Planning Board to certify it. L. Casey did provide a copy of the 2022 CPO to the Town Clerk, however.

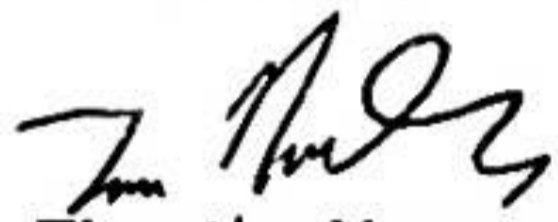
2. Master Plan 2025 update planning. L. Casey explained the importance and the role of the Master Plan in enabling zoning ordinances, and the budgetary and logistical planning needed to be able to complete the update. C. Pratt wondered if the SWRPC has services or personnel who may be helpful, since they were involved in previous updates. The most vital information is to capture the town's vision or feelings. It may be valuable to have an impartial planning professional to guide these early "visioning" efforts. The search for such a professional has begun, and L. Casey said it appears that there are planning consultants with experience in rural planning in the Northampton, MA area. There is also someone in VT. Public surveys and public involvement is a priority. Do the ordinances we have create the outcomes we desire? A. Cullis suggested that people might be asked to fill out the survey when they are in Town Hall for vehicle registration, etc. Timelines: L. Casey will put together a draft calendar. She asked everyone to think about who might serve on the Master Plan Committee
3. Planning Office status. L. Casey shared that the Planning office is coming along. There were a number of furniture items etc. that she was able to hunt down, including possible computers. The planning clerk ad will be published soon.
4. Selectmen's report. P. Bolduc shared that there has been an increase in property inquiries as well as interest in altering or reinstating discontinued roads. A. Sweet noted that over 25% of Sullivan is protected under conservation and cannot be developed. C. Pratt noted that there are a number of large, otherwise developable lots which do not have access to Class V roads.

H. Other

C. Pratt shared that the Town Archives web site is up, accessible from the "Government" page of the Town of Sullivan NH website, with help from Bob Switzer.

L. Casey motioned to adjourn; C. Pratt seconded. Voice Vote: unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,


Timothy Newcombe
Secretary Pro Tem