

LITCHFIELD ZONING BOARD
TOWN OF LITCHFIELD, NEW HAMPSHIRE
FEBRUARY 10, 2010

DRAFT

ZBA Members Attending (Indent if Absent):

Richard Riley, Chairman

Laura Gandia, Vice Chairman

 John Regan

Albert Guilbeault

 Tom Cooney (alternate)

 Gregory Lepine (alternate)

 John Devereaux (alternate)

 Eric Cushing (alternate)

John Brunelle

I. Call to Order

- Richard Riley calls the meeting to order at 7:22 pm. Meeting was published at Town Hall.
- Laura Gandia takes attendance.

II. Acceptance of New Applications

There are no new applications.

III. Hearings

There are no hearings scheduled

IV. Communications and Miscellaneous Business

- **Review and Approval of January 13, 2010 Minutes**

Since there were not enough members present who had attended the January meeting this was tabled until the next meeting in March.

- **Discussion about increasing ZBA application fees**

The current application fee is \$100.00, plus the cost of postage for abutter notices. The research into past cases showed that the average cost for processing an application is \$250.00. In previous discussions by the Board it had been suggested that the town should cover some of the costs associated with the application process and that any increase in fees should be gradual rather than one big increase. A suggestion was made for a tiered fee structure with higher fees

for requests involving multiple lots and/or multiple variances covered by a single application. A short discussion followed regarding the different scenarios for increasing the charges, how much should be charged, etc. It was suggested that Mr. Riley follow-up with Town Council for his feedback regarding the legality of a tiered fee structure and then report back to the Board.

- **Review of current budget status**

The review of the budget showed that expenditures were on track and were even slightly ahead of projections. It was noted that this could change if there were to be an increase in the number of applications. A brief discussion followed. Mr. Lynch has been working with some residents and there could be some possible hearings scheduled in the future.

- **Discussion about member term renewals in 2010: John Devereaux, Albert Guilbeault and Richard Riley all expire in March.**

The terms of Mr. Devereaux, Mr. Guilbeault and Mr. Riley will expire in March. They have all expressed their desire to remain on the Board for another term. Mr. Riley informed the Board that Eric Cushing has expressed a very serious interest in coming on as a full member to backfill for John Brunelle who is running for the open Selectmen position this year.

- **Review mail and any other official communications to the ZBA.**

Mr. Riley reminded the members that keys are being replaced at Town Hall on Thursday, February 11, 2010. A spare was made for Laura Gandia so she will have one as a back up.

Mr. Riley has been speaking with Mr. Kevin Lynch about streamlining the ZBA application process so that cases could be heard in a more timely fashion. Currently an application is presented to the Board, accepted, then a hearing date is scheduled for the following month and abutter notices are sent out. It had been suggested that a compromise could be made so that the application could be presented, accepted and then a hearing could take place all at the same meeting. For this to take place, however, abutter notices would need to be sent out prior to that first meeting. The question then comes down to who will send out the abutter notices - the ZBA Secretary or the Secretary to the Code Enforcement Officer. In their discussion about a change, it was noted that the Secretary to the Code Enforcement Officer may not have time to send out notices with her current workload. Since there was no back-up in that office, Mr. Riley was going to speak to the Town Clerk to see if there was someone in her office who could send abutter notices. Currently, once the application is accepted, a letter is written by Mr. Riley and then Mrs. Dabrowski would send out the abutter notices. A brief discussion followed. Mr. Riley will discuss this with Mr. Lynch and Terry Briand, Town Clerk, and get back to the Board.

- **Any Other Business.**

Ms. Gandia was asked to report to the Board about her testimony before the House Local and Regulated Revenues Committee on January 10, 2010 regarding HB 1380. This bill would grant Zoning Boards the ability to assess costs to the applicant to cover administrative expenses and costs related to special investigative studies, review of documents, and other matters that may be required by a particular appeal or application. She informed the Board that the bill is now

out of the subcommittee and has been placed on the House calendar. A brief discussion followed regarding procedures. She will keep the Board informed about the bill's progress.

- **Adjournment.**

There was no other business to come before the Board.

Ms. Gandia MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN.

Mr. Riley Seconds the Motion.

The Board votes in favor of the motion 4-0-0.

The Zoning Board Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Margaret J. Dabrowski*

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