

TOWN OF LOUDON
LOUDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
OF OCTOBER 16, 2008

2009 ZONING ORDINANCE WORKSHOP

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Tom Dow.

Attendance:

Planning Board – Chairman Tom Dow, Vice Chairman Stanley Prescott, Gary Tasker, Tom Moore, Henry Huntington, Steve Jackson, Ex-Officio Dustin Bowles, Alternates Bob Ordway and Jeff Green

Zoning Board – Chairman Dave Powelson, Vice Chairman Ned Lizotte, Roy Merrill, George Saunderson, Alternate Jim Venne

Resident Earl Tuson

Discussions:

- ◆ Small Wind Energy Systems – Chairman Dow said that he would like to form a sub-committee for recommendations on this topic. Dave Powelson said that he would ask if this would be a permitted use or if it would be by special exception and if it would be limited to certain districts. He said that he is generally in favor of the concept. Bob Ordway said that he would think it would be by special exception, no matter where it would be considered. Mr. Powelson asked if it should be kept to the AFP and RR Districts. Henry Huntington asked why or why not the CI District. Stan Prescott said that he did not see any reason to limit the district if the required area is available. Steve Jackson said that he thought a special exception would be the way to go, leaving it to a case by case basis. Jeff Green said that there would be setback requirements to be met. Tom Moore asked about negatives of the systems, such as bird injuries and noise, and he recommended being careful as they move forward. Dave Powelson said that he thought noise and visual impact would be the biggest concerns. Earl Tuson explained that a homeowner would put up what is economical and meets their needs. He talked about the net metering rules, tower sizes, and how the size would correlate to the site limitations.

The chairman said that there is a lot of research to be done in order to come back with a recommended ordinance. Julie Robinson said that the State has been doing a lot of research on wind power. She suggested that the group look at what has been gathered for information as a starting point. The chairman asked for volunteers for the small wind energy systems sub-committee. Stan Prescott, George Saunderson, Bob Ordway, Henry Huntington, and Earl Tuson agreed to sit on the sub-committee. They will notify Donna of their plans to meet so that others can be informed.

- ◆ Steep Slopes – Ned Lizotte said that he would like to submit the same verbiage that was considered on this topic at last year’s workshops. He said that the same issues apply and that the ZBA has recently granted relief on the CVAD site. Mr. Lizotte said that the ZBA is pretty much in favor of the 25% and he is bringing this back to the table per the minutes of last year’s workshop. Tom Dow said that they need to consider what has happened over the last year. Mr. Lizotte said that they will probably see more requests for relief.
- ◆ Signs – Chairman Dow stated that the ZBA has met with track representatives with regard to their sign. Dave Powelson said that the Ordinance does not allow flashing or movable signs but it does allow changeable copy. He said that the definition of changeable copy was reviewed, as was how the term applies to the NHMS situation. Mr. Powelson said that the sign’s colors have been toned down and the speed of the changing messages was slowed. He said that the ZBA had come to the consensus, with input from Bob Fiske, that the sign is compliant as revised. Mr. Powelson said whether everyone agrees with the Board’s decision, they had come to the conclusion that they should not shut the track down and tear down the sign. He said, in doing that, there is the possibility that they may get more changeable copy signs in town and therefore there should be some discussion about the ordinance and if it is satisfactory as it stands or if it needs to be changed.

Ned Lizotte said that part of the rationale of the ZBA decision was that technology has advanced since the writing of the sign requirements. He said that there is no change on the face of the sign as it is done manually on a keyboard. Mr. Lizotte said that the speed of the sign was the main focus, noting that the track has toned down the speed and brightness. He stated that the physical sign itself is reasonable. Mr. Lizotte said that the boards need to be pro-active with changes in time. Tom Dow suggested that the ordinance should include new technology and how it applies to all zones. He said it could be restricted per zone. Roy Merrill said that he does not agree with restricting it to just the CR District as that would be seen as showing preference to the track. Jeff Green said that it would not be unreasonable to limit how often the message can change. He said the sign can be distracting when trying to read all of the messages and that he found it to be very bright at night. Mr. Green suggested that the brightness be dimmed at night. It was noted that the regulations say that light cannot be cast onto abutting properties.

Stan Prescott said that they need to slow the cycle and agreed that the sign is very bright. Steve Jackson noted that there are 17,000 cars per day passing the sign for the last six months and there is no knowledge of any accidents. Henry Huntington suggested that that type of sign be restricted to the CR District, saying that he would not want it all over town. Gary Tasker noted that Concord’s sign ordinance defines that type of sign and zone. Stan Prescott said that Concord’s ordinance defined things the best out of the samples that they reviewed. There was discussion about restricting to the CR District, the appearance of preferential treatment, and options. Tom Dow spoke about this type of sign being more of an issue in an area where there might be residences. Gary Tasker suggested that it could be written that computer generated signs be limited to the CR District. Stan Prescott said that it might be good to talk with the sign company to learn more about signs and what options are available with them. Steve Jackson said that he would like to see restrictions on the number of lumens, the number of times the message changes, and the size of the lit area rather than limit them to the Speedway. Gary Tasker said that he would rather not see it at all then rather than having the Las Vegas appearance.

Earl Tuson noted that gas stations are using more of the LED signs, which are simpler but are similar technology. Dustin Bowles said that as people upgrade their signs they will be going to newer technology. Ned Lizotte said that there is nothing wrong with that as people have to promote themselves. He said that there has to be some sort of balance. Henry Huntington said that the goal is to have signs be tasteful, whether lit or not. Tom Dow suggested that they could see if they can get the track to conform a little more.

Stan Prescott asked if the ZBA had told NHMS that they were all set. Dave Powelson said that they did because Bob Fiske had said that the sign was compliant. Mr. Prescott said that he would like to see negotiations with the track to lengthen the cycle, limit the times that the message can change, and address the brightness.

Because of the time, Chairman Dow asked that the workshop be continued to another date. Other topics that members would like to see addressed are as follows:

- ◆ George Saunderson said that he feels the town needs bigger lot size and frontage requirements in order to protect what the boards have fought for over the years.
- ◆ Dave Powelson pointed out that reduced setbacks can be granted in all districts except the CR District. He also noted that housing for seasonal farm workers is permitted by special exception in the RR District but not in the AFP where it would probably be more applicable. Mr. Powelson said that he would like to address Section 302.4 of the Wetlands Conservation District.
- ◆ Donna said that a question recently arose about who determines how and where impact fees can be expended.

The next Zoning Ordinance workshop will be held at 5:30 pm on November 20, 2008.

Adjournment:

The work session ended at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna White