

Town of Newington, NH

PLANNING BOARD

Meeting Minutes – June 10, 2013

Call to Order: Chair Denis Hebert called the June 10, 2013 meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

Present: Mike Marconi, Vice Chair; Bernie Christopher; Jack Pare; Justin Richardson; Alternate Member, Peggy Lamson; Board of Selectman Representative, Rick Stern; Jane Kendall, Recorder; and Thomas Morgan, Town Planner

Public Guests: Dave Hislop, Knight Hill Surveying; Dick Spinney; Alicia Busconi, VP Property Management, and Rachel Cormier, Property Manager of Keypoint Partners; Elena Berry, Sales Manager, Metro Sign & Awning

1) Public Hearings: Proposal by **Dave & Marge Hislop and Justin & Leila Richardson** for a lot line adjustment at 32 & 34 Old Post Road, Tax Map 16.

Dave Hislop presented the Board with his proposal for a lot line adjustment to convey property to the Richardson's who already have a leach field load bearing easement on the Hislop property. Justin Richardson gave a brief review of the history of his lot, which only had a cesspool on the Hislop property when the Richardson's first moved in, and later had a septic failure in 2008. The easement was drawn up in order to do a leach field quickly, but the lot line adjustment was held off until DOT's purchase of a conservation easement on the Hislop property was completed to be sure it wasn't taken by eminent domain. Board Chair, Denis Hebert said it made sense to make the Richardson lot more conforming.

Mike Marconi moved to accept the lot line adjustment at 32 & 34 Old Post Road, Tax Map 16, Lot 8, and Tax Map 10, Lot 16 as complete. Bernie Christopher seconded, and all were in favor.

Mike Marconi moved to accept the application as complete. Bernie Christopher seconded, and all were in favor.

2) Preliminary Discussions:

A) Proposal by **Crossings** for electronic reader board signs along Woodbury Avenue and Gosling Road, Tax Map 34, Lot 3.

Alicia Busconi, VP, Property & Asset Management, and Rachel Cormier, Property Manager of Keypoint Partners, and Elena Berry, Sales Manager for Metro Sign & Awning came before the Board with their proposal to install new reader board signs at the Crossings in stages. They are proposing to replace two signs with electronic reader boards made by WatchFire, Inc., which would be controlled by KeyPoint

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Partners over the web. Ms. Busconi said Regal Cinema said they couldn't manage their existing sign on Woodbury Ave so they offered use of the sign to Keypoint. Busconi said the brightness could be controlled, and the sign could be utilized for Amber Alerts.

Board member, Jack Pare said the concern with electronic reader boards is that competing retailers could ratchet up the brightness and activity, distracting passing drivers so an ordinance was established to prevent signs from flashing or moving. Board Chair, Denis Hebert said the ordinance should probably have a provision to review new technology as well. Justin Richardson added that as well intended as Amber Alerts are, the flashing lights would be a distraction to drivers. Ms. Busconi said they would check with the Town before putting up an alert, and would leave it up for five minutes, rather than making a more rapid flash. Board Chair, Denis Hebert said controlling the illumination is good, but agrees that even posting good deeds for the community frequently would be distracting to drivers.

Alternate Board member, Peggy Lamson said she didn't think the "glitzy" technology suited the character and history of the Town, and thought traditional signs were better. Chair Hebert said he agreed, but the electronic reader boards would make it easier to change signs if a new tenant went in. Busconi asked if a more traditional LED sign without the individual tenant logos would be more acceptable on the reader board. Justin Richardson said the difficulty is in setting the criteria. Richardson said the site plan regulations say sign lighting is supposed to go out at the close of business. Town Planner, Tom Morgan said site plan approval is not required for changing signs at existing businesses. Richardson noted that some of the signs proposed are for new locations, to which Morgan said they would need to go to the ZBA to request a variance for some of the signs.

