

**ATKINSON PLANNING BOARD MEETING
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023**

Members:

Sue Killam, Chair (present)
Vice Chair Turell (present)
Ted Stewart (not present)

Paul Wainwright, Alternate (present)
John Ottow (not present)
(Master Plan Team)
Barbara Brown (present)
Paul DiMaggio (present)
Beth Cacciotti– Selectman Ex Officio
(not present)

Others Present

Julie LaBranche, Planner (present)
Karen Wemmelmann, Recorder (present)
Sue Coppeta, Planning & Zoning Administrator
(not present)

Call to Order:

Chair Killam called the Atkinson Planning Board meeting to order Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 7:33 PM. She explained that there are some interesting things happening and she would like to inform the audience. She also informed the audience that there are no public hearings at this meeting.

Minutes:

February 1, 2023:

Vice Chair Turell made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2023 meeting as corrected. Member Brown seconded the motion. Vote: 4/0/0. Unanimous.

Public Hearings: NONE

Master Plan Update: Team Report by Chair Killam

There is a master plan committee meeting with the consultant on Thursday, February 16, 2023, from 4:30 PM – 6:00 PM. Chair Killam encourages anyone interested in the topic to attend. Information can be found in print and on websites. The meetings are wide open and are held in Atkinson Town Hall. They are televised so residents can watch the meeting from home or attend in person if they have something to offer. Planning Board members will also attend. Karen McFadden and John Ottow co-chair the Master Plan Committee. Chair Killam wants the audience to know about this on-going activity. Citizens are strongly encouraged to participate in it. Generalized input over a wide cross section of people is needed.

The draft copy of the current conditions report has been released and the masterplan committee will be reviewing it at their meeting tomorrow.

There is a flyer out regarding the forum on April 11, 2023. It is out on several Atkinson web pages, including the Planning Board page. There is also an Atkinson Master Plan page on

Facebook. Ms. LaBranche informed the audience that the April 11, 2023 event is a community forum. They are asking people to participate and give their feedback on a wide range of topics that the master plan may cover. There is a flyer about it which can be found on the Planning Board page. All the links and information can be accessed there by clicking on the master plan link. The agenda for the master plan committee meeting tomorrow is also posted on the Planning Board page. They will be looking at the existing conditions report, planning for the April 11, 2023 event and working on outreach.

Chair Killam informed the audience that many of the pages she mentioned above are Facebook pages. The Atkinson Planning Board has a Facebook page. The Town of Atkinson also has a website, town-Atkinsonnh.com which also has links to all this information. There will be much more information about the forum on April 11, 2023. She is asking all members of the Atkinson Planning Board to be at the forum, including those planning to retire.

Member DiMaggio appeared.

On Friday, Chair Killam received a letter from New Hampshire Housing, Plan NH and UNH Cooperative Extension. They are sharing and administering the grant funding which the Board has been discussing. They would like any and all public acknowledgements to note that this award is being received from the Invest NH Municipal Planning and Zoning Grant Program funded by the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs as part of a \$100 million Invest NH initiative with ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) State Fiscal Recovery Funds.

The Atkinson Planning Board applied for two grants from the State and was notified Friday that they will receive both. One is for the Housing Needs Assessment project. The other is for a regulatory audit of where Atkinson stands with their regulations and hopefully some suggestions of what can be done. The grand total of the awards is \$44,250. That includes three seats at the Housing Academy in April.

Housing Grant: Julie LaBranche

Ms. LaBranche explained that there is no state contract for her yet.

Yesterday, Chair Killam sent an acknowledgement to the sender of the award letter stating that the Planning Board intends to accept the housing opportunity grant. A letter from Ms. LaBranche's company committing to do the work was sent with it. Those two things were sent and Chair Killam is waiting for the agreement. It will be forwarded to the Selectmen's office. The Selectman have the authority to accept it and sign it. The Board discussed why the Selectman will sign the agreement.

The Planning Board will have administrative and management authority for the grant. Chair Killam explained that the big win is that it has received the funds they requested.

Ms. LaBranche stated that there is no contract in place but she has a plan for the needs assessment to start with a community housing survey, She would like a survey with 6-8 questions about people's opinions about housing.

