

**Sutton Planning Commission Regular Meeting
February 23, 2021 @ 6:00 pm via Zoom**

Attendees: Paul Brouha, Chair, Byron Savoy, Hank Parker, Darlene Ahrens--Sutton Planning Commission/DRB, Joe Witt--Sutton Zoning Administrator, Alison Low—NVDA Senior Planner.

1. The meeting was called to order @ 6 pm.
2. Attendees introduced themselves--no additions/deletions to agenda were made.

Training session: Meetings, Hearings, Due Process—Alison Low, NVDA. Alison gave a PowerPoint presentation consisting of 21 slides with attendant discussion and questions from participants of each slide. The focus was on DRB roles and responsibilities and how ZA is apprised of permit applications by the Town Clerk and DRB is referred conditional use/commercial use & subdivision applications. ZA requires state water and wastewater permits first (results in better site plans), does site visit, and then decides on permit.

At DRB hearings all participants should have reviewed application, orienting findings of fact may be stated, a record of interested parties must be kept, and, without expressing opinions, all participants can participate in discussion. Hearing continuations (to a certain date & time) to permit site visits and collection of more information may be useful. Any notes from site visits or research must be entered into the hearing record in order to be used in decision-making. Importance of disclosing ex-parte communications and conflicts of interest as a matter of ethics and to maintain public trust was discussed. Deliberative sessions may be closed to the public and decisions must be based only on findings of fact & conclusions of law. Decisions need to stand on their own and, while they may be included in minutes, they should also be a separate letter to applicant attached to approved application. Chair may delegate writing of decision to clerk or a member—45 days are available so take time to write a good decision based on findings of fact and conclusions of law.

3. Consideration/approval of draft minutes of past meetings was deferred pending all members reading those minutes prior to the next regular meeting.

4. Old business

Final approval/adoption of the Sutton Energy Plan/Town Plan amendment by the Selectboard is scheduled for February 25th at their regular meeting. Following adoption, Alison Low has agreed to integrate it into the existing, approved Town Plan.

5. New business

Annual Organizational Meeting

Nominations for election of Chair were opened. Byron Savoy was nominated by Hank. Motion was seconded by Darlene.

Motion to close nominations was made by Joe with a second by Darlene. Motion passed. Byron was unanimously elected.

Nominations for election of Vice-Chair were opened. Paul nominated Hank. Motion was seconded by Byron. Motion to close nominations was again made by Joe with second by Darlene. Motion passed. Hank was unanimously elected.

There was support for Paul's stated intention to request the Selectboard appoint him as Clerk for a one-year term.

2021 Rules of Procedure for the PC/DRB, including designation of time & place of regular meetings, were considered. Byron moved adoption and Hank seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Time & place of regular meetings will be published on town website.

Succession planning was discussed and Martha Tack and Krystina McMorrow were thanked for their service. Evan Carlson has requested appointment as alternate member and an advertisement for regular members has been published in the Caledonian-Record.

6. After agreement the next regular meeting would be Monday March 22nd via Zoom, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm. We will try to resume in-person meetings at the Sutton Fire Station in April while also continuing Zoom to encourage public participation.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Brouha, Chair