

Meeting Minutes Draft
Shelburne Natural Resources & Conservation Committee (SNRCC)
7:30PM, July 21, 2021
(Meeting held via Zoom Platform)

Attending:

SNRCC Members: Don Rendall, Jon Cocina, Bob Paquin, Sean MacFaden, Fred Morgan, Gail Albert (Sean, Fred and Gail joined the NRCC Zoom later after technology issues delayed their access to the Zoom from our town hall meeting room)

8:40 Start of SNRCC session

- Preliminary matters—Confirm audio/video and address technology questions
- Confirm minute taker – Don taking notes
- Jon moved to open the meeting, Don seconded
- Review and Approve Agenda – There was no agenda developed; debriefing from the DRB
- Public Comment (for items not on agenda) – no public comments.

This special meeting was called on short notice to follow attendance at the evening's DRB meeting which dealt with a development sketch plan application by the Kottormans for a subdivision. The project discussed at tonight's DRB meeting is proposed in an area of concern to the NRCC. The DRB designated the application a major subdivision at the end of the application hearing.

At this evening's meeting of the DRB much of the details were hard to access without the support which Dean would have supplied. Tonight's sketch plan presentation highlighted that we were not included in an earlier (year ago?) hearing on this property. And as a sketch plan hearing we would not have normally been brought into the process at this point per current regulations. This highlights that important resources are being gobbled up without our gaining input. This interim process how NRCC reviews and sets conditions on development might not work seems process is dysfunctional. Should we follow for a month or two more before we complain?

Problems:

1. Is the procedure getting our comments to DRB working? Past protocol: Dean distributed all materials we would need ahead of our meeting, at the meeting the applicants could discuss their proposal, Dean would add context and further details. If we are required to only give our testimony as individuals replacing the past protocol, will the previous formal process reduce our impact on the process. What about precedent? Regs still require our Section 600 letter. DRB requires 9 letters at final stage many from Town departments. Will our 600 letter be required by DRB in this temporary mode of operation? How does the DRB utilize our 600 letters anyway?

We need information packets on a project as received in the past earlier than the DRB

meeting at which the application will be heard in order for us to discuss and vote. We must warn our meetings; requires lead time. Should we have a normal meeting and also go to the DRB meetings to have more impact? Do we need to expand to two meetings per month utilizing Zoom? Teleconferencing can be done without full in person participation but open meetings require a physical meeting space as well. Can we always get multiple people at the DRB meetings in order to be really heard; probably not?

2. What is the impact of SNRCC review in development review? Tonight's sketch plan presentation highlighted that we were not informed of or included in an earlier (year ago?) hearing on this property. Need to identify in the regs what areas and types of projects we should be involved in.

Does our in-person statements have more or less impact? Does a vote by SNRCC on an application have same weight as individual comments at a meeting? Should we have a meeting with DRB to discuss how they deal with our comments? Gail always attends and does not feel heard. Our questions at the meeting got our issues out in front of the DRB when they might otherwise not have been in DRB ordinary procedures.

3. Lack of full-time staff in Planning and Zoning

Without Town staff, we are suffering how to get the timely access to applications and their associated materials. We don't know what we need to know, what past history is relevant. At this meeting much of the details were hard to access without staff support; the temporary staff is unable to find time to dig out the details to support us as needed.

4. Future of Planning and Zoning Dept and procedures. Staff will be reorganized. Job search(s) is underway without stating job descriptions. Delay expected to last 3-4 months or more. We have not been invited to play a part of this process yet. Not transparent.
5. Public knowledge of change process. We see people are upset that town is changing, turning into something else than what it was in earlier days. Yet their voices are not heard. Are the Town Plan and Zoning Regs adequately protecting the kind of town citizens want to keep? Maintaining our sense of place? Gail noted the FPF comments about loss of natural elements in town and responded to these commentors. Will forward to all the response comments she sent to these people. People are not following the public process and are not knowledgeable and thus not adding their input. Only neighbors get notification; the rest of the public is not following but later surprised to see the changes.

How about we offer a letter of concern to Lee and the Select Board now to lay down a marker but state we want progress soon and will follow up. So much development pressure now – can we delay? All should send their opinions to the Select Board about development individually at least if you feel the dysfunction.

Impact of Covid.

Keep a mailing list to get people to DRB meetings.

Homework: Gail's letter, Kate L's memo, reach out to the SB

Not enough voices

9:20 Motion to Adjourn – Bob moved, Fred seconded. All in favor.