She has some ideas for questions, but has not developed anything firm yet. For example:

- Do you know anyone in your social sphere who is housing challenged and who are they?
- There will be some graphics showing different kinds of housing and the survey will ask which kind of housing appeals to you in your community.
- The last question in the survey may be open ended for example, is there something about housing not covered in the survey that you would like to express their opinion about.

Member DiMaggio stated that the information will go to the Master Plan Committee and to the Planning Board. He asked if the Rockingham study would come out this summer.

Ms. LaBranche stated that the last she heard at the Rockingham County Planning Commission presentation in January is that the data would be published in the middle of February. So far, she has not seen any of the data. She has been checking daily and there is some demographic data, but not everything. She has also checked the Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission website and their data has not been published yet. Southern New Hampshire area goes west to Route 93 or Route 3 to the Massachusetts border. It will be interesting to see trends in border towns such as Salem, Derry and Windham which are much more urbanized and closer to the I93 and 495 corridors.

The needs assessment will depend on what data is provided. Ms. LaBranche would also like to do some in-person interviews. Lewis Builders is the biggest employer in Atkinson, The golf club is part of Lewis Builders. All their companies are listed under Lewis Builders.

Ms. LaBranche stated that Atkinson has few large employers. Chair Killam would like the Board to look at all major employers. Ms. LaBranche would like to talk to people whose job site is in Atkinson. This is part of the needs assessment she would like to focus on. She will start on the regulatory assessment later.

She will provide a monthly update on the work she has done to the Planning Board. She has plans to promote the survey on Atkinson TV, on the web, in the Town Newsletter and in Carriage Town news. Chair Killam reminded everyone that the survey Ms. LaBranche plans will have 6-8 questions.

Member DiMaggio asked about surveys planned by the Master Plan Committee. Alternate Wainwright explained that the Master Plan Committee will start with the community forum and then develop some on line surveys from there. Member DiMaggio stated asking about different types of housing styles would be interesting and something that the master plan committee will not do.

Ms. LaBranche stated that if the contract could be secured next week, then the surveys could be launched by March 1st and have it done by the end of March so there will be no cross over.

Member DiMaggio will be attending the April 11, 2023 master plan forum and may get involved with the master plan as an outsider.

Ms. LaBranche would like to get the housing survey out as soon as possible and finish before the master plan forum. She will be at the April 11, 2023 forum and have a table to answer questions. She will have a poster, a copy of the survey and her laptop.

Alternate Wainwright stated that the tables at the master plan committee forum will not be staffed. The committee wants people to be able to examine the information without interference to express their ideas. There will be questions at the tables and paper to write on. The contractor for the master plan committee will go over the answers.

Ms. LaBranche stated that this type of forum is called World Café. She said the only drawback to having no one at the table is that arguments can happen.

Chair Killam mentioned that Member Ottow will be speaking at the school regarding the master plan and interviewing some of the students. There is a flyer out regarding the master plan. A copy is on the Town bulletin board, on the Town website and on Facebook pages.

Chair Killam stated that there is no more business for this evening. The next meeting will be a workshop meeting on March 1, 2023. Ms. LaBranche stated she hopes to have an update.

Karen McFadden appeared to see if anyone had questions about the master plan committee since Member Ottow could not be at the meeting tonight. Chair Killam informed her that she informed the audience of the master plan committee meeting tomorrow and that everyone is invited.

New/Old Business:

Alternate Wainwright announced that there is a triangular piece of land surrounded by the Stickney Town Forest which was owned by Charles Kinney for 40 years. He sold it to Jameson Hill, Jameson's Excavating, who has agreed to sell it to the Atkinson Conservation Commission. A purchase and sale agreement has been signed. It is 1.4 acres and is inaccessible from the highway. Mr. Jameson agreed to sell it for the tax assessment. Fortunately, it will not be clear cut as the new owner had planned. There will be a public hearing on March 9, 2023 to discuss spending from the Conservation Fund to purchase the property.

Alternate Wainwright informed Vice Chair Turell that he will be requesting a check and will also have some checks from the forest maintenance fund. There may also be some checks in memory of a mother who used to be on the Conservation Commission.

Member Brown made a motion to adjourn. Member DiMaggio seconded the motion. All in favor. Vote: 4/0/0.

Chair Killam adjourned the February 15, 2023 meeting of the Atkinson Planning Board at 8:21 pm. The next meeting will be March 1, 2023 at Atkinson Town Hall.