

Lyme Planning Board Minutes
9/26/2019

Board Members and Staff Present: John Stadler, Chair; Tim Cook, Vice Chair; Kevin Sahr, Select Board Representative; David Van Wie, Alternate; Rich Brown, Alternate; David Robbins, Planning and Zoning Administrator.

Board Members Absent: Vicki Smith, Member; Eric Furstenberg, Member; David Roby, Jr., Alternate;

Members of the Public Present: Bret Ryan, Pat Super, Jennifer Cooke, Dave Santaw, Kate Santaw, Peter Webster, Kristin Pekala, Pilar Bauta, Dane D'Arcangelo

John appointed Rich Brown and David Van Wie as regular members for the Eversource hearing.

John opened the public hearing and asked the Eversource representative, Dane D'Arcangelo, to provide an overview of the proposed trimming / removal.

Mr. D'Arcangelo stated that for general tree trimming, they intend to remove approximately four years of growth from around the power lines. The cutting specification is based on the primary wire, which is usually the top wire. The primary wire is the one that will cause outages or fires if it is hit by a falling tree or branch. The specification based on the primary wire is 15 feet above, 10 feet below, and 8 feet to each side.

In addition to pruning, there are trees that are dead or diseased that need to be removed entirely. Eversource has sent letters to the property owners seeking permission to remove these trees.

Public comment: Pat Super was unsure if the trimming would impact her property because she has a different electric provider. Mr. D'Arcangelo stated that he did not have the specific power line maps with him at the meeting but they were in his truck and he would work with her to see if there would be any impact. Jennifer Cooke voiced general concern that the Town's scenic roads were getting wider and that Eversource was too aggressive trimming along the Lyme Common and Rt 10.

John asked if there were any questions or comments from the Board. There were none. John then moved to approve Eversource's request for tree maintenance, trimming and removal on the Town's scenic roads, as described by Mr.D'Arcangelo, with the following findings:

Eversource has two programs, maintenance pruning of new growth and removal of dead and diseased trees that threaten a line.

The trimming specification based on the primary wire is: 15 feet above, 10 feet below, and 8 feet to each side.

In order to remove dead or diseased trees, Eversource must have the owner's permission prior to removal.

Tim seconded the motion and John called for a vote.
The motion passed unanimously.

Item 2: Acceptance of minutes from 9/12/2019.

John moved to approve the minutes as amended by Tim and Rich.
Tim seconded the motion.
John called for a vote
The motion passed unanimously.

Item 3: Senior Housing.

Bret Ryan stated that he had given some more thought to senior housing and wanted to share his thoughts with the board. He believed that the need in Lyme was for seniors with a lower income who wanted to downsize to stay in Lyme. The units needed to attract those seniors who are downsizing and not provide a second home for snowbirds who could afford more expensive housing. To accomplish this goal, he believed that the units should have a common owner and should not be allowed to convert to condo ownership. John and the Zoning Administrator believed that condo ownership could not be prohibited. The units should also be age restricted to 62 and older and be sized in the 1,000 - 1,200 square foot range. The dwelling units should all be on the first floor. Common areas and mixed use should also be allowed.

He also felt that the Lyme Common District could support senior housing if the building footprint, lot coverage, and gross floor area controls were relaxed and combined with the ability to have a larger number of dwelling units for both conversions and new construction when creating senior housing. He believed that the septic requirements would be the major controlling factor.

John noted that Rich had proposed language for senior housing that recommended three changes to the zoning ordinance:

1) Create a new definition: Senior Housing is a living arrangement where at least 80 percent of the occupied units include at least one resident who is over the age of 55.

The Board discussed the age restriction and believed that senior housing should be restricted to age 62 and up for at least one of the residents in each unit. The issue of the age of care givers or other residents within a unit was discussed but no decision was reached.

2) Change the definition of Planned Development 4.49A to say, "Planned Developments may be 100% residential. At least 15% of the floor area shall be reserved for residential use."

The Planning and Zoning Administrator recommended that the Board keep Senior Housing and Planned Developments as separate articles within the ordinance as it avoids confusion and makes it easier to administer the ordinance.

3) Change Article IV so that a Planned Development for Senior Housing is permitted on any parcel with frontage along NH Route 10.

At this time, there was no additional support from the Board for senior housing outside of the Lyme Common Zoning District. John suggested that if the Board found it necessary then it could be expanded at a later date.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
David A. Robbins
Lyme Planning and Zoning Administrator.