10/09/2019 PB Minutes

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
Planning Board
October 9, 2019

BETHLEHEM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM
Minutes
6:00 pm

Present:   Chairman Johnathan Stevenson, Chris McGrath, Marie Stevenson, Kevin Roy, Kim Koprowski and Chris Jensen
Alternates: Anthony Rodrigues voting member for the night
Excused absence: Vice Chair Mike Bruno, Nick Meachen, Peter Roy
Chairman Johnathan Stevenson opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.
Chairman Johnathan Stevenson appointed alternate Anthony Rodrigues as full voting member for the night.
Chris McGrath asked if there was an attendance clause for failure to attend and unexcused absences. Debbie Bayley will check with NHMA.
Minutes from September 25, 2019
Marie Stevenson motion to approve as amended Anthony Rodrigues seconded and it passed 6-1 with Kim Koprowski abstaining.
The public notice was read for the continued hearing for the change of Rules and procedure and opened the hearing at 6:00 pm.
Rules of Procedure document
The board decided to just go over the rules on paper and not use the power point presentation since there was no one from the public in the audience.
On Section 6 Chris Jensen noted that Mr. Bruno had added an item, number 4, about any conditions for a site plan approval being noted on a new form.
Mr. Jensen said the select board was hoping planning would approve using the form, which would then be given to the code officer. He said the plan was worked out by Nicole McGrath in the town office and code officer David Wiley agreed with it.
Mr. Jensen suggested a change to show the select board and the code officer would get copies, not just the code officer.
Mr. Jensen said the idea was to help keep track of conditions and make sure the developer does what is required. Chris McGrath said that idea was brought up years ago but never went further. He said he thought it was a great idea.
One concern raised by Chairman Stevenson was Section 10, item b.
His concern was the sentence “the board shall not grant approval of an application pending receipt of either information that the subdivision regulations require or studies or reports that the board requires before deciding the application.”
Chairman Stevenson worried that “shall” could prevent the board from approving an application because of a small thing like the direction “north” not being on the plan. He wanted to give the planning board a chance to okay a project.
Chris Jensen said he sees “information” and “studies” as different than something like the direction. He said that information could be important and the board should not be allowed to approve something without it.
Chairman Stevenson also said he would like to see something about attendance and lateness that gives the planning board the right to remove a member for failing to attend.
Kevin Roy said the board meets every second and fourth Wednesday of the month and there is no excuse for board members not to let the clerk know if they will miss a meeting.
Mr. Jensen said an attendance policy might be good, but it would have to be written carefully to avoid punishing somebody who might have a long sickness and probably only the select board can remove an elected official. But the planning board could make a request to the select board.
The board decided more time was needed to consider the rules and voted to continue the hearing until October 23.  Chris McGrath made the motion and Kim Koprowski seconded.  It passed 7-0.
Code officer attending
The board asked Debbie Bayley to ask David Wiley if he could please attend the October 23, 2019 hearing.  The board would like to catch up current projects.  Timeline on projects completion.
Manufactured Homes
The board discussed having a warrant article to deal with where manufactured/mobile homes can be located.
Mr. Jensen provided state definitions of manufactured/mobile homes and how they are different than pre-site/modular homes.
He said the select board had asked the planning board for a recommendation on whether to keep the zoning regulation the town adopted in 1987. That limits manufactured homes to parks.
Mr. McGrath said he would be open to manufactured homes anywhere but along Main Street in the Village District. He said a development could have a covenant to keep mobile homes out. He said there should be a standard for the manufactured homes to make sure they are not junk.
Mr. Stevenson said he didn’t think the town should even be involved in this.
Mr. Jensen said it is possible when the town voted for the restriction people worried that manufactured/mobile homes would hurt property values of the homes nearby. Or somebody might not want to buy a regular house next to a manufactured house, he said.
But Mr. Jensen also noted that there is a shortage of affordable housing in the North Country and manufactured homes are much nicer and safer than they were in 1987.
Mr. Jensen said one possibility was a warrant article that just asked voters whether they still think that manufactured homes should be limited to special parks.
But it was noted if that was voted down, then manufactured homes could be located anywhere.
So, board members said, maybe there should be two warrant articles. The second one would allow manufactured homes only in certain areas.
The board agreed it is a complicated issue and it would be good to see what people think. So, there will be a November 13th public hearing.
Other
There was also a brief discussion about whether the board should get involved in Airbnb or tiny homes.
Mr. McGrath said he does not like the idea of people buying a house and using it only as an Airbnb rental. He said that is different than people making a little extra money from time to time.
No decision was made.
Mr. Jensen said he saw a notice that Tara Bamford is available to help boards with planning problems. He said he watched her work with the Coos Planning Board on very complicated stuff like the Balsams and she does great work.
The board agreed to ask how much she would want to help review its procedures.
Marie Stevenson said she is very unhappy that Lahout’s is putting up more buildings under a plan that was approved years ago. She said there should be a time limit that makes a developer come back because things might have changed.
Mr. Jensen agreed.
Marie Stevenson motion to adjourn. Anthony Rodrigues second All in favor 7-0

Respectfully submitted
Debbie Bayley
Planning/Zoning Clerk