

Minutes

Pittsfield Planning Board

Regular Meeting

May 12, 2014

The Pittsfield Planning Board met on Monday, May 12, 2014 at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers of the Pittsfield Municipal Building, 112 Somerset Avenue, Pittsfield, Maine.

Present: Holly Zadra, Jan Laux, Royce Sposato and Tom Cote. **Absent:** Alan Dunphy, Brent Newhouse, Walter Reuter and Jack Wright. **Also Present:** Lori Swartz, Deb Billings, Mark Schumpert, Jane Woodruff, Don Woodruff, Vaughn Woodruff, Ray Berthelette, Dwayne Ames, Town Manager Kathryn Ruth and Building Inspector Steve Seekins.

1. Chair **Royce Sposato** opened the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.
2. The Minutes of the meeting of March 10, 2014 were not adopted as the Board did not have a quorum.
3. Public Hearing: NONE

Royce Sposato noted that since the meeting lacked a quorum only the presentation by the Heart of Pittsfield Group and Dwayne Ames' recommendations for mobile home parks in the C-4 Zoning District would take place. Action items on the agenda would be discussed at the next meeting. This meeting would be considered a workshop.

4. New Business:

Presentation by the Heart of Pittsfield Group regarding community projects

Vaughn Woodruff led a presentation by the Heart of Pittsfield Group. Vaughn passed out handouts entitled "Heart of Pittsfield" and an announcement of a meeting at the First Universal Church of Pittsfield on May 22, 2014 at 6:30 pm entitled "Maine At Work". Steve Seekins advised he would mail the above information to the board members who were not present. Vaughn explained the purpose of the Heart of Pittsfield Group was to unite and promote the Town of Pittsfield by following recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. The group plans to connect the community through the media tools we have in this next generation. These include facebook, a website and a community calendar on their website to assist organizations in planning events that do not conflict with other events. Vaughn discussed current and future projects: "Where in Pittsfield" photos on their website, a community supper featuring locally grown food; a car show; and harvest festival. After holding these events, they decided that they would switch over to the Comprehensive Plan since only the town government was working on the plan. They decided they would implement the plan and started working on the Somerset Ave corridor project.

Vaughn asked each member of the group to report on the projects they were passionate about and chose to work on.

Lori Swartz wants to have materials created to welcome people to town to let people know what is available in Pittsfield. When she moved into Town, she did not get any information on Pittsfield, only information on other towns. She feels that the Town needs to provide the history, services available, the offices, hours of operation, where recycling is located and all various services available. She felt as a newcomer to Pittsfield that this was missing. She would have appreciated having this information when she arrived in Town.

Vaughan Woodruff and Ray Berthelette discussed the Google Maps project for updating addressing and adding trails and waterways. One of Ray's long-term objectives is to map out all the waterways. In the future, he wants to see more portages all along the Sebasticook River, putting them in along the entire river so that you can come all the way down. He would also like to see more trails that are well mapped.

Deb Billings is working on a Community Arts program. She would work with the Maine Arts Commission, the ballet and others here in Town and advance to classes for children and adults with a long-range goal of a gallery/studio.

Mark Schumpert is placing photos of Pittsfield on Google Maps. To date six photos have been placed. He is taking photos so that he can profile businesses. He is working on updating the addresses on Google so that people can find places.

Jane Woodruff spoke on the Somerset Ave Gateway project. She feels it should be expanded to other major gateway roads. She is looking at all the entrances to the Town and wants to review how Pittsfield looks and make sure it looks good all the way down the corridors. Jane spoke about the upcoming discussion on employment, working in the community and looking at the economic needs. Jane indicated that the Heart of Pittsfield was a facilitator for the Civil War Grant which will include the Maine Memory network and two other projects. She stated this will help as the cultural, historical and art in the town are underrepresented.

Don Woodruff spoke on the need to draw people and their businesses to Pittsfield. To do this he indicated that the Town must provide visibility of the Mill Pond by cutting down the trees and bushes. He stated that the Town has not done the work needed to show these areas off as the pond needs to be highly visible so that people see it. He stated that the vision of the Comprehensive plan is not meshed with the ordinances and the ordinances must be fixed. He stated that the vision of the Comprehensive plan must be supported by the ordinances and by the committees that support the government.

Further discussion on the projects then proceeded.

