



Town of Knox Planning Board

Established 1822

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Minutes: March 14, 2019

Present: Bob Price, Todd LaGrange, Betty Ketcham, Deb Nelson, Tom Wolfe, Bill Pasquini

Absent: Kurt Johnson

Review of minutes from February 14, 2019 meeting. Discussion of revised minutes were tabled until next meeting. An audio file to be made available for Planning Board members to listen to if they choose to do so.

Home Occupation

1. Due to the concern for the length of time required to review and discuss the Multi Recreational District or MRD, Home Occupation to be discussed at April's meeting.

MRD Application for Route 156/167

1. Tom opens the floor for discussion amongst the board members.
2. Deb Nelson begins the discussion with some items that she feels are important for the Planning Board to review and discuss.
 - a. The MRD uses are less intensive than business district allowable uses but are not necessarily less intensive than a residential and agricultural district.
 - b. In order to have large medical facilities or educational institutions an area would require infrastructure and the proposed area does not have this. There also is no current plan so does not feel it gives those "apples to apples comparison."
 - c. Important to note that a Multi-Family housing with four or more units would be allowed in a MRD. This is important for the residents to understand and know.
 - d. Keep in mind the KARST within this area.
 - e. Look at entire town as a whole in regards to the comprehensive plan and also use it as a tool to help aid in decisions regarding changing the current zoning for this area.
3. Tom makes a point that this is not and has not been a process that ignores public input.
4. During discussion of proposed MRD Bob Price makes the point that this is the second time the Albany County Planning Board has disapproved a change of zoning in the proposed are.

5. Deb Nelson reads from the Albany County Planning Board disapproval reasons:
 - a. Incompatibility with the surrounding land use and community character.
 - b. Potential impacts to traffic on county and state roads.
 - c. Inadequate infrastructure and lack of plans for the provisions of infrastructure.
 - d. Potential environmental impacts and water quality concerns.
 - e. Inconsistency with the town's comprehensive plan.
6. Tom Wolfe does not agree with the Albany Planning Board's disapproval reasons.
 - a. Makes the point that this area has historically supported different businesses for years.
 - b. Feels the disapproval reasons are more subjective versus objective.
7. Deb Nelson made the point that the current small businesses in that area are grandfathered in so they would not benefit from any zoning change.
8. Tom Wolfe makes the point that if the zoning was changed to MRD, any new business that wished to become established would go thru a lengthy and thorough review process and if it is not compatible would not be approved.
9. Todd LaGrange does acknowledge that there are pro's and con's to the current proposed MRD.
 - a. He makes the point of why is it acceptable to build a house? With the discussion of preserving farm land, why is it acceptable to build a solar array on it?
 - b. What works for a rural town is different than a big city.
 - c. In favor to move forward with the proposed MRD with restrictions and rules.
10. Betty Ketcham finds it important to really look at the reasons the Albany County Planning Board has disapproved two different applications for this area and not dismiss them all.
11. Bob Price agrees with Betty's point of view regarding the decision of Albany County Planning Board and feels there is a message to be learned from their decision.
12. Bill Pasquini makes the point that in regards to any business being brought in with the MRD would go thru a review process and site plan review. Feels that with multiple layers of review that there is no reason to not support the MRD.
13. Audience member Bridgett McAuliffe discusses how the "checks and balances" and do not always work. Uses the example of Hoosick Falls and their contaminated drinking water and the people who live next door to super fund sites. Feels that the planning board is gambling with her family and neighbors lives. Made the point that the Zoning Board of Appeals approved the MRD application and does not feel they were properly educated regarding everything involved and what was addressed in Albany County Planning Board's decision. Extremely worried that if this MRD application is approved that her well water may be contaminated and if she ever chooses to move the value of her home will be less than what it is worth.
14. Audience member Cindy Gustifson questions who will financially gain from "building that corner up?" Why not expand and business opportunity in the current business district in Knox.
15. Tom Wolfe asks each member of the Planning Board to respond to the question by Cindy Gustifson:
 - a. Tiffany Snyder, secretary responds with no financial gain or plan to buy in that area.
 - b. Bill Pasquini does not have any financial gain or plans.
 - c. Tom Wolfe does not have any financial gain or plans.

- d. Deb Nelson does not have any financial gain or plans.
 - e. Betty Ketcham does not have any financial gain or plans for that area.
 - f. Todd LaGrange does not have any financial gain or plans.
 - g. Bob Price does not have any financial gain or plans.
16. Cindy Gustifson asks why there is such a push to have the MRD go thru.
- a. Tom Wolfe responds that he feels personally it allows a limited opportunity for some potential business growth.
17. Audience member Judy Beeble moved here in June with her husband to have a rural type of environment. They chose to live in Knox, next to a farm because they did not want to live in a built up town. Feels the majority of people who live here would feel the same way. Also feels that the current business district could be added to instead.
18. Audience member Dennis Cyr begins by stating he is a ZBA member and has no financial gain or plans with the current proposed MRD. Makes the point that years ago there were more businesses in town than there are now. Made the point that there are multiple small towns with business in different areas that run smoothly and are kept nice. Makes a point that not all town members have been able to attend the different meetings for different reasons but that he has discussed with some the need of small conveniences a change in zoning may bring, with the agreement of others.
19. Audience member Eric Marczak, who is also on the ZBA, feels that the Albany County Planning Board did not fully look at the application because he too finds the application to be incomplete. Works for DOH for the state and recently wrote an article regarding the water in town. Discusses the problems with the past problems with the septic system for the highlands. Thinks that there are many pieces missing from the EAF. Believes that the application for the MRD should be reconsidered.
20. Audience member Amy Pokorny asks the question of when the letter from Doug Roether, Chairman for the ZBA was received? She also asks the question of whether or not Doug had mentioned that the ZBA members did not have all the information when they made their recommendation and would be reconsidering their decision.
- a. Tom Wolfe and Deb Nelson respond to her questions that they had received the letter March 12 and it was dated March 11 and that they had not discussed whether or not they would be reconsidering changing their decision.
 - b. Dennis Cyr also states that when they made their decision at the most recent ZBA meeting that each member had reviewed and discussed all of the information emailed by Amy Pokorny.
 - c. Eric Marczak makes a point in response to Amy's comment that he feels due to the absence of legal counsel at the last meeting and understanding of the EAF by other ZBA members, thinks that the current ZBA decision should be reconsidered.
21. Audience member Vas Lefkaditis responds to Cindy Gustifson's comment that "all her answers of why this corner was chosen would be answered at this meeting." He corrects her in saying he had stated at the public hearing she would know. The public hearing is not yet scheduled.

Deb Nelson made a motion to not approve the current proposed MRD application as presented due to the inadequate consideration of the sensitive environmental conditions, as presented on the EAF as well as the lack of proactive public involvement. Bob Price seconded the motion. A vote was taken:

Tom: No

Bob: Yes

Todd: No

Betty: Yes

Deb: Yes

Bill: No

The vote was a split decision.

A recommendation by the planning board cannot be made at this time. A letter with the motion and vote to be sent to Knox Town Board.

Deb Nelson made a motion to adjourn, Tom seconded. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm

Next meeting to be held April 11, 2019 at 7:30pm