

**Town of Voluntown
Planning & Zoning Commission**

**Voluntown Town Hall
Regular Meeting
Wednesday February 12, 2020**

Draft Meeting Minutes

Halloran Sage Attorneys held a training session from 6:00 – 7:30pm with Planning and Zoning Commission members.

Regularly Scheduled Meeting

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Scott Davidson called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:37pm.

Members Present: Scott Davidson, Tom Sweet, Bob Panko, David Nieminen, Paul Hartman, and Alternate Members John Savage, Max Hollowell and Judith Allik.

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Pete Zvinglas, Zoning Official

2. **Seating of Alternates:** No Alternate Members were seated for the meeting.
3. **Additions to the Agenda:** Motion made and seconded (T. Sweet / B. Panko) to add the Housing Authority Site Plan Modification to the agenda under New Business. *MOTION PASSED Unanimously*
4. **Approval of Minutes Jan 8, 2020:** Commission members reviewed the minutes of the 1/08/2020 Meeting. Motion made and seconded (D. Nieminen / T. Sweet) to accept the minutes of the 1/08/2020 meeting as written. *MOTION PASSED Unanimously*
5. **Citizen Comments:** Chet Loch (485 Beach Pond Rd.) stated that he has now filed two complaints about his neighbor at 491 Beach Pond Rd. for having a severely blighted property. He asked about the status and process moving forward with respect to enforcement and getting the property cleaned up. He stated that he approached the tax assessor about having his taxes reduced due to the likely depreciation of his property value given the blighted property next to his. P. Zvinglas explained that he did refer the first complaint to then Attorney Mike Carey and that the appeals period had passed, but he hadn't heard any more from Mr. Loch, so he took no further action at the time. He passed the most recent complaint to the new Attorney and is waiting for the appeals period to expire and will go from there. He and Chairman Davidson explained to Mr. Loch that the town does not have a formal blight ordinance making enforcement difficult.

Chairman Davidson told the Commission members that he had had a conversation with Juliet Hodge, who was present in the audience, about the Recording Secretary Position being available due to the resignation of Marc Ledoux Sr. effective 2/12/2020. Chairman Davidson asked J. Hodge if she was interested, and stated that he felt she may be well suited for the position given her background. She said she would be happy to do it. Chairman Davidson explained that the Commission would discuss it further during Executive Session.

6. **Old Business:**

- a) **Approval of 12/11/2019 Meeting Minutes:** Commission members reviewed the minutes of the 12/11/2019 Meeting. Motion made and seconded (J. Allik / D. Nieminen) to rewrite 12/11/2019 minutes. *MOTION PASSED Unanimously*
- b) **Approval of 12/19/2019 Meeting Minutes:** Commission members reviewed the minutes of the 12/19/2019 Public Hearing. Members felt that they needed to be rewritten. They suggested that the person who agrees

to rewrite them listen to the tape. **Motion made and seconded (B. Panko / D. Nieminen) to rewrite 12/19/2019 minutes. MOTION PASSED Unanimously**

- c) **Election of officers:** Chairman Davidson stated that the Commission needed to elect a Chairman, Vice Chair and Secretary. Chairman Davidson offered to be the Vice Chair. B. Panko explained that he would not be able to fill any role as he recently accepted a job in Long Island that will prevent him from attending any meetings. He stated he had planned to resign at the end of the month. P. Hartman stated that he would not have time to be the Chairman. Chairman Davidson stated that he had been Chairman for 3 years and given the lack of a willing replacement, he spoke to the Attorney for advice. The Attorney suggested that each member rotate through the position - though preferably not monthly. Commission members discussed the possibility of waiting until Bob Panko's seat is filled to see if that person would be willing to be Chairman. T. Sweet stated he was unable to serve as Chairman as he is currently the Chairman of the Wetlands Commission.

Motion made and seconded (B. Panko /D. Nieminen) to table the election of Chairman until the next meeting. MOTION PASSED

Motion made and seconded (D. Nieminen / T. Sweet) to elect Scott Davidson as Vice Chair. MOTION PASSED Unanimously

Motion made and seconded (S. Davidson / T. Sweet) to elect David Nieminen as Secretary. MOTION PASSED Unanimously

- d) **Clarification of Committee for rewrite of POCD:** Committee was created last month consisting of Judith Allik and Juliet Hodge. J. Allik stated she wanted to invite others to join. The 1st task would be to work on the Vision and then to work on the plan one section at a time until it was finished. Chairman Davidson advised J. Allik that agendas and minutes needed to be posted, and that the Committee would need to bring back the revised sections to the full Commission for comment. The approval of the final document will be voted on by the full Commission after another public hearing.

