

Town of Readsboro Selectboard

Minutes of Public Hearing

December 19, 2017

Board of Selectmen Present: Helyn Strom-Henriksen, Jim Franzinelli.

Others Present: See attached Sign-in Sheet

The Selectboard Chair Helyn Strom-Henriksen opened the Public Hearing at 6:30 p.m. in accordance with the Vermont Municipal and Regional Development Act, Title 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117 Section 4441 and 4444 Preparation of bylaws and regulatory tools; amendment or repeal and Section 4442 Adoption of bylaws and related regulatory tools; amendment or repeal.

Helyn noted that the Public Hearing notice was posted on November 22, 2017 at the Readsboro Town Office, Readsboro Post Office, Readsboro General Store, and the Town of Readsboro website. The Public Hearing notice was published in the Deerfield Valley News on November 30, 2017. Copies of the Readsboro Zoning Bylaws were made available to any interested parties at the Readsboro Town Office.

Helyn explained that the Readsboro Planning Commission received a petition signed by a group of registered voters of the Town of Readsboro to Repeal the Bylaw in its entirety on March 21, 2017. No additional information was provided to the Planning Commission. The Readsboro Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on July 10, 2017 in response to the Petition. The Selectboard received recommendations from the Planning Commission on September 5, 2017. At a meeting held November 15, 2017, the Selectboard set the Public Hearing date for December 19, 2017.

Helyn opened the floor for public comments and explained the ground rules for the Public Hearing and set a time limit of 5 minutes per person.

John Whitman commented on the purpose of zoning bylaws and that the perception is that the bylaws are not being enforced fairly, and stated that it is important to retain the bylaws.

Robert Marechal asked for an update on what is happening with the zoning enforcement process.

Helyn explained that the process has been explained in detail during the Planning Commission public hearing held earlier this year, and that if anyone has any questions they are free to follow up with the Acting Zoning Administrator for updates at any time.

Forrest Hicks asked if there were any problems with the bylaws.

Sue Bailey commented that town officials are revisiting the same issues, basically a difference of opinion to the bylaws, and that decisions made by the Zoning Administrator (ZA) are being challenged. Sue explained that the ZA makes determinations based on the zoning bylaws.

Robert Marechal commented that he wondered if higher standards exist in Readsboro in comparison to nearby towns.

Priscilla Margola commented on recent zoning bylaw issues in the Northeast Kingdom section of Vermont and that bylaws are being reinforced due to the problems.

Helyn offered remarks on the progress made with the zoning process over the course of the past year with everything being current and organized. Zoning Permits are processed within 2 to 3 days. Helyn noted that with respect to the history of the Zoning Administrator position there has been four Zoning Administrators in four years. Helyn commented that no appeals or the required \$200 fee for filing an appeal have been filed against any zoning determinations.

Forrest recommended that zoning, planning, and development review board staff participate in trainings. Helyn explained that the zoning officer has attended a training this year.

Sue commented that the ZA has been attending the Planning Commission meetings.

John commented on the violation list and that there is no reason given in the records and that he has not seen permit notices posted on properties.

Ted Hopkins commented that he has not seen permit notices posted.

Chris Schofield commented that he felt it may be difficult for anyone in a zoning position to enforce all of the bylaws all of the time. Chris wants the zoning bylaws to stay in place.

Ted commented that he wants the bylaws to stay intact.

Robert asked if anyone was at the hearing tonight that signed the petition to repeal the bylaws. Sue replied yes, that there are people here tonight that signed the petition.

Helyn explained that at the next Town Meeting in March, an article, By Australian Ballot, will appear that will ask the registered voters in Readsboro if they want to vote to repeal, in its entirety, the Zoning Bylaws.

After hearing no further public comments, Helyn made a motion to close the Public Hearing at 6:57 p.m. Jim seconded. The Public Hearing closed at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Stone
Town Administrator
Approved: January 3, 2018