

**ATKINSON PLANNING BOARD MEETING
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2023**

Members:

Sue Killam, Chair (present)

Vice Chair Turell (present)

Ted Stewart (not present)

Paul Wainwright, (present)

John Ottow (present)

(Master Plan Team)

Heidi Mahoney (not present)

Bill Baldwin– Selectman Ex Officio (not present)

Others Present

Julie LaBranche, Planner (present by telephone)

Karen Wemmelmann, Recorder (present)

Sue Coppeta, Planning & Zoning Administrator (not present)

Karen McFadden, Master Plan Committee

Call to Order:

Chair Killam called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM. Chair Killam, Vice Chair Turell, Member Ottow and Member Wainwright are present.

Public Hearings: NONE

Minutes: April 5, 2023

Vice Chair Turell made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2023 meeting of the Atkinson Planning Board as presented. Member Ottow seconded the motion. All in favor. 4/0/0. The motion passes.

New/Old Business:

Discuss Process and Consider Planning Board Alternate Appointment

This is now done by the Planning Board since it has become an elected Board. Chair Killam has one application.

Member Ottow said that setting a procedure to choose an alternate was discussed at the last meeting. He would like to make a motion as to how to vet and introduce a candidate to be an alternate.

Member Ottow moves that the process to become an alternate may be initiated by any member of the Planning Board. A member will vet the prospective alternate member and have their name put on the agenda for discussion at the following meeting. At that meeting a motion may be made to accept that person as an alternate member of the Planning Board. The motion was not seconded.

Discussion: In this case, all members of the Board know who the candidate is. In the future they may not. Vice Chair Turell stated that a person volunteering is enough. A member of the Board to bring them in is not needed. Ms. LaBranche asked if the Board had considered having an interview or a meeting to review the duties of an alternate with the candidate. Chair Killam stated it wasn't included in the motion but she agreed. Anyone bringing a name in for consideration would have vetted them.

Member Turell stated that if someone fills out a form in the lobby, the Chair would hear about it and have a chance to speak with them or have another member of the Board speak to them.. Chair Killam likes knowing a little about the applicant but does not believe an interview process is necessary. It has never been done with any appointments.

Vice Chair Turell stated that there is a difference between someone filling out a form in the lobby and having someone talk to them is not the same as someone being brought in by the Planning Board. Bringing someone in implies that the application is initiated by a member of the Planning Board. It should be the individual wanting to volunteer that initiates the process.

Chair Killam stated that if an application comes in, it goes to the Land Use office and she is notified.

Chair Killam also stated that someone filling out a form to volunteer as an alternate is the best practice. A member of the Planning Board can look at the form and speak to the volunteer then. The Planning Board would like at least three alternates and they do not have many volunteers.

Member Ottow read his motion again. Member Wainwright clarified that Vice Chair Turell is saying that the way a person volunteers is to fill out the form. Chair Killam stated that that is the Town requirement. Someone volunteering should not need a sponsor.

The Board agreed that the process of becoming an alternate should start with someone filling out the form to volunteer and giving it to the Land Use Office. After the candidate has submitted the form, a member of the Board can talk to the candidate.

Member Ottow made a motion to state that the process for becoming an alternate member should be initiated by a candidate filling out the Application for Committee Appointment form. The Chair will have the candidate's name put on the agenda for discussion at the following meeting. A motion may be made to accept that person as an alternate member of the Planning Board. Member Wainwright seconded the motion. Vote: 3/1/0. Three in favor, one opposed. The motion passes.

Chair Killam stated that the Planning Board has procedures and they should be updated now that the Board is elected.

The applicant for alternate is Hannah Rizzo. She was an alternate for the Conservation Commission and resigned so she could be considered as an alternate for the Planning Board.

Her resignation was voted on by the Selectmen on Monday. She first showed her interest by putting her name on the ballot in March. Becoming an alternate is an excellent way to become a member. A lot is learned on this Board because they get called on so frequently.

Chair Killam made a motion to accept the application by Hannah Rizzo as an alternate member of the Planning Board for a three year term. Member Wainwright seconded the motion.

Discussion: Member Wainwright stated that he has known Ms. Rizzo for two or three years. She has been very eager to serve and contribute. She has some physical limitations so she cannot work in the woods. She has been very helpful with press releases. She is retired and lives at Page Farm. Member Wainwright stated that she would be a good contributor to the Board.

Chair Killam stated that she really wants to work in the community. She has come to realize that the Planning Board acts according to RSAs, not opinion. She thought this was a good start. She had questions about Page Farm. Chair Killam went through the 52 page plan set for Page Farm with her.

Vote: 4/0/0. All in favor. The motion passes.

Ms. LaBranche stated she is not sure of her background. She asked if Ms. Rizzo would like a plan reading tutorial and stated she would be happy to sit with her. The Board discussed her background. Ms. LaBranche stated that it is important for members and alternates to be able to understand what is on a plan. Chair Killam informed her that she reviewed reading a plan with her in their last two hour meeting and would prefer to wait until the Planning Board has a plan in front of them. Member Ottow and Vice Chair Turell agreed.

Housing Needs Assessment Project Update: Julie LaBranche

Ms. LaBranche attended the public forum put on by the Master Plan Committee last Tuesday. She has received 47 completed surveys and out of those surveys, 11 people signed up for discussion groups. There were 29 on line responses as of 3:00 PM this afternoon. She would like to be able to post on the Atkinson Community and Friends page. It is run by one of the members of the Master Plan Committee, Anne Bretton. Ms. LaBranche will reach out to her because she would like to put some posts on the site. She is getting close to her goal of 100 completed surveys.

