

GEORGETOWN PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

The Georgetown Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Wednesday, September 9, 2009 in the Georgetown Town Hall, 404 6th Street. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Answering the roll were Chairperson Cynthia Skeen and Commissioners Kathy Hunninen, and Kerry Ann McHugh. Commissioners Dana Abrahamson and Jan Shirlaw were absent. Also in attendance was Recording Secretary/Town Clerk Merinel Williams.

AUDIENCE BUSINESS – None.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Ms. Skeen and Ms. McHugh requested that review of the final draft of the letter to the Board of Selectmen regarding sidewalks/traffic/parking to the agenda. Ms. Hunninen requested that discussion of potential changes to the Commission's meeting schedule be added to the agenda. Ms. McHugh and Ms. Hunninen requested that designation of Dana Abrahamson as Vice Chairperson be removed from the masthead of the agenda. Ms. McHugh moved to approve the agenda as amended. Ms. Hunninen seconded and the motion was adopted by unanimous vote.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Review draft letter to the Board of Selectmen regarding sidewalks/traffic/parking

The Commissioners reviewed the letter / report to the Board of Selectmen regarding sidewalks/traffic/parking as re-drafted by Ms. Skeen. By consensus, the Commissioners approved the document.

Elect Vice Chairperson

Ms. Hunninen moved to elect Ms. McHugh as Vice Chairperson of the Commission. Ms. McHugh seconded the motion, which was adopted by a vote of two (Hunninen, McHugh) to one (Skeen). Ms. Skeen explained that she voted in the negative because she does not believe that the election of Dana Abrahamson to the position was in error.

Discuss demolition by neglect issues

Ms. Hunninen reviewed Section 110 of the Uniform Fire Code regarding unsafe buildings. The Commissioners discussed the goal of a possible demolition by neglect ordinance. Ms. Skeen noted that the Town's current nuisance statute is focused on safety, and there should be consideration of historic structures separate from safety issues, particularly when an owner is

showing willful neglect. She stated further that there should be remedies other than demolition.

Ms. Skeen reviewed the building maintenance regulations from other jurisdictions, noting that there is variation in how this issue is addressed, although all have a due process system. Some jurisdictions offer incentives, and some provide a fund for cases of economic hardship.

The Clerk agreed to provide copies of the list of contributing structures and the Design Review Commission's policy for designation of local landmarks. Ms McHugh agreed to provide copies of the Building Code and Fire Code definitions of dangerous buildings. The Commission will utilize these documents for further discussion, including consideration of the idea of self-identification by property owners.

Review research by Kathy Hunninen regarding Planning Commission mission / operation in other jurisdictions

Ms. McHugh reported that she has reviewed the Town Code and Rules of Procedure regarding the mission of the Commission, and the Commissioners agreed to review the Rules at the next meeting to consider whether they wish to make any changes to the document.

Discuss potential changes to the Commission's meeting schedule

The Commissioners decided to table this agenda item to the next meet when it is hoped that more members will be present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. McHugh moved to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2009 meeting as written and the minutes of the August 26, 2009 meeting as corrected. Ms. Hunninen seconded and the motion was adopted by unanimous vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Skeen adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Merinel Williams, Town Clerk

Cynthia Skeen, Chairperson