

## **Lyme Planning Board Minutes April 14, 2016**

Board Members and Staff Present: John Stadler, Chair; Tim Cook, Vice Chair; C Jay Smith, Select Board Representative; Vicki Smith, Member; David Robbins, Planning and Zoning Administrator.

Board Members Absent: Eric Furstenberg, Member; Freda Swan, Alternate

Members of the Public Present: Amber Boland, David Roby, Michael Mundy, Fire Chief.

### **Item 1: Lyme Common Housing Review**

Mike Mundy, Fire Chief and Board member of the Lyme Water Association met with the Board to discuss the capacities of the Water Associations wells and distribution lines, in addition to fire safety issues. John thanked Mike for taking the time to meet with the Planning Board and asked him to describe the Association's water system. Mike stated that it is a domestic water system having three wells and a capacity of about 13,000 gallons per day. Only around one third of the system's capacity is used at around 4500 gallons per day. There are 32 houses plus the Lyme School using the system. Much of the physical parts of the system are located in members' basements. In the event of a prolonged power outage, the system can be run at a reduced capacity from a portable generator. The association has one paid system operator and the rest of the work (administrative) is done by the Association members.

Mike believed that the system could potentially support a larger number of users but having a backup location for a new well would be essential. Any expansion of the system would require approval of the membership.

John then asked Mike, as the Fire Chief, what he thought about adding density to the Lyme Common Zoning District. Mike's two concerns were water supply for firefighting and the exposure between buildings. When fighting a fire in a building that is close to another, the fire department uses a larger quantity of water to create a screen between the two buildings. When buildings are closer the amount of water needed increases. There are currently two water supplies in the Lyme Common District. One on the lot behind Stella's and one north of the village on Route 10. A third is currently being constructed behind Dowd's Inn.

The longest run of supply hose on any of the fire trucks is 1200 feet. Any fire beyond 1200 feet from the water supply needs to be fought using tanker trucks.

Mike felt that if the density of the Lyme Common District were to be increased, then additional water supplies that are plainly visible should be developed. He was also concerned that an increase in density could result in buildings being closer together. This could add additional challenges to fighting a fire. Close proximity makes it difficult to place men, equipment and apparatus where it is needed and allows fires to spread more

easily. Vicki asked what Mike believed to be an appropriate safe distance between buildings. He replied that the fire department uses a formula based on the size of the buildings. He was unsure what it was, but would find out and report back to the Board.

Vicki then asked Mike as a resident of the Lyme Common District, how he felt about potential increased density. He believed that as long as it did not change the atmosphere of the district, it might be okay. That said he wondered whether that might lead to the loss the unique small town feeling his children were able to grow up with.

## **Item 2: Acceptance of minutes from March /24/2016**

John moved to accept the minutes as submitted.

Tim seconded the motion

John called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

## **Item 3: Appointment of officers.**

John noted that Amber Boland had volunteered to be an alternate Planning Board member. He noted that she had regularly attended meetings for some time and had intelligently contributed to the proceedings. He moved to appoint her as an alternate for a term of three years. Tim seconded the motion. John asked if there was any discussion, there being none he called for a vote.

The Board voted unanimously to appoint Amber.

Vicki moved to nominate John as chairman for another year. Tim seconded the motion and called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously to appoint John as chairman.

John moved to nominate Tim as Vice-chairman for another year. Vicki seconded the motion and John called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously to appoint Tim as Vice-chairman.

## **Item 4: Zoning Amendments.**

The Board reviewed both a letter from Frank Bowles, which outlined several changes to the Ordinance that he would like to see implemented, and the input from the Zoning Board members from their March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 meeting.

1) Under limited circumstances allow the Zoning Administrator to approve a replacement septic system within the property or road setbacks.

The Board discussed this with the Administrator and decided to table any changes until the Board can gather more information, including discussing this with the Town's Health Officer. The Board felt it would be important to have the input of the Health Officer to ensure that more problems would not be created. The Administrator stated that the number of applications for replacement septic systems that are within the setbacks is

small. Vicki noted that the Zoning Board process is an excellent mechanism for abutting land owners to be able to voice any concerns about a system that would be in close proximity to their property.

2) Expand Planned Development to other districts, remove the business or institutional use requirement and allow for new multifamily dwellings.

The Board concluded that this issue would be tabled for the time being. The Board has received very little support, outside of a small group, from the community for easing restrictions on multifamily dwellings. While Planned Developments are not allowed in the Rural District, Lot Size Averaging subdivisions can achieve the same density of housing on a single lot as allowed by Planned Development, without the need for business or institutional use to accompany the residential use.

3) Ridgeline and Hillside Conservation district language.

The Zoning Board has difficulty with the language: "subject to the requirement that the proposed use, to the maximum extent reasonably practicable, will not materially interfere with or degrade those visual features of the site or adjacent sites which contribute to the scenic character of the area as viewed from the Town's public highways or public waters".

The Zoning Board feels that the interpretation of this language is too subjective and would like to have a better way to evaluate the impact of a building in the district. Alan Greatorex suggested, during the meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016, using computer modeling to better determine the impacted areas. The Planning and Zoning Administrator noted that the Town could add functionality to the GIS software the Town uses. This would allow the administrator to perform a view shed analysis of a proposed building site to determine where a building could be seen. The Board agreed that this tool along with some modification to the language would help the Zoning Board. Vicki suggested that this would be a good time to include the use of sharp cutoff lighting for outside light fixtures. John asked Vicki to draft the new language that the Board could discuss at a later meeting. She agreed.

Rob Titus had suggested adding a section to the Ordinance on Workforce Housing. The Board discussed the possibility of changing the title of Article XI from Affordable Housing to Workforce Housing but decided that the current articles would not work well for that. The Board decided that it would be better to write something new for Workforce Housing. John volunteered to write a first draft.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm.

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