Member Ottow informed her that the deadline for the master plan survey is May 11th. Member Ottow stated he was at the library and none of Ms. LaBranche's surveys were available. She will drop some off next week. She gave the rest of the paper copies to Karen McFadden and asked if there are any at Town Hall. Chair Killam suggested Ms. LaBranche drop some of at the Community Center. Ms. LaBranche will drop surveys off at the Library, the Community Center and Town Hall. It is posted on the web page and she would like to put it on the Facebook page. She will start pushing out some messages. For the May meeting, she is hoping to have compiled some of the data from the housing needs assessment. She has been working with reviewing both the Southern New Hampshire and the Rockingham Planning

Commission original housing needs assessments to pull out data. She should have a very rough draft of some data. She would like to keep her survey open until May 22nd so she would not have enough time to compile all the survey data for the May meeting. There was an article in Carriage Town News a month ago. Ms. LaBranche stated that she will send another article to the Carriage Town News with the survey link.

Ms. LaBranche stated that she plans to get the surveys together and start thinking about the housing needs assessment and the data that will go into it. There was some good information in that and in the posters. She would like to focus on that information and can give an overview of the surveys for the May meeting, but it will not be a final report for the survey. In June, she will delve into the results of the surveys and pick out the themes that emerged from them. This will give her some guidance on how to proceed with her regulatory audits. That is a three month plan.

The Board has not discussed having workshops in July and August. The first Wednesday of July is July 5th, the day after the holiday so there will not be a workshop in July.

Master Plan Update: Team Report

Ms. McFadden appeared. Member Ottow stated that the forum was last week. He thought it was a great success. 103 people signed in but many people attended who did not sign in. He estimates that 110-120 people attended. He thought the format was excellent. He trusted the process and it paid off. The posters were a valuable source as well. It finished one lap for the Master Plan Committee. The next phase would be to go back into the existing conditions report. Ms. McFadden stated she was very pleased with the forum and the posters. She learned things, too. The feedback was positive and she was happy with the process. They do not know how many people have filled out surveys. It is on line, coming in. They are attempting to find a way to measure the number of responders.

There will be a meeting on Thursday without the consultant. The Committee is planning to regroup and decide on next steps for the meeting tomorrow night. There were an additional 60 responders on line by the end of last week. Chair Killam asked if the Station Manager can tell who is watching on line. Mr. Williams responded that he can only give the numbers from the Facebook simulcast.

Ms. McFadden informed the Board that they will not televise at their meeting. Member Ottow stated that they will be reviewing the existing conditions report. They would like to get the final draft by next month. Member Ottow stated that the Committee will be making a final push. The Library Director offered their meeting room to hold the posters starting May 1st. Ms. McFadden informed him that the Planning Administrator would like to keep the posters at Town Hall. Member Ottow stated that the Committee is going according to schedule, the process is working well and he has high confidence that there will be a meaningful master plan.

Ms. LaBranche asked if there would be a forum for the vision plan. She was told the Committee will be looking at the 2015 vision plan in June. Decisions on vision statements will be made once responses from the surveys are received.

Ms. LaBranche stated that there were several topics not covered on the posters, things like stormwater, water quality and MS4 were not touched upon in the survey. Chair Killam stated that it would have to be discussed in terms of how much is public opinion and how much is regulation.

Ms. LaBranche stated that a typical vision chapter of a master plan will have the planning committee and their advisory committee bringing forward emerging planning topics, which the public may not be aware of.

Conservation Commission Report:

Member Wainwright stated he would like to give a report from the Conservation Commission. They have completed a design for a wheelchair accessible trail in the Slade Forest. The design was funded with ARPA money. They have design specs and are ready to go to bid. The Conservation Commission needs volunteers and funding. They have about \$3,500 in donations and need around \$16,000. That will count as matching funds for grants to be applied to Phase 2.

Chair Killam stated that she feels the amount of discussion about that topic at their meetings has been very helpful in informing the public about what the Conservation Commission does. The Conservation Commission is on Channel 20. John Fournier set up a couple of web pages and the Conservation Commission has an email regarding the trail. They will be taken down once the project is done.

Also, they are about 6 weeks away from purchasing the Deborah Lang land at the end of Knightland. Ms. Lang needed to close last year. The Conservation Commission did not have funding at that point. There are organizations that will act as an intermediary. The last time an intermediary was used was in 1991 for the land behind the Community Center. It was purchased by the Forest Society and the Town was able to buy the land from them with a grant. The Conservation Commission is working with a group called The Conservation Fund ("TCF") to acquire the Lang property. They are a nationwide organization that helps land trusts and municipalities acquire land when they do not have the money. They develop the funding sources. They are working with Sally Manikian, a long time Atkinson resident and NH representative of TCF, to complete the process. She is thrilled to be working in her home town. A management plan has been completed by a consultant to meet the Aquatic Resource Mitigation ("ARM") fund requirements. There is also a conservation easement to be held by SELT on the land which is required by the grant making organization.

Member Wainwright is a member of the Board of the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions ("NHACC"). They will be holding a photography contest and Member Wainwright will be running it. He has a web platform set up. It will be open to any resident of New Hampshire who is not a professional photographer. The theme is water,

wetlands and wildlife. He is hoping the photographs will be inspirational. There are three categories. Children 12 and under, Teens 13 to 18, and Adults 18 and over. The prize for each category will be \$250. They are hoping this will get families with children involved. The contest will run to September 8th, the Friday after Labor Day. Winners will be announced at the NHACC annual conference in November.

Vice Chair Turell made a motion to adjourn. Member Wainwright seconded the motion. All in favor. Vote: 4/0/0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

The next Planning Board meeting will be a workshop on May 3, 2023 at Atkinson Town Hall.