



OAK BLUFFS PLANNING BOARD

Meeting Minutes

THURSDAY, October 12, 2023

5:00 p.m. | Virtual Zoom Meeting

Members in Attendance: Ewell Hopkins, Mark Crossland, Erik Albert, JoJo Lambert, Sean DeBettencourt

Members Absent: None

Staff in Attendance: Jessica Downey

Attendees: Geoff Rose, Kris O'Brien, Josh MacArthur, Todd Cleland, Kimberly Kirk, Sam Houghton, Susan Desmarais, Joan _____, Rebekah ElDeiry, Richard Toole, Mark Mac, Terence _____.

Chair Hopkins opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

Member Crossland made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 14, 2023 Planning Board meeting. Member Hopkins seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 2-0.

Member Albert made a motion to approve the Open Session and Executive Session (as to form only, not for release) minutes from the September 28, 2023 Planning Board meeting. Member DeBettencourt seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 4-0.

Citizens' Cannabis Petition - Update

Chair Hopkins stated that a Citizens' Petition has been presented to the Planning Board through the Select Board. The Planning Board is now obligated to hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to Town Meeting. The hearing on this matter has been scheduled for October 26, 2023. The Chair expressed the desire to differentiate between the special zoning reform meetings currently being held by the Planning Board and this mandatory public hearing on the Citizens' Petition. At the hearing, the Petitioner will make a presentation, then the Board will ask for public comment. At that time, the Board will be able to ask questions, then close the public hearing and move to deliberation.

Kris O'Brien asked for clarification regarding the substance of the petition. The Chair clarified that it is a Citizens' Petition related to Cannabis Operations in the Town of Oak Bluffs.

Status of Zoning Reform Meetings

The Chair stated that there have been two meetings so far and the Board has received a lot of feedback. The Chair asked the Board for thoughts and questions related to the sufficiency of the input and whether they thought a second series of meetings was necessary.

Member Crossland suggested giving more context to the proposals, including participation from working group members. The Chair stated that working group members would be invited to participate at future meetings so the public will have an opportunity to hear from them. Member Lambert commented that she thought the last meeting went very well and that there was a significant amount of public input.

Member Hopkins indicated that the Board should spend some money on newspaper advertisements for the November meetings, but that spending advertising dollars on the remaining October meetings would not be worth it. Member DeBettencourt agreed, adding that there has been some confusion on the part of the public surrounding the purpose of these meetings.

The Chair then sought additional input from the Board regarding procedure going forward: should the Board hold additional meetings, and if so, what form should they take?

Member Lambert recommended holding another four meetings in the same form as the meetings that have been held thus far.

Member Crossland inquired as to timing, and the Chair assured the Board that there would be time in November and perhaps into December for additional meetings. However, it would be best to complete the process before the Holidays. A discussion followed regarding logistics of holding the meetings, and a determination was made that four additional meetings would be held in November, in the same format as those that have been held previously.

Member DeBettencourt suggested that there be a pamphlet or takeaway for the meeting attendees, and perhaps a Powerpoint presentation from the working group members, for visual learners.

The Chair inquired as to whether a broadcast interview would be helpful and the conclusion was that it would not. The Chair further recommended handing out flyers at the post office.

Susan Desmarais suggested that information be available re: potential implications of the changes. The Chair suggested this might be a good topic for the one-pagers that would be handed out.

Richard Toole thanked the Board for their work on zoning reform, and suggested that the fewer pages in these handouts, the better. The Chair agreed, and reiterated that there is already a significant amount of information available on the Board's website.

Member Albert left the meeting at 5:33 p.m.

MVRHS

The Chair announced that the Board's most recent Court filing would be made available on the website the following day.

Member Crossland recused himself from the discussion at 5:36 p.m.

The Chair opened the floor to public comment and questions at 5:36 p.m. Susan Desmarais asked for a brief explanation of the response. The Chair explained that the Judge requested that the parties collaborate and come back with characterizations or positions on the state of the legal proceedings. The Planning Board and the Town responded with a recommendation that would include a special permit process in line with the constraints of the Judge's ruling. He further explained that the school officials submitted their recommendation, and the Judge is considering both. The Chair stated that the Board does not have a timetable associated with resolution of the matter, but that it will inform the public as soon as it hears from the Court.

Board Updates

Member Crossland rejoined the meeting at 5:39 p.m.

The Chair stated that he has had several meetings with the Water Superintendent since the last Board meeting, and that the Superintendent has published a document outlining the conditions under which his system is operating. The Superintendent is also wrapping up his engineering work, and meeting with the Select Board and the head of the Land Bank to determine sites for potential additional wells. The goal is to work long term to plan additional capacity.

Adjourn

Member Lambert made a motion to adjourn. Member DeBettencourt seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 4-0.

Minutes approved October 26, 2023

Documents on File:

Agenda; Board Packet; Zoom Video