

Agenda

**Town of Strafford
Development Review Board
April 20, 2016
7 P.M.**

Call to order: Terry called the meeting to order at 7:20 P.M.

Member Attendance: Chair Terry Garrison, Martha Walke, Steve Campbell, Bonnie Bergeron,
Liz Clarke

Other Attendees: N/A

Approval of minutes: Martha moved/Steve seconded, minutes approved

Report of Zoning Administrator: N/A

New business:

1. Discussion of Steve Campbell's draft of ZA position description

This discussion was rescheduled from the March meeting so Steve Campbell could lead the discussion.

To open the discussion, Martha shared that she had been asked why the DRB wanted a position description for the ZA.

Steve responded that the purpose of the position description is to clarify the role and responsibilities of the ZA so the responsibilities of the ZA are tied to the Town Zoning Regulations because at this time the connection is not always clear and this can result in potential problems during the development of a project or after it's completion.

With a goal to alleviate such problems, Steve also suggested that in addition to clarifying the ZA job, a subdivision approval might include an envelope describing the proposed development. For example, in the SD application, the applicant must identify where the building might be sited on a Lot based on zoning regulations, which will make building site location a condition of the approved SD. This condition, Steve discussed upcoming changes to the Subdivision Regulations that address the issues relating to appropriate density of building based on the sensitivity and characteristics of the property. He illustrated the concept by describing a potential SD for 15 acres, which in principle might be subdivided into 10 three acre lots. However if the 15 acres include environmentally sensitive properties such as wetlands, streams and/or steep grade, there may be fewer lots that meet the zoning regulations for building.

The Board also considered how to verify whether or not the regulations have been met and which organization would be responsible. This subject raised the question of enforcement and the economic impact for the Town.

Steve said the DRB is the only group considering the Draft Position Description so far, to see whether the DRB would like to see more specificity for the ZA's role, and if it did, what would that look like. Based on the thinking of the DRB, he would like to offer a Draft Position Description to the Select Board. The Draft under consideration is adapted from the Town of Hinesburg. Martha and Bonnie suggested some edits to the Draft to make it more applicable to the Town of Strafford.

As a part of the discussion, Steve introduced a concern about FEMA's requirement for a Certificate of

Occupancy in order for buildings on a Flood Plain to be eligible for Flood Insurance. The DRB pointed out that the common understanding of Certificate of Occupancy, is that the building meets Building Codes. The Town of Strafford does not inspect for building codes. In contrast, Town Zoning Regulations do specify State approved septic design, set back from environmentally sensitive features, and set backs from property lines. In lieu of a Certificate of Occupancy, perhaps a Certificate of Compliance (with Town zoning regulations) might satisfy the verification needed for FEMA required flood insurance.

The underlying issue for having clear and current zoning regulations is to be compliant with the mandates that are known to be handed down from the State; for example, Energy Conservation. The discussion also considered the conflict between introducing regulations for new development versus existing development that is known to be non-compliant.

Terry drew the discussion back to the Draft Position Description and asked whether the Board wanted to present a Position Description to the Select Board. The consensus was that they would like offer a position description to the Select Board that is shorter and simpler than the Draft under consideration. The discussion ended with Board members agreeing to review and edit the Draft and come back to the next month's meeting prepared to reconcile the edits into a Position Description that conveys the needs of the Town of Strafford in the context of available resources.

Old business:

N/A

Adjournment:

Martha moved, Bonnie seconded the motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M. The next meeting of the DRB is scheduled for Wednesday, May 18, 2016, 7:00 P.M. At the Town Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Clarke, Clerk
Town of Strafford DRB