

Town of Clarence
Planning Board Minutes
Wednesday January 13, 2010

Work Session 7:00 pm

Chairman Al Schultz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1.) Roll Call

Planning Board Members present:

Chairman Al Schultz	Vice-Chairperson Wendy Salvati
Timothy Pazda	George Van Nest
Richard Bigler	Gregory Todaro

Town Officials Present:

Director of Community Development James Callahan
 Planner Brad Packard
 Councilman Peter DiCostanzo
 Deputy Town Attorney David Donohue

Other Interested Parties Present:

none

ACTION:

Motion by Wendy Salvati, seconded by Richard Bigler, to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on December 23, 2009, as written.

Gregory Todaro	Aye	Richard Bigler	Aye
George Van Nest	Recuse	Timothy Pazda	Recuse
Wendy Salvati	Aye	Al Schultz	Aye

MOTION CARRIED.

2.) Planning Board Organization

Chairman Schultz asked for input from all members regarding the Planning Board's past year. He said the Planning Board meeting held on December 23, 2009 was as good a meeting as you can get. There were issues on the project that were thoroughly addressed by the Town Engineer's Office, the Planning Board members in attendance understood the issues, most Planning Board members performed a site visit and neighbors were satisfied.

Jim Callahan said the Wegmans discussion/debate was well done.

Wendy Salvati would like to see the project files brought back to the Planning Board meetings so all information on the project is readily available during a meeting.

Richard Bigler notes that the Master Plan Annual Review is coming up on February 24, 2010.

Brad Packard said the Master Plan Annual Review in 2009 was handled cleanly and objectively; he appreciated the fact that the Planning and Zoning Office was used in the technical capacity. He will assist in coordinating better use of everyone's time in the Executive Planning Board sessions, perhaps with the use of informational e-mails sent prior to the sessions.

Timothy Pazda said he was sometimes uncomfortable with the past practice of having all information on a project discussed and the decisions made before the Planning Board meeting so that at the meeting it is just "rubber stamped". The other extreme was the Planning Board members would be digging in files searching for answers to questions during a Planning Board meeting. He would like to see a balance between these two practices.

Deputy Town Attorney David Donohue said it is preferable to receive legal questions via e-mail prior to a meeting if possible so that he can research the topic if necessary.

George Van Nest is pleased that the Planning Board held their ground and showed consistency in thought and process with the Wegmans Master Plan Amendment. He was disturbed by the small amount of disconnect that existed in terms of conveying the process for the Master Plan Amendment. He clarifies that he is talking about the confusion that seemed to exist at the Town Board level.

Gregory Todaro agreed with Jim Callahan's and George Van Nest's comments. He the integrity of this Planning Board is a breath of fresh air compared to what he has seen in other communities he's worked with. Land Use Certification is important. He would like to see the training and certifications continue to keep the Planning Board knowledge at a high level.

Richard Bigler does not agree with doing the majority of the work on an agenda item the night of the meeting. He likes the preparation done ahead of time. All members need to be involved. He understands that questions will come up the night of the meeting.

George Van Nest said the Executive Planning Board needs to be careful not to make any decisions or convey any type of decision to the applicant.

Al Schultz said there is a reasonable momentum from the Town Board to move the Planning Board to five (5) members; it is not unanimous. He thinks it is incumbent on the Planning Board to experiment with five (5) members, but the Executive Planning Board Committee will have a problem because there will only be two (2) members, but three (3) member signatures are required for sign approval. At this point, a five (5) member Planning Board, will still require four (4) votes for any action to be taken. The quorum is four (4) because the Planning Board is still a seven (7) member board, missing members. Open meeting regulations are still as they always were.

Timothy Pazda said this is a good opportunity to experiment with a five (5) member Planning Board. Wendy Salvati said the real test will come when a more complex project comes before the Board.

Gregory Todaro said it is important for members to communicate when they will be unable to attend a meeting as soon as they know.

Richard Bigler agreed that it is a good opportunity to experiment with a five (5) member Planning Board.