6. **New Business:**

- a) **Housing Authority Site Plan Modification.** John Faulise from Boundaries, LLC and Lisa Lowe were present for this application. J. Faulise explained that the original Site Plan was approved in April 2018 after an 8-24 review to substantially modify or improve Town-owned property. Applicants now seeking a modification the approved Site Plan. Specifically, applicants are proposing to forego some aspects of the parking lot improvements and eliminate the additional curb-cut on the approved plans due to insufficient funds. Mr. Faulise stated they are proposing to simply regrade and resurface the original parking lot to become compliant with ADA standards; realign some sidewalks; eliminate the stone dust pathway and second curb cut; and improve existing curve radius of the entrance to provide easier emergency access. Drainage will remain the same and pavement around the catch basin will be repaired. Commission members asked whether the modifications were in compliance with the existing Wetlands Permit. Mr. Faulise stated that they were still in compliance.

Motion made and seconded (B. Panko / D. Nieminen) to approve Revision C of the approved Site Plan as presented this evening by John Faulise, Boundaries, LLC. Motion Passed 4:0 with P. Hartman Abstaining.

Mr. Faulise stated he would publish the Notice of Decision on behalf of the Commission and file the Mylar.

- b) **Regulation Changes:** Chairman Davidson Spoke to NECOG about working on changes to the Regulations. Chairman Davidson also acknowledged that J. Hodge had expressed interest in assisting with this task. Commission decided to table this issue until next meeting. **Motion made and seconded (T. Sweet / D. Nieminen) to table the discussion about rewriting the Zoning Regulations until next meeting. MOTION PASSED Unanimously**

- c) **FYE 2021 Budget:** Chairman Davidson stated he had a package from the Board of Selectman and a letter concerning the proposed budget. Chairman Davidson stated that the salary line item increased from \$1,782 to 1,800, and that the \$1,000 in the previous budget that was allocated to the POCD would remain and be allocated to revising the current Zoning Regulations if needed. The line item for legal fees, which include publishing notices, was increased to cover rising cost of advertising. Overall, the proposed increase to the budget is minimal.

J. Allik left the meeting at 8:23pm to attend another meeting at the School.

Motion made and seconded (D. Nieminen / T. Sweet) to approve the FY 2020-2021 Budget. MOTION PASSED Unanimously

8. **Executive Session to discuss Employees:** Motion made and seconded (D. Nieminen / T. Sweet) to go into executive session 8:25pm to discuss employees. **MOTION PASSED Unanimously**

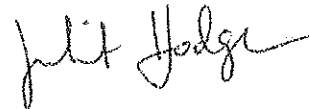
Commission members came out of Executive Session at 9:00pm. No votes or action was taken.

Motion made and seconded (T. Sweet / D. Nieminen) to discuss hiring Juliet Hodge as Recording Secretary. MOTION PASSED Unanimously

Chairman Davidson stated that the pay would be \$20/hr and that the responsibilities would include filing agendas, publishing required notices, taking and posting minutes, doing any necessary mailings and/or emailing of documents to other agencies, Boards and Commissions, and Town Clerk. Position would be for 3 months initially. J. Hodge stated she may not be able to attend the March 11th meeting as she would be on vacation, but she would listen to the recording and post the minutes.

Motion made and seconded (B. Panko / T. Sweet) to hire Juliet Hodge as Recording Secretary for 3 months with the salary and duties as discussed. MOTION PASSED Unanimously

9. **Correspondence:** Chairman Davidson reviewed the letters that were received about the budget, enforcement matters, and from J. Allik requesting that grammar corrections be made to the POCD prior to submitting it to the State. The POCD has already been sent to the State. Chairman Davidson discussed the urgency of getting the minutes of the Public Hearing for the POCD on 12/19/2019 approved and sent to the State as it is the only thing missing at this point.
10. **ZEO Report:** ZEO P. Zvinglas further explained the details about the Cease & Desist orders recently issued. He stated he had done a site visit to the property on Beach Pond Rd. and had referred matter to the Attorney. P. Zvinglas also reported that he received a complaint from a citizen about the anticipated large Trump Sign in the center of town given the upcoming election year. P. Zvinglas will cite him for an unpermitted structure rather than the sign itself.
11. **General Planning Discussion: None**
12. **Adjourn:** A motion was made and seconded (T. Sweet / P. Hartman) to adjourn at 9:11pm. **MOTION PASSED Unanimously**



Scott Davidson, Chairman

Juliet Hodge, Recording Secretary