

Truro Planning Board Work Shop
Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2016, 5:00 pm, Public Safety Training Room, Truro, MA

Planning Board members present: Lisa Maria Tobia, Steve Sollog, Bruce Boleyn, Peter Herridge, Jack Riemer, John Hopkins. Members absent: Mike Roderick. Others present: Rae Ann Palmer, Carole Ridley. In the audience: Paul Kiernan

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss Planning Board policies and procedures and open meeting law. As a workshop, no public comment or votes were taken.

Carole Ridley opened the meeting by stating its purpose as an opportunity to review policies and procedures since regular meetings left little time for this.

Rae Ann Palmer noted that workshops are frequently used by the Board of Selectmen and provide a more relaxed setting for considering policy issues. A workshop for the Planning Board seemed timely given the changes in membership, and also transition in staff. She asked the Board what type of staff support it is looking for.

Lisa Maria Tobia asked each Board member to offer comments.

Steve Sollog noted that he wants to know that when an applicant is before the Board they have completed all steps that qualify them to be there, and there are no issues that disqualify them. This type of research is beyond what a volunteer board can do.

John Hopkins noted that he wants applicants to provide thorough historical information on ownership and land rights that relate to the adequacy of access ways. He said that some access and right of ways are not suited to additional subdivision or ANR, even if they are on the town list of roads.

Rae Ann Palmer noted that the Board does not want to get drawn into discussions of private deed terms that are not within their purview. She said the Board's key role is to ensure compliance with zoning.

John Hopkins concurred, but said that the Planning Board is also responsible for saying "no" to applicants when that is necessary, such as the case of inadequate access.

Bruce Boleyn commented on a recent event where an attorney tried to characterize Board members' statements, and he took issue with this.

Lisa Maria Tobia indicated that many applications have legal questions, and she wants to be sure that the Board's decisions are defensible and do not lead to litigation. Rae Ann Palmer suggested that as much as possible, if there are legal questions, they should be addressed by Town Counsel up front.

Jack Riemer noted that the Board is responsible for upholding the subdivision law and must enforce the bylaw as written. He also indicated that he does not want to have late information delivered to the Board at meetings, with no time to review, and he would like to see information distributed to the Board as it comes in, even before packets are put together. He also expressed continuing concern about excessive and unsubstantiated waiver requests, which Mr. Herridge also mentioned.

Rae Ann Palmer and others concurred on not allowing applicants to supply late information, but said that sending information to Board members as it comes in is problematic. She suggested doing more in the way of pre-application meetings with staff to identify information needs and smooth out issues sooner.

The group agreed that packets should be ready no later than Thursday or Friday, and that the Board be updated at each meeting with a list of agenda items on the horizon.

Peter Herridge commented that every project seems to have a deep history that is difficult to access, yet often relevant to the Board's deliberation. Rae Ann Palmer noted that the Town is developing a coordinated filing system that will compile actions by all town boards for each property.

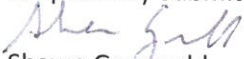
Rae Ann Palmer also touched on some elements of Open Meeting Law.

Follow up items:

- Rae Ann Palmer will set up a training session with Town Counsel that will focus on recent cases. She will also set up training on open meeting law and how to run a meeting.
- Carole Ridley will get packets out no later than Friday at noon. Packets not picked up on Friday at Town Hall will be left at the Police Station.

Steve Sollog moved to adjourn at 6:10 pm, and Peter Herridge seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,


Shawn Grunwald

Recording Secretary

Approved 1/19/16

