



PLANNING BOARD

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MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD WORK SESSION

Thursday, February 04, 2016 – 7:00 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

Members Present: Chair Stu Gerome, Scott Baker, Courtney Homer, Chip Hussey, John McDevitt (Selectmen's Rep), David Moore, Rich Winsor, Steve Gerrato (Alternate), James Connelly (Alternate)

Staff Present: Mark Fougere - Consultant

Chair Gerome opened the Planning Board meeting at 7:00 p.m. A roll call was taken by the Chair; he announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being recorded.

1. Stormwater Management – Julie LaBranche, Rockingham Planning Commission

Julie LaBranche's discussion on stormwater management included a slide presentation. It's important to manage stormwater to maintain the natural hydrology of the landscape and the flow paths of water. The more development there is on the landscape, the more impervious surface and runoff there is to be managed. M. Fougere added that even if a site is 100% unpaved, the water could be treated so it met good quality water standards.

Runoff is typically treated as a waste product; it should be transformed back into a resource. Rather than treating it and discharging it back to a waterbody that eventually flows into Great Bay or the ocean, it should be distributed on the landscape. This can be done by recharge into the ground and distribution across the landscape. It is important to treat runoff as a transfer of resources rather than a waste product.

One way to implement and incorporate stormwater management on the local level is through regulations. Addressing this through Site Review and Subdivision Regulations is the easiest and most cost effective way. It can include sediment and erosion control during construction and permanent stormwater practices post construction. One of the major requirements in the model standard is to implement low impact development standards to the maximum extent practical.

The new precipitation atlas shows that compared to 40 years ago, the region receives more rain during storm events. There has also been a 5" to 6" rise in sea level in Great Bay over the last 100 years. That needs to be taken in consideration when looking at designing water conveyance systems.

When the MS-4 permit goes online, the Town will have to coordinate and account for the different methodologies the community is using to reduce its pollutant loading. DES and RPC are working on a suite of tracking tools that can track how much pollutant loading is being removed.

The threshold for the Alteration of Terrain permit is 100,000 sq. ft. Statistically, many local projects fall below that threshold and there is no stormwater management review unless a town has its own

standards. Redevelopment of an existing site: any new impervious surface cover created on a site that is less than 40% has to be treated. Sites over 40% are allowed a net balance of treatment.

RPC encourages stormwater plans be recorded at the Registry of Deeds. An operation and maintenance plan for the site should be developed and recorded. The recorded plan would also allow the town access to the property to do emergency repairs if the owner is found negligent.

The MS-4 permit defines “discharge”. Anything that drains into the municipal system from private property becomes a municipal liability and part of the MS-4 permit. With a lower the threshold of disturbance, more projects will need to have a stormwater management plan.

J. LaBranche stated that anything that has been permitted has five years to demonstrate substantial completion of the project. They are grandfathered against any zoning or regulation changes. If they come back to the Planning Board with substantial changes to their plan or not completed, the clock starts over and the standards would apply. M. Fougere added that the Board will have to make a decision on the threshold.

RPC encourages the use of buffers as a stormwater BMP. Trying to use natural features on the landscape rather than putting in something that is expensive to maintain, is a good trade-off. The buffer can’t manage all the runoff, but could manage a good portion.

J. LaBranche told the Board if they adopt the stormwater management standards, they needed to have a firm idea of what they wanted. They should be looking at less hardscape and more soft approaches, as well as techniques that use vegetation and infiltration. J. LaBranche will provide the Board with a list of sites using different BMP’s, including those with high water tables. She’ll also send a list of publications that may be of interest to members.

Last year RPC completed a project, Tides to Storms, which is an assessment of flooding from coastal storm surge and sea level rise. Seacoast communities from Portsmouth to Seabrook were included; an assessment was done of road and transportation aspects, critical facilities and natural resources. A grant was received to do the same assessment on 10 inland communities around Great Bay.

2. EPA Groundwater Management Proposal: Breakfast Hill Road

M. Fougere updated the Board on the EPA groundwater management proposal for the former landfill on Breakfast Hill Road as the result of a slight uptick in the monitoring wells in that area. The EPA advocated that the Town adopt a groundwater withdrawal ordinance for that area, prohibiting any large withdrawals from wells. It would also limit development, putting restrictions on wells and requiring monitoring/testing.

J. McDevitt stated that he would need more information before making a decision. C. Hussey added that groundwater withdrawal could change the direction of the flow. R. Winsor suggested that the Town Attorney review any proposed ordinance due to liability. There was also a concern about water supply if a property owner wanted to subdivide. Chair Gerome pointed out that if an alternative was not offered, the Board could not limit a property owner’s ability to drill a well.

M. Fougere will contact Gerardo Millan-Ramos to set up a meeting date.

3. Topics for Public Hearing: Thursday, February 18, 2016

Items for the next meeting were reviewed.

4. Approval of Minutes

Approval of minutes was continued to the next meeting.

5. Approval of Invoices

MOTION: *D. Moore moved to approve payment of invoices in the amount of \$1,859.77 from the Escrow Account and \$892.95 from the Town budget. Second – C. Homer; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED*

6. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

7. Adjournment

MOTION: *C. Hussey moved to adjourn at 8:13 p.m. Second – D. Moore; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED*

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, February 18, 2016 – 7:00 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room

Respectfully Submitted: Charlotte Hussey, Secretary to the Boards

Approved: Thursday, February 18, 2016