Kathryn Ruth advised when approached by Vaughan Woodruff about mapping out the community, she had noted that the Town did not have the staff for this project. After E-911 had been implemented for a few years, the locations became an issue with Google. Both Google and MapQuest look at the same exact information and for some reason, the Google Maps do not line up. She noted while this was a noteworthy project, it was clear that it would take hundreds of hours, therefore, the Town did not start it as it would not be able to be finished due to its sheer size. Further, she advised the Town had contacted Google Maps 9 times and has not received a response. Basically, the way that the group is inputting the information is the only way to complete this project, which is very time consuming. The data received from the State of Maine to complete E-911 were large maps, therefore, we do not have any media that can be forwarded to be downloaded by Google or another entity to update the maps. The State of Maine does not involve itself in making sure the addresses on the internet are updated. She suggested that the instruction for individuals to make Google map changes be listed on the town

and Heart of Maine websites. Vaughan Woodruff agreed to write a procedure to update Google maps for Kathryn to have posted on the town website. There was a lengthy discussion about the Google mapping project and how it is proceeding. Vaughan wants to show the world the Town so that people will move here and bring their businesses here. He noted that we are not going to compete with North Carolina as they have stripped down their tax and environmental law. However, we can show that this is a safe town with a great quality of life. The discussion continued regarding the Map Ups and future events.

Kathryn advised that documents will not be needed to welcome and promote the Town as the Town Office has every document that you can imagine. When people move into Town they head to the Town Office and we prepare materials for them designed upon their interests. Kathryn advised that while she had been told that she has one of the most cluttered reception areas in the State that she also has one of the best display areas for people to find any information that they would ever want. The Town Manager noted when she arrived, she put together Welcome Packages with the folders she located downstairs in more than a dozen boxes in storage. Now, due to the cost, the fact that everything changes so quickly and items can be placed on the website to download, the Town no longer prepares these packages ahead of time, rather we put them together based upon the needs of the specific individual. Kathryn will meet with Lori once it is not so busy and they can review the materials together.

The Town Manager stated that we should thank Jared McCannell of MCI for writing the civil war grant as he did a great job and the grant was approved due to that work. MCI will be the fiscal agent so this will work well given how many grants the Town is implementing right now. The Town appreciates MCI's assistance on this project.

Kathryn advised the group of the upcoming Trade Show for the Seabasticook Valley region that will be held in Pittsfield at MCI in 2015 and 2016. This will be a wonderful opportunity to promote the Town, MCI and the businesses. A lot of effort will go into these events as we can showcase the community.

Holly Zadra asked if anyone had any idea on how the Planning Board and the Heart of Pittsfield could work together. She noted that the Planning Board has to look at the ordinances and the Heart of Pittsfield is looking at the vision of the Comprehensive Plan, which is also our job.

Vaughan Woodruff answered that the Heart of Pittsfield plans to have a representative at the Planning Board meetings to assist the Board and report back to the Heart of Pittsfield about what is going on. He noted that the Heart of Pittsfield had talked about how they were going to elicit community input on items that the Planning Board is reviewing. They can do a poll about how people feel about something. What kind of businesses do we want to see in certain areas of the Town? We can use this tool. Don Woodruff indicated that we used to have press, however, they no longer cover the meetings. So we can help inform people about issues coming up so that they can get involved and give the Planning Board their opinions. The Heart of Pittsfield plans to use the new networking tools such as their website and facebook to get information to the public about what the Planning Board is doing. Don stated that with no one at the Planning Board meetings that the board is working in a vacuum and we need to find out what people want. A discussion incurred about how the Heart of Pittsfield could ask questions about items and have people post comments and opinions on an informal basis. The group would post the meeting agenda. Kathryn Ruth noted that the Town has received legal advice to not be on facebook which is why the Town does not have one of the pages and utilizes the website to post items such as agendas. **Holly Zadra** requested to be emailed the agenda so she could post it on facebook. Holly talked about how powerful facebook conversations were as she learns something each day from people who were on facebook. Don and Jane Woodruff noted that people used to know what

was going on and now they do not so you have to use the tools out there – facebook, twitter and other things. The group went on to discuss the effectiveness of spreading the word and keeping people informed through the social media services that are now available. Debra Billing suggested posting the board's yearly meeting schedule to different media sites.

Royce Sposato asked Dwayne Ames to speak on mobile homes in C-4 area. He noted this meeting does not have quorum so we can not act this evening. Dwayne Ames thanked the board for inviting him to the meeting and did a presentation on allowing mobile home parks in the C-4 Zoning District. Steve Seekins explained the planning board wanted input on the size of the lots and spacing for the smaller mobile home parks in district C-4 that has been recommend by comprehensive plans. Dwayne stated if mobile home parks where to be limited to 4 homes per park there would be no more new mobile home parks in Pittsfield because cost per site. This would not make such a park worthwhile for any developer.