3.) Planning Board Effectiveness

Jim Callahan provides a Lean Six Sigma presentation; he is a Six Sigma Green Belt. The presentation is the analysis of the major project review process, taking a project from introduction to Concept Plan Approval. The project runs through a DMAIC: **D**efine, **M**easure, **A**nalyze, **I**mprove and **C**ontrol. The major project included both residential and commercial projects. The goal was to see if there is any mechanism that can be used to streamline the process and reduce costs. Another Six Sigma tool is a SIPOC: **S**upplies in the system, **I**nput, the **P**rocess, the **O**utput(s) and the **C**ontributions. Mr. Callahan looked at what it costs the Town to undertake a meeting in the review process. This would include personnel/hourly costs for the Town Board, Planning Board and TEQR Committee meetings. Mr. Callahan displays a diagram that shows every step in the review process; in a perfect situation the process would take 150 days. A standard review by the Town costs just over \$6,000. Various issues arise which delay the process, they include but are not limited to: incomplete or insufficient submissions, time delays between meetings causes a big discrepancy in the preparedness of the applicant and the reviewing bodies, public confusion regarding the process, lack of preparation of all the involved parties, and coordinated review responses. A possible solution includes a triage for project submittals. This would make sure the gatekeepers (Town Board members) are prepared with more general information up front so that identification of road blocks are obtained prior to sending the project through the process. The Planning and Zoning Office may be able to identify road blocks to the Town Board and the Planning Board.

Wendy Salvati asked if anyone considered the possibility of giving the Planning Board approval power on anything to eliminate the project going “back and forth” between Boards. She offered the idea of eliminating the two-step process by requiring applicants to come before the Town Board with engineered plans already done. Deputy Town Attorney David Donohue said that would take major Code changes.

Jim Callahan refers to the project triage matrix and explains a synopsis of the project could help all the Boards.

George Van Nest said if the Town is serious about streamlining, empowering the Planning Board should be considered. Al Schultz suggests making a proposal at the annual Master Plan Amendment meeting in February 2010. Deputy Town Attorney David Donohue said the issue can be placed on a Town Board agenda and discussed at that meeting.

Al Schultz said if there is an apparent stormwater, sewer or drainage issue with a project the Town Engineer will be invited to the Executive Planning Board meeting in order to discuss the issue. If there are road issues the Highway Superintendent will be invited to the meeting as well. A decision will not be made at this meeting; it's just to provide the full Board with all the information.

4.) Liaison Assignments

Al Schultz explained that a liaison is someone who provides information between boards. Wendy Salvati is liaison to Conservation Advisory Council. Ms. Salvati said there is always dialogue between her and the members in which they exchange relative information.

Richard Bigler is liaison to the Zoning Board of Appeals; there is not much discussion between Mr. Bigler and that Board. George Van Nest asked if a liaison to the Zoning Board of Appeals is necessary. Mr. Schultz said there is one (1) out of fifty (50) items that the Zoning Board of Appeals looks at that have to do with the Planning Board. After further discussion it is decided that Mr. Bigler will use his discretion as to whether or not his attendance is necessary at a Zoning Board of Appeals meeting; if the agenda items have no relevance to the Planning Board he does not have to attend.

Timothy Pazda is liaison to the Fire Advisory Board who meets once a month. Mr. Pazda classifies his attendance at these meetings as valuable every once in a while. Jim Callahan said projects are referred to the Fire Advisory Board members for review and comment.

George Van Nest is liaison to the Traffic Advisory Committee which is a virtual committee; there have not been any meetings in two (2) years. Jim Callahan explained that when a project is referred to this committee the information is electronically sent to them for review and comment.

It is decided that Gregory Todaro will be the liaison to the Town Environmental Quality Review (TEQR) Committee.

Al Schultz said all liaisons should use discretion when attending meetings. For example, if all items on an agenda are going to be tabled there is no need for the liaison to attend that meeting.

5.) What might we expect in 2010?

Al Schultz said there are three (3) or four (4) commercial development plans that are currently at the Town Engineers office, they are good projects. He thinks there will be further activity with the Segment B project. There are some large residential projects along Harris Hill Road that will need to be dealt with.

6.) Miscellaneous

Deputy Town Attorney David Donohue said if there are only four (4) Planning Board members that will be in attendance at a meeting and there is a complicated project on the agenda perhaps consideration should be made to remove that project from the agenda. All Planning Board members should communicate via e-mail if they are unable to attend a meeting as soon as they know.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Carolyn Delgato
Senior Clerk Typist