

PLANNING BOARD

DATE: May 11, 2023

TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE: Meeting Room/Zoom Virtual Meeting

FOR: Regular Meeting

PRESENT: Brandee Nelson, Chair, Via Zoom; Pedro Pachano; Jonathan Hankin; Malcolm Fick;
Via Zoom; Jeremy Higa
Associate Member Jackie Kain
Chris Rembold, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Planning and Development

Ms. Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. She read the opening statement. She said the meeting was being recorded. Ms. Nelson also read Section 241-1 of the Town Code.

There will be roll call votes as not all members are present in person.

Mr. Fick would not be voting as he was not sworn after being re-elected.

REORGANIZATION:

Mr. Hankin made a motion for Ms. Nelson to be Chair, Mr. Higa seconded.

Roll call vote: Mr. Pachano, aye; Mr. Higa, aye; Mr. Hankin, aye; Ms. Nelson, aye

Mr. Hankin made a motion for Mr. Pachano to be the Vice-Chair; Mr. Higa seconded.

Roll call vote: Mr. Higa, aye; Mr. Pachano, aye; Mr. Hankin, aye; Ms. Nelson, aye

Mr. Higa made a motion for Mr. Hankin to be Clerk, Mr. Pachano seconded

Roll call vote: Mr. Pachano, aye; Mr. Hankin, aye; Mr. Higa, aye; Ms. Nelson, aye

Mr. Hankin made a motion for Mr. Higa to be the Board's representative to the Community Preservation Commission, Mr. Pachano seconded.

Roll call vote: Mr. Pachano, aye; Mr. Hankin, aye; Mr. Higa, aye; Ms. Nelson, aye

Mr. Hankin made a motion for Mr. Pachano to be the Board's representative to BRPC and Mr. Fick to be the alternate, Mr. Higa seconded.

Mr. Fick said he thinks the alternate is appointed by the Selectboard.

Roll call vote for Mr. Pachano to be the representative to BRPC, Mr. Pachano, aye; Mr. Hankin, aye; Mr. Higa, aye; Ms. Nelson, aye

Mr. Hankin made a motion to recommend to the Selectboard that Mr. Fick be the alternate to BRPC, Mr. Higa seconded.

Roll call vote: Mr. Pachano, aye; Mr. Hankin, aye; Mr. Higa, aye; Ms. Nelson, aye

Mr. Hankin made a motion for Ms. Kain to be the Board's representative to the Design Advisory Committee, Mr. Higa seconded.

Roll call vote: Mr. Pachano, aye; Mr. Hankin, aye; Mr. Higa, aye; Ms. Nelson, aye

Mr. Hankin made a motion for Ms. Nelson to be the Board's representative to the Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force, Mr. Higa seconded.

Roll call vote: Mr. Pachano, aye; Mr. Hankin, aye; Mr. Higa, aye; Ms. Nelson, aye

FORM A's:

No applications presented.

MINUTES: APRIL 27, 2023

Mr. Hankin made a motion to approve the minutes of April 27, 2023 as amended, Mr. Higa seconded.

Roll call vote: Mr. Pachano, aye; Mr. Hankin, aye; Mr. Higa, aye; Ms. Nelson, aye

HOUSING STRATEGIES DISCUSSION:

Ms. Kain said she came from LA, California, where, at the Armand Hammer Museum, the housing crisis was discussed in a way that was not political. The discussion was grounded in the community with discussions once a month for four months. Each month a different topic would be discussed. She said it brought in people to talk about the housing topics in an interesting way. She said she wanted to suggest the idea to the Board.

The Board discussed Ms. Kain's suggestion offering ideas of how it could work in Berkshire County. There were comments about zoning not necessarily being the same as housing and that there could be more discussion about housing as a separate topic from zoning and perhaps a way to start the update for the Master Plan.

Ms. Nelson said the discussion could be part of a joint meeting with the Selectboard. She said she would try to set up a joint meeting for June. She said there will be further discussion of the topic at a future meeting.

BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES/ISSUES & CONCERNS:

Mr. Higa said the Master Plan could be a mechanism for updating Complete Streets Plan. He suggested there would be a committee to reformulate the plan.

Mr. Rembold said this Board could tackle the Open Space and Recreation Plan. He said he would love the help updating the plan and it would be in the Board's purview.

Mr. Higa asked if the Board can look at the wireless 5G plan.

Mr. Hankin said the voters already made a decision.

Mr. Higa said yes but the Board could look at it after the AG sends the bylaws back.

Mr. Hankin said he is disappointed with what happened for the affordable housing development on North Plain Road. He said he is disappointed with the Great Barrington Affordable Housing Trust and the Selectboard. He said there needs to be someone from the Planning Board on the GBAHT. The Trust needs people involved in planning to be involved.

Ms. Nelson said maybe the topic could be part of joint meeting with the Selectboard. She said there could be constructive suggestions put together for discussion.

Mr. Pachano suggested that maybe a Planning Board member could attend other board meetings.

Ms. Nelson said it can be discussed at a future meeting. She suggested a recommendation be made.

Mr. Fick said he might be the Chair of BRPC.

Mr. Pachano said Mr. Fick is the sole representative of South County on the Board. He said he is thrilled that Mr. Fick is willing to take on the role.

Mr. Fick said as Chair he will be participating on many other committees.

Mr. Pachano commended Mr. Fick for hammering down on the important parts of the Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Pachano said there are many issues around affordable housing including how affordability is measured through economics.

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

Mr. Rembold said there will be an update at the next meeting on a few initiatives.

CITIZEN'S SPEAK TIME:

There were no citizens present to speak.

Having concluded its business, Ms. Nelson adjourned without objection at 6:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly L. Shaw

Kimberly L. Shaw
Planning Board Secretary