Dwayne stated the lot sizes should remain at 20,000 square feet size. Lots could have 100 feet of frontage and be 200 feet deep. He noted that most rural mobile home parks are used by senior citizens. This works well for the town, as the retiring baby boomers would bring tax dollars without increasing need to build new schools. **Holly Zadra** asked where mobile homes are allowed? Steve Seekins advised in C-4, R-2 and R-4. Steve advised there is little land left in R-2 or R-4 that would be large enough for a mobile home park. Steve noted that the reason we are talking about this is the comprehensive plans states we should discourage mobile home parks in C-4 to preserve farmland and rural areas. **Holly Zadra** asked if Dwayne sees C-4 as an attractive place for a mobile home park? He states he does and indicated that such a park could be limited to adult parks. He states an adult park per state rules must allow 20% of people under 55 years old. His park has no children it is all seniors. **Holly Zadra** asked if the town could limit the number of mobile home parks in C-4? Steve Seekins advised he would need to check with town attorney but does not think we could limit the number of parks. **Holly Zadra** asked what the minimum size a mobile home park would need to be to make it feasible for a developer? Dwayne Ames advised at least 50 units.

Jan Laux stated the demographic of the town should be considered when determining the need for mobile home parks. Also the lack of public transportation could be an issue for seniors living in a park in the rural area. He stated young people of today are not going into farming. **Holly Zadra** countered by stating small farms are currently on the increase. **Jan Laux** discussed the need to draw people to the town such as utilizing the type of development we have been talking about for the SAS site. Vaughan stated that having some outside company come into SAS may not be positive for us. He stated that the town being an attractive place to live is what would attract people and their small business. Vaughan advised we have to look at attracting to Town what we export each year which are graduating seniors and figuring out the opportunities. It is not going to be some big business that will save Pittsfield but that it will be lots of small ones that pop up. **Jan Laux** discussed how the SAS building does have to be redone so that it will attract businesses. He discussed doing a study of why people are staying and why people are leaving.

5. Old Business: Skipped over due to lack of a quorum.
6. Other Items That Come Before the Board:

Vaughan Woodruff suggested that our vision, which you are looking at for the next 15 years, is the one thing the board has control over in the type of business coming to town. He stated that you have control over what type of development is good for Pittsfield. He suggested not making decisions on a

business on the tax base alone. He stated that Family Dollar is a very good case study. This came in with real estate and planning people who were not going to listen anyway and we said okay as we need tax base as we are a poor town. He stated that he brought his business here as he wanted to be here and that he wanted to make sure that even though he does not have 20 employees that he will be treated the same as a big business. These are the decisions that the Planning Board has control over and you need to look at it strategically and not just one item.

Debra Billings said if we are going to follow the Comprehensive Plan, then it is all about being a small town in central Maine where you do feel safe and can have some of the amenities without Family Dollar things. The purpose and the need to follow the Comprehensive Plan was discussed. **Royce Sposato** noted the plan is not a legal document and basically is a wish list. The ordinances are a legal document. The board's job is to align the ordinances to the plan which is in progress. Vaughan Woodruff then indicated that it is a vision of where the community is going. **Royce Sposato** explained the process that was taking place now. **Tom Cote** indicated that Family Dollar followed the rules and laws that they were given. Vaughan indicated that the Comprehensive Plan states that we are going to support businesses that value this community rather than seeing Pittsfield as an economic opportunity to exploit. He indicated that is a great example of why the ordinances do not support the Comprehensive Plan. Vaughan Woodruff stated that an economic feasibility study required of any business not owned by someone in Pittsfield is a reasonable piece to add. **Royce Sposato** stated that the items that are written into the Code must be legal. Vaughan indicated that all kinds of places have this. He stated that Wal-Mart cannot go into Vermont. There are ways to do this. **Tom Cote** said that those people who want to shop at Wal-Mart go to other towns and yes, they may have protected their vision but they lost the dollars.

Holly Zadra indicated that she really wants the two groups to work closely together to accomplish the vision. We now have the vision and need to figure out how to accomplish the vision. **Royce Sposato** clarified that we need to make sure that the vision agrees with the laws we have in this town. Debra Billings indicated even if the two groups work closely together there are going to be some rubs. Debra Billings noted that the Heart of Pittsfield wants to follow the vision and the Planning Board has to follow the ordinances. Vaughan Woodruff stated that he thought it would be a much more streamlined process for the government to create the ordinances rather than for an outside group to put in an ordinance amendment. Steve stated that there was not a difference in how ordinances are adopted. Steve further pointed out that the ordinances that are in place today were developed by the will of the townspeople. **Royce Sposato** pointed out that the ordinances do not discriminate.