Board member, Bernie Christopher asked how the Gosling Road signs would be illuminated, and Ms. Busconi said they would be illuminated the same way they have been, except there would be a LED sign at the top of one of the 40 feet tall signs to get attention from the highway. Justin Richardson said they might not need a traffic study, but was concerned with how an LED sign would affect traffic. Chair Hebert agreed, and said it would also be helpful to look at any problems that have occurred where the same technology has been used elsewhere. Tom Morgan said the Board could still determine if they should have a site review, and Chair Hebert said he could understand a concern for visibility from the highway, especially with the Spaulding Expansion project promoting through traffic, but they probably should do a site review. Bernie Christopher agreed with a site plan review, and Mike Marconi agreed that he would like to see where the new sign is going before approving. Denis Hebert wondered if locating a sign along the highway by Kohl's might work better. Jack Pare recommended putting up a helium balloon with a 40-foot string to get a sense of how the sign would be visible from the highway and roads. Justin Richardson suggested getting a letter from a traffic engineer showing the Gosling Road sign move would comply with State regulations, and making receipt of the letter a condition for approval.

Tom Morgan said wherever they put the sign, it still wouldn't alert north bound traffic in time to turn off on Gosling Road, Exit 1, and the DOT is proposing to make Exit 2 go away eventually. Chair Hebert said it would be important to assist businesses

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in coping with the changes from the Spaulding Turnpike Expansion. Alicia Busconi said they would be glad to echo those statements to the public through their social media links.

Board Chair, Denis Hebert requested that the applicant return with plans that would include sign placement, illumination levels, and site distance for a Public Hearing scheduled on July 8, 2013.

B) Proposal by Crossings for Seacoast Growers Association Farmers' Market
KeyPoint Property & Asset Management VP, Alicia Busconi said they had been approached with the possibility of hosting the Farmers' Market from 2:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. on Tuesdays beginning mid July, and they had checked with their tenants, and all had been supportive.

Justin Richardson said Greenland already hosts the Farmers' Market on Tuesdays, so they might want to consider another day. Richardson said they would also need to consider that many people go to the Farmers' Markets that also have vendors cooking foods which create trash and restroom issues.

Mike Marconi asked if they would need to discuss the proposal with the Health Officer. Chair Hebert asked if the Board would approve once traffic flow, parking and sanitation issues had been addressed, and the consensus was that it would.

3) Pending Business: Coast Bus Shelter on Gosling Road

Town Planner, Tom Morgan said he attended a meeting at Portsmouth City Hall regarding the proposed bus shelter, and although the majority of riders are tenants of Gosling Meadows on the Portsmouth side, Portsmouth wants Newington to provide a sidewalk to the crosswalk at the traffic light at the corner of Woodbury and Gosling to ensure their safety.

Because it would not be safe for the bus stop to be placed so close to the corner, and there being no sidewalk, Morgan suggested it might be a good idea to ask Cumberland Farms to put in part of the sidewalk during the construction of their new facility. Board Chair, Denis Hebert asked who would be responsible for plowing the sidewalk in the winter since Newington doesn't have sidewalk plowing equipment, and pedestrians would end up walking in the road when there was snow. Jack Pare said they might consider a flashing sign mid-block. Tom Morgan said they'd proposed a crossing at the bus stop, but the City of Portsmouth thinks it would give pedestrians a false sense of security. Bernie Christopher and Justin Richardson said people would then take it upon themselves to jaywalk if there was not crossing at the bus stop. Mike Marconi said Newington could use a utility trailer for plowing. Peggy Lamson said DOT is going to build sidewalks along Woodbury Avenue before they turn it over to the Town, the Town could contribute to adding a sidewalk up to the bus stop to support business, and plowing should be added to the budget to avoid liability. Lamson said Newington could also ask Portsmouth to contribute or do the plowing for their Gosling Meadows citizens. Chair Hebert agreed that the Town might want sidewalk-plowing equipment eventually.

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Tom Morgan said Coast bus lines was expecting a Federal Grant to build the Gosling Road bus shelter, but would need \$3,000 seed money from Newington which would be reimbursed.

Mike Marconi moved to give Coast Transportation \$3,000 seed money for the installation of a bus shelter on Gosling Road, contingent upon repayment. Bernie Christopher seconded, and all were in favor

Minutes: ***Mike Marconi moved to approve the Minutes for the June 3, 2013 Planning Board meeting. Peggy Lamson seconded, Justin Richardson was absent and abstained, and all other members were in favor.***

Adjournment: Mike Marconi motioned to adjourn. Bernie Christopher seconded, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, July 8, 2013

**Respectfully
Submitted by:** Jane K. Kendall, Recording Secretary