

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday January 13, 2022

Board Members:

Mackenzie Brisson
Roland Simino
Jill Brown
Roxanne Tufts-Keegan

Public:

None

Meeting called to order by Mackenzie Brisson on Thursday January 13, 2022, at 6:30pm.
Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes:

November 8, 2021, table until Lee and Janet are present.

December 09, 2021, and December 16, 2021, Roxanne motions to accept as read, Jill seconds all in favor.

New Business: None

Old Business:

-MRI Contract and Update: Mackenzie followed up with MRI, they stated it is not a problem to wait until March/April. In terms of what she has heard from the Board of Selectmen, she has not heard anything from them, they were supposed to follow up. There is a warrant article according to Roxanne. Jill asked to rewind just to be clear: Mackenzie goes over the Timeline.

Timeline on Temporary Moratorium on Building

7/29/2021 - Emergency Meeting introducing the idea of a moratorium

8/12/2021 - Public Hearing for the Moratorium, passes the Board

9/13/2021 - asked to re-present petition with signatures at the BOS meeting

10/2/2021 - Special Town Meeting; moratorium goes into effect

11/17/2021 - Mackenzie reached out to MRI to see if they are available to update Master Plan

11/19/2021 - MRI emailed that they have the availability to take on our Master Plan update

11/30/2021 - Mackenzie spoke to Carol with MRI about the process and expectations

12/9/2021 - Board voted to use MRI for Master Plan update

12/13/2021 - BOS meeting where the question was raised regarding the budget line for Master Plan update

12/15/2021 - MRI sent scope of work contract to review and sign

12/16/2021 - BOS emailed and asked to take the \$25,000 from the budget and put it in a warrant article

12/21/2021 - Board submitted warrant article to BOS at the request of the BOS

12/27/2021 - Presented BOS with the contract to sign; BOS asked for time to review and find the funds

12/28/2021 - The Board reached out to MRI and asked for a scope of work extension to sign the contract, MRI said that would be fine.

Roxanne states it was submitted and presented at the budget committee public hearing. It is in for the unassigned fund balance. Jill asks for an explanation of unassigned fund balance. Roxanne explains this is budget money that is not used, it goes into the unassigned fund balance. An example is this year the Board of Selectmen decided to reduce the tax rate by using unassigned fund balance money. It is money that is not allocated to anything. Every year Warrant Articles are typically through taxation and one time Warrant Articles are not typically through taxation and it usually comes from the unassigned fund balance. Roxanne continues, the Master Plan and the capital Improvement Plan are not optional. Mackenzie would like to see at town meeting if the Planning Board Warrant Article can be bumped up, so it is closer to the front so if the threshold of the funds is met, we still are able to get the funds. We are able to petition it to have it moved up. Roxanne suggests that someone needs to speak at Town Meeting to thoroughly explain this. Jill asks who has the authority to spend from the fund, Roxanne says the Board of Selectmen has the authority to expend from the fund.

No further questions or comments.

-Abby Church Essence merger application. She responded to the email. We will contact her again to see what works best for the next meeting in February, whether it be a call in, her attending the meeting or her sending a representative. She has some challenges in being able to make a meeting. The board decided that we need to do an in-person meeting. If she cannot make that date in February, ask her to give us a couple dates and we can work a meeting around her. The goal is not to be difficult; it is to be thorough.

Roxanne asks if there has been any update on the Sliver Street and Jordan Drive property. Mackenzie says that we have not heard anything back on that or any other of the consultations we had. It has been quiet. Jill does point out it's a tough time of year with winter being here.

Mackenzie puts out a reminder that Internal Board Elections are coming up in March to elect the new Chair and Vice Chair holders. It's a new opportunity for people to hold these spots on the board.

Public Comments: None

Board Comments:

Jill asks if anyone else has been contacted regarding a social media post regarding the moratorium. She has had 2 people reach out to her, she has not responded as she wanted to talk with the Board first, but it was regarding a comment made by a Selectmen about being sued over the moratorium. People are wondering we can be sued for putting the moratorium in place. We as the group held the vote and it was voted on by the residents, however we may get these questions. She says she has not fielded any of these questions, being new to the board she doesn't know what is appropriate for her as a representation outside of this board for a question like that.

Roxanne says especially with social media, she would specifically say come to a meeting or reach out by email for answers. Mackenzie replies that typically her response is always, unless replying to a board email, is just as a resident. Meeting minutes are public so they can be referred to those.

Jill says she also saw another post from someone who said they miss the Board of Selectmen meeting but heard that the Selectmen declined to give money for an attorney for the moratorium. Jill says she reads the minutes as she cannot attend every meeting, so she did

suggest to that person to sign up for the emails from the town and the meeting minutes are emailed when they are ready. That is how she fielded that question but as for the first one... Roland suggests if someone texts you with a question refer them to the online town website to see town meeting minutes, that way it doesn't come back to you being at fault for something.

Jill wants to know the stance on lawsuits. Her understanding is we had the reasons that we suggested the moratorium and to get the master plan done. We have to get that in place before the moratorium comes up or at least a work in progress. What if by chance the funds are not granted for the master plan?

Mackenzie says the Board of Selectmen were told if the warrant article goes through or not by law the town needs to come up with that money. Essentially with the way we have it right now the warrant article is for the townspeople to decide on giving the money for the master plan and CIP. If the town votes yes on the warrant the BOS must sign off on the funds. The warrant is worded for the Contract with MRI.

Mackenzie states that if the warrant does not go through by the townspeople, the town legally must come up with those funds. Jill says well we have it in process but what if it is not done by October 2? Mackenzie says the bulk of it will be done by then. If we had done nothing, then the potential is yes to your question. We have not heard of any lawsuits regarding the moratorium. Roxanne says we are not denying anyone with building permits when they come in. Jill wonders how would we know if one was denied? Mackenzie says that would be through Code Enforcement. In other towns Code Enforcement has contact with the Planning Board.

Roxanne states that the Code Enforcement has budgeted for a new software through Avitar. This should make tracking easier.

Other Board Comments: None

Mackenzie appreciates the attendance of everyone and would like to stick to one meeting a month until town meeting. We will wait to hear if we need to add another meeting time for the merger application.

Next meeting Thursday February 10, 2022.

Roxanne makes a motion to adjourn at 7:09pm Roland seconds. All in favor.
Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:
Janelle Guarino
Planning Board Secretary