The process and cost of submitting ordinance changes was discussed. It was noted the Planning Board only recommends or does not recommend ordinance changes. The Town Council, after a properly held public hearing, makes the decision. The fees for changes and advertising costs were discussed.

Kathryn Ruth was asked by Vaughan Woodruff about the costs for advertising and whether it was less expensive by having 10 ordinance amendments together. She advised that it was less expensive to have one larger ad rather than several smaller ads. The Town Manager explained that due to the significant legal advertising costs that currently ordinance amendments being proposed by the Town were being grouped together.

The Town Manager went on to explain so that everyone is clear as to what is taking place that the Planning Consultant went through the ordinances after putting together the new Comprehensive Plan based upon all the input and requirements. After reviewing the ordinances, a list of specific items that need to be addressed in order to match the current Ordinances to the new Comprehensive Plan was created by the Planner. These items are listed on page 137 of the Comprehensive Plan. These are the

specific items that the Planning Board is reviewing and working on. A batch of those changes were recently grouped together and we added the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance amendment in order to make the property at SAS more desirable for development. She noted that interestingly enough this amendment will also be available for the UTC property, although at the time of drafting this we did not know we might need it. In addition we added a couple of administrative items into the mix and put everything together. She noted it has worked well and has also resulted in less staff time and less meeting time for the boards as they are not meeting several times on several different items.

Kathryn Ruth updated the board on current status of SAS property. She stated the Trust which manages the property has stated it will sell the property as one piece and is not interested to dividing the land or leasing the buildings. She explained the change in the shoreland zoning to allow for a higher density as when the new shoreland zoning ordinance was put in place it was discovered to be more restrictive. Addressing the shoreland zoning was the first item to do to make the property use more flexible. This change is currently waiting State DEP approval. She explained the progress on getting the mill building on the list of Historic properties on the federal register. The Town Manager discussed the possible uses of the property and noted how beautiful the mill building is on the third floor and how this could be promoted. Kathryn noted that this is a large project and needs to be phased. She noted that she has learned a lot from talking to the developer who has extensively researched possible projects for it, and is interested in developing the site if it is determined to be feasible.

Don Woodruff discussed that there should be a way to discuss with business applicants how a proposed new building will be designed to fit into the area where it is to be located. He stated that we should have been able to have sit down and talked to Family Dollar about the comprehensive plan to have some changes. He stated that we should have done some yankee trading here. It is not that it follows the rules but that it needs to be compatible. Don wanted to know what we can do to make it work while we are fixing the ordinances to match the comprehensive plan.

The Town Manager explained the process that is taking place again to match the ordinances to the new Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Consultant went through the ordinances to review them to determine what items needed to be changed in order to match up to the Comprehensive Plan. The list of changes needed are already listed in the Comprehensive Plan item by item and the Planning Board is working on the master list contained in the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Board has already addressed the first one which was the junky yard issue and now the Planning Board has a new group that they are working on which is more complicated than the first items.

Jan Woodruff discussed her letter to the planning board which has not yet been answered. She sees it is on the agenda and will happen at the next meeting. It lists a number of questions around the Somerset Avenue gateway. She believes there is a discrepancy in having the highest level residential zone across from a commercial zone. Jane is very concerned about this issue and wants to know if it is going to be looked at. She surmises that this whole area got put into the Highway Commercial Zone when the dairy farm was changed to Kenton Wright's garage. Then across the road there is a very restrictive zone. She wants the Planning Board to put properties back to residential. She is concerned that there will be a domino affect down the street with more commercial development coming to town down one side of the street. She indicated that the Town has been lauded for the gateway and we could lose it if there is development. She hopes that the board will look at this and address the discrepancy between the two zones. She states that this should address that vision with having a gateway. We need to keep all those commercial things out of that level and not any further down. She wants to hear a response on this and whether the Planning Board will address this or whether she will need to submit that as an ordinance change. Steve Seekins indicated that the letter would be addressed

at the next meeting due a lack of a quorum at this meeting. Steve Seekins advised if these homes should be vacant for over a year they would lose their grandfathered use as a residence. Jane Woodruff discussed that all entrances to the Town should serve as a draw.

Vaughan Woodruff noted that he knows it is busy but just found out they were on the agenda at a Heart of Pittsfield meeting as he never heard back from his request for the group to be on the agenda. Steve Seekins indicated that he e-mailed the agenda to Vaughan with a week's notice and asked for a reply.

7. Adjournment:

The workshop was adjourned at 8:50 pm

Respectfully submitted by:
Steve Seekins, Building Inspector
Nicole Nickolan, Town Clerk