

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Planning Commission

Minutes

April 15, 2014

I. CALL TO ORDER

Rick Trombley called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Present at meeting:

- **Planning Commission Members:** Woody Rouse, Rick Trombley, Bruce Ryan, Tim Reynolds, Julie Rice and Luc Dupuis
- **Staff:** Heidi Britch-Valenta – Planning and Zoning Administrator, and Samantha Rice – Planning and Zoning Secretary
- **Public:** Amanda Holland, Catherine Dimitrik, and Jeff Towle

Before the meeting began Mr. Trombley announced that the executive positions need to be selected. Mr. Reynolds nominated Mr. Trombley for chair. Mr. Ryan seconded the nomination. After a unanimous vote, Mr. Trombley was granted chair of the Planning Commission. Then Mr. Reynolds nominated Mr. Dupuis for vice chair. Mr. Ryan seconded the nomination. After a unanimous vote, Mr. Dupuis was granted vice chair of the Planning Commission.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Northwest Regional Planning Commission

First the Planning Commission discussed the recent news article on Richford's Development Review Board. In conjunction to the new article Mrs. Holland explained that the number of member slots on the Board do not change depending on how many vacancies the Board has. At the start, Highgate had a seven member Board so the quorum for the current Board is four members. If there are less than four members present at a hearing then the Board cannot make a decision. If the board cannot make a decision it is considers a no decision hearing.

Next the Planning Commission discussed Article 3 of the draft regulations. Article 3 consists of the "Permit Review Procedures and Standards". The items covered in this article are Application Requirements, Permitted Uses, Conditional Use, Waiver of Required Setback Distances, Site Plan Review and Variance Review. When looking at

this article Mrs. Holland asked the Board if they would also like to see Planned Unit Development in this section or in Article 5, General Regulations and Review Standards. In the Permitting Process section the new standards are laid out for the applicant. There is now a figure included in this section to illustrate how the permitting process works. In the Zoning Permits section the procedure is explained including application requirements and permitted uses and conditional use. Mrs. Holland removed the variance part of this section because in order to issue a variance there are five criteria for the applicant to meet. If the applicant doesn't meet all five of the criteria then the Town Administrator should issue a waiver instead. Next Mrs. Holland focused on the Site Plan Review section. Mrs. Britch-Valenta asked if there was a way that all the application requirements for subdivision, conditional use and site plan could be combined in the Bylaws. Although they are similar it would be hard to combine the three in a simple format. Mrs. Holland then asked if it would be more helpful if the elements needed for a site plan was in a list format instead of a table format. The Board agreed that the list format was appealing to them. The only additions Mrs. Holland made to the list of elements needed for site plan are the grading and storm drainage features. One other note that Mrs. Holland made was that under application requirements there is going to be two additional sections, flood hazard review and process of a curb cut. Previously these two sections were replaced with the Town's sewage ordinance but since that is now handled by the State it is no longer needed.

In the Conditional Use section Mrs. Holland added additional language to explain the applicability and changed the Conditional Use table. In terms of Conditional Use standards it's the same standards as the previous Bylaws with more information defining what those standards are. For the conditions of approval Mrs. Holland added more descriptive examples. Mrs. Britch-Valenta stated that she would like to see language that enforces preexisting uses that are changing to come before the board for Conditional Use approval, even though they don't have an underlying permit.

In the Waiver of Required Setback Distances section the Board would like to change the front setbacks. Currently the Bylaws state that a structure must be 65 feet from the centerline of the road with the exception in the high density district where a structure needs to be 45 feet from the centerline of the road and the industrial/commercial district where a structure needs to be 85 feet from the centerline of the road. The Board would like to keep the 85-foot setback for the industrial/commercial district because they would like to see businesses further from the road opposed to a house. The Board would also like to decrease the front setback in the medium density district to 55 feet and the side setback to 20 feet. Mrs. Dimitrik then suggested that if the board doesn't change the setbacks instead they could allow 10 more feet to the front setback waiver. She also recommends that if you do reduce the front setbacks to 55 feet then the Board shouldn't allow a waiver.

In the Variance Review section the only additions were language, including the flood hazard overlay and renewable energy structures. The renewable energy structure sections can use the standards set by the State or what was previously in the Highgate Bylaws.

The Planning Commission then switched to review Article 4. This Article consists of Subdivision Approval. Currently Highgate's Bylaws state that the applicant should survey the whole parcel of a subdivision even when it is a large parcel. The Board decided that they would like to change that to the applicant only having to survey the part of the subdivision they are focusing on. In addition to that change Mrs. Holland added mitigation measures and off-site improvements to the subdivision requirement table. Mrs. Holland also provided the Board with other examples that could be added to the subdivision requirement table including utility plans, grading and erosion control plans, and storm water management plans. Mrs. Holland also changed the Boundary Line Adjustment process to allow the Town Administrator to review the application alone and then have the Developmental Review Board hold a hearing for approval.

Currently the Highgate Bylaws state that an applicant has one year from Preliminary Plat to submit their Final Plat. The Board decided that after each phase of the application the Board has 45 days to approve the application, review the decision letters and send the decision letters to the applicant. After Preliminary Plat the applicant has 6 months to submit a Final Plat and if they need an extension then an additional 6 month extension could be requested.

III. DELIBERATIVE SESSION

MOTION: Mr. Trombley motioned to go into deliberative session. Mr. Reynolds seconded the motion.

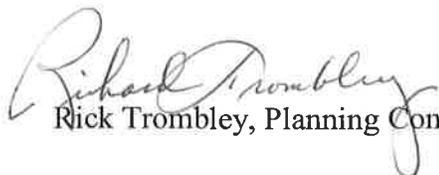
IV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Trombley made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dupuis seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously at 8:24pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Rice, Planning & Zoning Clerk

Minutes approved by:


Rick Trombley, Planning Commission Chair

Date: 7.15.14