



# Town of Middleton

182 Kings Highway, Middleton, New Hampshire 03887

## ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT MINUTES

December 19, 2023

Middleton Old Town Hall  
200 Kings Highway  
Middleton, NH 03887

**Meeting Called to Order** by Charles Therriault at 6:37 PM

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Invocation** by Dan Saliga

**Roll Call**

Members present: Charles Therriault (Chair), Lorri Gunnison (Secretary), Dan Saliga, Jim Keegan (**Vice Chair**), Joe Varga (Alternate) Tim Cremmen (BOS Ex-Officio)

**Members absent:** None

**Review Minutes:**

**Motion to approve minutes of October 24, 2023**

**Motioned by** Jim Keegan

**Seconded by** Dan Saliga

**Vote** - Unanimous

**Motion Carried**

**Unfinished Business**

**T. Cremmen** will check to see if Linda Adamo has been sworn in as an alternate member of the board.

**L. Gunnison** handed out a copy of some questions she came up with for a survey for residents. She reminded everyone at the end of the last meeting they talked about each member coming up with a couple of survey questions.

**C. Theriault** said this was similar to what he was talking about concerning finding out if the town wants to take advantage of grants for workforce housing.

**L. Gunnison** reminded everyone that many decisions cannot be made by the town boards. The residents need to decide based on the voting procedures for town meetings.

**J. Keegan** said he does not believe reducing the minimum lot size would favorably affect people's ability to afford housing or purchase a piece of land.

**C. Theriault** said he was surprised to learn through some research that when the minimum lot size in Middleton was two acres, the tax rate was much lower than when it was increased to five acres. He thought it would have been higher. He said the tax rate went up almost 80% during the years after the minimum lot size was increased to five acres.

There was some discussion about the history of the town and the relationships between tax rates, current use, the school and lot sizes.

**J. Keegan** talked about zoning in Brookfield, NH. He talked about Class 6 roads and the zoning regulations that they normally involve. For example, anyone trying to build on a Class 6 road needs to know there is no guarantee the town emergency services could get to them.

**J. Keegan** said it may be a good idea to explore different lot sizes in different areas. For example, he said a five-acre minimum may not be necessary for someone who wanted to build a store.

**J. Varga** said the way the ordinance is written is that **lots in** any new subdivision must be five acres.

There was discussion about assisting the Planning Board by making suggestions to update some of the Zoning Ordinances based on what the community wants and needs.

**D. Saliga** said the Planning Board specifically asked the Zoning Board to produce suggestions on what may need to be changed based on what issues have come before them.

**L. Gunnison** said the only issues that have come up in the two years she has been on the ZBA are those related to small lots, such as setback requirements.

**C. Theriault** suggested they consider having a separate set of rules for existing town roads (for example two acres minimum) and another for new subdivisions where a new road is created. Another example would be changing the ordinance so that family compounds could be separated into two lots, each with two acres.

**C. Theriault** mentioned resident Lenny Melanson, **who** has a family compound, may like to separate it into two lots so he can give one to his daughter. He has to be sure he has the correct setbacks and/or get variances for that and the five-acre lot minimum.

**J. Keegan** said the ordinance for family compounds warns about the importance of planning and advises taking into consideration the fact that zoning laws may change.

They may be different in the future and may not be in line with the resident's goals over time.

None of the members have received a variance application from Mr. Melanson. He needs to contact the ZBA and discuss the application and hearing process if he is interested in pursuing a variance.

There was discussion about trying to make the process for requesting a variance less confusing and time consuming for residents, but still meet the **standards** and documentation the law **requires**.

**J. Varga** said there are detailed requirements and specific dates in the law that have to be adhered to in order to change an ordinance.

**J. Varga** said they don't need to come up with what the Planning Board wants. They should decide what changes the ZBA thinks residents want that would be beneficial to the town, then propose those to the Planning Board. The next step would be to have a discussion with the Planning Board, decide what both boards agree on, and propose that to the town.

It was agreed it is critical to ask the residents what they want. There was discussion about questionnaires in general and it was decided it would be helpful to get input from residents about different issues (for example the family compound ordinance) and then ask closed-ended questions about the best way to accomplish this. The ZBA could meet monthly and work on this when there are no variance applications to review.

It was decided that each member will read Ordinance #23, Family Compounds, prior to the next meeting. Also, each member should be prepared to discuss some open-ended questions to use in a survey for residents.

**Motion to adjourn at 7:37 PM**

**Motioned by** L. Gunnison

**Seconded by** D. Saliga

**Motion Carried**

**Next meeting:** January 16, 2024 at 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by:

Robin Willis