

PLANNING BOARD

DATE: May 25, 2023

TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE: Meeting Room

FOR: Regular Meeting

PRESENT: Brandee Nelson, Chair; Pedro Pachano; Jonathan Hankin; Malcolm Fick;

Jeremy Higa

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.

FORM A's:

No applications presented.

MINUTES: MAY 11, 2023

Mr. Hankin made a motion to approve the minutes of May 11, 2023 as amended, Mr. Fick seconded, all in favor.

SPECIAL PERMIT: 777 MAIN STREET

The Board reviewed a ZBA special permit for Berkhill 777 LLC, 777 Main Street to expand an existing nonconforming residential use on the second floor of 777 Main Street.

Attorney Peter Puciloski was present on behalf of the applicant. He said there are two apartments on the second floor of the building. He said Volunteers in Medicine will take the open space on the first floor.

Mr. Puciloski said the apartments were not built with a building permit. The special permit will provide for the expansion of the nonconforming residential use. He said the building dates back to 1930's. He said all of the work will be internal with the exception of the exterior staircase.

Mr. Rembold said the structure is in a mixed use B-2 zone so it needs a special permit. He said this property has been in the ZBA's jurisdiction for years because it is nonconforming.

Mr. Puciloski said there are a number of special permits for the property. He said there was a special permit for a single apartment but it was never used.

Ms. Nelson said the nonconformity is not increasing. She said the applicant is making the existing apartments legal.

Mr. Hankin said the Town needs housing. It would be good to bring the property up to code.

Mr. Fick made a motion to send a positive recommendation on the special permit to the ZBA, Mr. Higa seconded, all in favor.

BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES/ISSUES & CONCERNS:

Ms. Nelson said she talked to Steve Bannon, Chair of Selectboard, about setting a joint meeting and the potential discussion topics: including zoning, housing, more public education and where we are with the Master Plan. She said the Planning Board needs to identify items and issues to discuss. The meeting will be 30 minutes to an hour. She said the possible dates would be July 10 or July 24 at 5:00.

The Board agreed to have the joint meeting on July 24.

Mr. Fick suggested one topic to discuss is whether or not the Housing Sub Committee should continue to function.

Ms. Nelson asked Mr. Fick to think about how to present the topic for discussion.

Mr. Rembold asked if the Sub Committee will discuss what they think about their existence before the joint meeting.

Mr. Fick said yes. He said the Sub Committee has identified what each board can do regarding their roles in housing. He said the question is where the Sub Committee goes from here. He asked about the Master Plan and how to proceed with the update.

Ms. Nelson said Mr. Rembold has previously provided a spreadsheet with what needs to be done. She said we can work from there to start the process.

Mr. Higa suggested there needs to be representation on the Great Barrington Housing Trust Committee from Town boards if the Town is going to fund the Trust. He said it would be nice to have input from other boards.

Mr. Rembold said the charter explaining how the Trust will work can be found on the website. He suggested the Board take a look at it.

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

Mr. Rembold said he will try to bring an update on Complete Streets to the Board's July 13 meeting. He said also on the agenda for the July 13 meeting will be SPR for the parking lot at Lake Mansfield.

Mr. Rembold said he hopes to see proposals for the Housatonic School renovations soon. He said he hopes to bring a plan for the Master Plan update to the Board before the joint meeting with the Selectboard.

Mr. Rembold said the next meeting agenda is very light. He suggested the Board could take a break.

CITIZEN'S SPEAK TIME:

There were no citizens present to speak.

Having concluded its business, Ms. Nelson adjourned without objection at 6:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly L. Shaw

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Planning Board Secretary