

GEORGETOWN PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 30, 2008

CALL TO ORDER

The Georgetown Planning Commission held a special meeting on Wednesday, April 30, 2008 in the Georgetown Town Hall, 404 6th Street. Chairperson Sarah Kaminski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Answering the roll were Chairperson Sarah Kaminski, Commissioners Susan Romeo, Malcolm Schaefer and Greg Sterett, and Alternate Member Kerry Ann McHugh. Commissioner Paul Nisler arrived at 6:10 p.m. Also in attendance was Recording Secretary/Town Clerk Merinel Williams.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Ms. Romeo moved to approve the agenda as written. Mr. Sterett seconded and the motion was adopted by unanimous vote.

AUDIENCE BUSINESS – None.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Further consideration on proposed Ordinance No. 02 to include consideration of a letter and supplementary information for submittal to the Board of Selectmen and to discuss attendance at the May 13, 2008 Board of Selectmen public hearing

The Commission considered a memorandum from Ms. Kaminski suggesting additional recommendations and questions to the Board of Selectmen regarding draft Ordinance 02. It recommended that “and unanimously recommended denial of the proposed amendment to the Board of Selectmen” be added to the whereas clause in the ordinance that references the Planning Commission’s public hearing on this matter, and requested authorization from the Commission for her to author a final recommendation and present it to the Selectman at their May 13, 2008 hearing.

Questions recommended in the memorandum were:

1. The Division of Wildlife owns lands adjacent to and surrounding those properties currently zoned Gateway Mountainside Industrial and Mining. Due to the Big Horn Sheep habitat in these areas, the DOW may have important comments that need to be considered. Did the Town of Georgetown notify the Division of Wildlife about this proposed change to the zoning regulations and what was the response?

2. Some of the lands adjacent to and surrounding those properties currently zoned Gateway Mountainside Industrial and Mining are held in private ownership. Did the Town of Georgetown notify all adjacent private property owners about this proposed change to the zoning regulations and what was their response?
3. The word “livestock” is not defined in Title 17. What is the Board of Selectmen’s definition of livestock?
4. Without animal regulations in place, the Town of Georgetown is unable to make justifiable decisions on how many livestock units are allowed per parcel of land. Does the Board of Selectmen believe that allowing arbitrary numbers of livestock units on parcels of land are in the best interest of this community?
5. If the Town of Georgetown initiates and changes their zoning regulations to benefit a single property owner, the public could misconstrue this action as having the appearance of and being perceived as “spot zoning”> This could lead to the setting of a precedent where any property owner can request zoning changes, initiated by the Town, to suit their needs. Is the Board of Selectmen aware that they may be setting a precedent that could become problematic in the future?

The Commission agreed to add to this list questions regarding environmental impacts, enforcement, potential negative impacts resulting from poor animal management, possible attraction of predator animals, safety concerns regarding proximity to I-70, and slope.

Mr. Schaefer moved to authorize Ms. Kaminski to prepare the additional comments regarding proposed Ordinance No. 02 as discussed and present the information to the Board of Selectmen at the May 13 public hearing. Ms. Romeo seconded and the motion was adopted by unanimous vote.

Continued discussion on issues with a Board of Selectmen member

Mr. Schaefer distributed a list of comments made at the last Board of Selectmen’s meeting. Mr. Nisler commented that the situation began with Mr. Behrens’ accusations regarding opposition to the Town’s Rose Street sidewalk grant, and there now seems to be an impasse. The Commission agreed that it is positive that the Board appears to be moving toward adopting a code of ethics. Mr. Schaefer asserted that even without a code of ethics, the Board could officially state that they do not agree with Mr. Behrens’ behavior, particularly false statements and accusations against Planning Commission members. Ms. Kaminski commented that elected officials should separate their public duties from their personal feelings. Ms. McHugh and Mr. Sterett commented that Mr. Behrens represents his personal opinions as facts.

Ms. Romeo commented that this dispute has focused a lot of attention on Mr. Behrens, that it is positive that the Board is looking at adopting a protocol, and that this process has brought inaccurate statements to light which will damage Mr. Behrens’ credibility for future statements. The Commissioners agreed that it is time to move beyond this issue, if the Board

takes an action on May 13 to indicate it disagrees with Mr. Behrens' behavior. Mr. Schaefer referenced a communication he is getting ready to send to the Board, and indicated he welcomes Planning Commissioners' comments before he makes it final. Ms. Kaminski apologized for any abuses that have been suffered by Planning Commission members. Mr. Nisler announced that if the Board takes action on May 13, he will not resign his position on the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Kaminski adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Sarah Kaminski, Chairperson

Merinel Williams, Town Clerk