

**NORTHFIELD PLANNING BOARD  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2022  
REGULAR MEETING  
REMOTE LOCATION  
MEETING MINUTES**

Members Present: Chair Stephen Seredynski (SS), Joe Graveline (JG), Meg Riordan (MR), Homer Stavely (HS), Tammy Pelletier (TP)

Members Absent: none

Members of the Press: none

Others in Attendance: Wendy M. Levy (Board Clerk), Peggy Sloan (FRCOG), Sarah Kerns (Conservation Commission), Charlie Blanker (Conservation Commission), Pat Shearer, Tom Shearer, Andrea Llamas (Town Administrator), William Murray (Places Associates)

*Please note, because of Zoom's participation structure, attendance may be incomplete.*

***I. CALL TO ORDER***

Chair SS called the meeting to order at 4:03pm.

***II. ESTABLISH A QUORUM***

SS announced a quorum has been met.

MR shared a document showing the Planning Board's agenda for this meeting.

MR announced one change to the agenda: Item 5, "Approval of Minutes 7/21/2022," is tabled until the next meeting.

SS announced that he has three items for Item 6, "Business Not Anticipated By the Chair 48 Hours Prior to the Meeting."

***III. FLOOD PLAIN BYLAW***

SS introduced Peggy Sloan from FRCOG.

Ms. Sloan discussed the flood plain bylaw. Highlights included:

- All towns in Massachusetts are now required to have a flood plain bylaw. This is a directive from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), which comes via a directive from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- This is a requirement for towns—and property owners in the towns—to participate in the federal flood plain insurance program.
- All towns must appoint a Flood Plain Administrator, who must be a town employee.
- This person is sometimes the Town Administrator or a Town Planner. The Building Inspector is also involved in any flood-plain-related application review.
- Being Flood Plain Administrator is a big responsibility.



- The flood plain maps towns must use are the official FEMA flood plain maps, which are outdated.
- FEMA is apparently updating the flood plain maps soon.
- The primary goal of the bylaw is to keep any new development out of the flood plain.

A discussion ensued on drafting a simple zoning change once the new flood plain maps are available. The bylaw will reflect this.

A discussion ensued about existing development and how the new flood-plain bylaw will affect it. Ms. Sloan confirmed that existing development is "grandfathered" in, with two exceptions: if there's new development on a parcel, and if any actions like paving or drilling could increase flooding on a parcel.

*HS entered the meeting at 4:16pm.*

A discussion ensued on the current flood plain bylaws, and that the new bylaws—which must be approved by Town Meeting—will replace them.

MR said members of the Conservation Commission have questions, which they submitted beforehand.

MR shared a document, "Conservation Commission Responses" [to the proposed bylaw].

A discussion ensued on the new development review process regarding the new flood hazard zone overlay district, and the powers the Conservation Commission has regarding decisions on special permits, and what an applicant can do if their permit request is denied.

A discussion ensued on bylaws versus regulations and how they are changed and used.

A discussion ensued on how to word the bylaw where flood plain maps are mentioned, specifically, "current," versus "[actual date of current maps]," the latter of which is September 30, 1980. Ms. Sloan recommended including the actual date so the public knows which maps to use.

A discussion ensued on who is the Flood Plain Administrator. Town Administrator Andrea Llamas said that other small communities almost always appoint the Town Administrator, but enlisting the help of consultants and other knowledgeable parties is allowed.

A discussion ensued on the Conservation Commission's participation in developing and approving new flood plain bylaws.

A discussion ensued on hiring consultants for special permit reviews. Massachusetts General Law supports this.

Ms. Sloan noted the state has approved Northfield's flood plain bylaw.

**MOTION BY TP TO APPROVE THE NORTHFIELD FLOOD PLAIN BYLAWS. JG  
SECONDED.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

**MR: YEA**

**HS: YEA**



**JG: YEA**

**SS: YEA**

**TP: YEA**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### ***IV. ANR - TOWN OF NORTHFIELD***

Ms. Llamas discussed the town's ANR request. Highlights included:

- Whether or not the Emergency Services project happens, the town is interested in purchasing the parcel in question.
- This purchase is included in the town's Master Plan.
- If the Emergency Services building is built, it will lie on only a small portion of the parcel. The rest of the land will be for recreational use.
- If the town does not buy this parcel, the current owner can develop it or sell it for development if he wishes.
- The town hired Places Associates to do the survey, and Ms. Llamas introduced William Murray of Places.
- The town has a purchase & sale agreement for the parcel.

SS noted the Planning Board's role is to approve the boundaries of the new lots.

Ms. Llamas explained there are two portions of the map, and it covers 23 acres. This includes a sewer easement. The lower part of the property abuts the library.

HS asked if the town is confident the difficulties at the Fire Department lot won't be present at this lot. Ms. Llamas responded: the town did extensive testing, and this was discussed at a recent meeting. Reports are available and worth reviewing. She reiterated that even if the Emergency Services building is not constructed, the town still wants this parcel.

SS reminded his colleagues that the Planning Board is only reviewing the ANR to create the lots at this meeting; the Emergency Services building is a different matter and will be discussed at other meetings.

Mr. Murray reviewed the property lines on the site plan. He said the proposed ANR does not create a non-conforming lot.

**MOTION BY JG TO APPROVE THE ANR AS PRESENTED. HS SECONDED.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

**MR YEA**

**HS YEA**

**TP YEA**

**JG YEA**

**SS YEA**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SS announced the documents will be in the Town Offices for the Planning Board members to sign.



## **V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES 7/21/2022**

This item was tabled by the Vice-Chair.

## **VI. BUSINESS NOT ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR 48 HOURS PRIOR**

### **a. Stipends**

SS said Town Meeting approved stipends for Planning Board members, and this is in perpetuity; not just for current members.

A discussing ensued on whether the Planning Board will accept their stipends, and how the stipends will be disbursed. The consensus was to disburse half of the stipend in December and half in May.

SS noted there is paperwork to complete for all Planning Board members who want their stipends. Michelle Turner will help members with their paperwork, so please contact her.

### **b. Continuing Education**

SS said he recently attended a great program on the roles of the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals. He will forward the information about it to the other Planning Board members.

SS announced Site Plan Review courses are coming in early-December, and he recommended everyone attend.

### **c. 5-C Meeting**

SS announced the 5-C meeting is tonight. HS is a member. There is an extensive agenda. Please attend.

## **VII. VOTE TO ADJOURN**

**MOTION BY JG TO ADJOURN. HS SECONDED.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

**MR YEA  
TP YEA  
HS YEA  
JG YEA  
SS YEA**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10pm.

**Documents presented at this meeting:**

**- The meeting agenda.**

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- "Conservation Commission Questions" [to the proposed flood plain bylaw]
- ANR site plan for the parcel the Town of Northfield wants to purchase.

Respectfully submitted by Wendy M. Levy from minutes taken by Wendy M. Levy.

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Approved 1/24/2023  
St. Helen  
Chair