

TOWN OF HIGHGATE
Planning Commission Mtg.
January 21, 2020 @ 6pm

Approved Minutes

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Tom Conley, PC Vice-Chair, opened up the meeting @ 6:07pm.

Present for this meeting were:

Planning Commission Board Members; Tom Conley – Vice Chair; Ken Thompson; Richard Noel; Bruce Ryan *absent* – *Luc Dupuis, Chair*

Town of Highgate Staff: Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Administrator & Planner; Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Public / Other: Sharon Bousquet – Selectboard Chair

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Motion by Bruce Ryan to approve the minutes from October 15, 2019, as written. The motion was seconded by Ken Thompson – **APPROVED.**
- Motion by Richard Noel to approve the minutes from January 2, 2020, as written. The motion was seconded by Bruce Ryan – **APPROVED.**

III. OTHER BUSINESS & UPDATES

- Motion by Richard Noel to approve the PC meeting schedule for 2020. The motion was seconded by Bruce Ryan – **APPROVED.**
- Heidi shared the reports from the Town Administrator, Planning Commission and grant spreadsheets she has submitted for the 2019 Town Report. The draft is off to the printers. Bruce pointed out one edit he would like to see if possible.
- The Town Meeting Warning was also in the packet, which includes article #6 about adopting a tax stabilization plan. Members of the PC should be present at town meeting to answer questions on this and the CIP. There was brief discussion on some of the other articles on the 2020 warning.
- The Hazard Mitigation Plan is moving forward. Shaun Coleman will have it submitted to FEMA very soon to keep us on track with grants.
- Richard brought up the topic of Selectboard stipends and attendance issues and asked Sharon if that has been discussed. Sharon said it has been discussed and, to be honest, nobody really cared. There was brief discussion on who is on the ballot this year and who is and is not running for various town positions. Petitions are due January 27th by 5pm.
- The DRB meeting on February 13th currently does not have any applications submitted and the deadline is January 27th. The PC is very interested in holding a joint meeting with the DRB at the regularly scheduled DRB meeting on February 13th @ 6pm. There are plenty of topics to discuss and it has been some time since both boards have met together. This will serve as the PC meeting for February, instead of February 18th. Heidi will reach out to Luc Dupuis and Rick Trombley to see if this works for both boards.

- Feb. 6th @ 6:30pm will be a joint meeting with the Highgate Selectboard and the Swanton Village Trustees regarding the airport infrastructure study. This meeting will be held here in Highgate as part of the regularly scheduled Selectboard meeting.

IV. IMPACT FEES

Heidi had sent the materials in advance via email and put them in the SharePoint file. The PC members did not recall receiving the log in information for SharePoint. It had been sent via email by Shelley several months ago. We will no longer be using DropBox, as we have outgrown it. Heidi prepared paper copies of the materials for this meeting. Back in October, information on impact fees from St. Albans was shared with the board. For this meeting, information was shared on what the Town of Georgia does. The law states that whatever impact fees are collected have to be used within six years. Funds would be raised from zoning permits on new construction. The fee schedule would need to be predetermined. Funds raised could be used for many things, such as: capital expenses, emergency services, police coverage, development, etc. – as long as it is predetermined. In 2019 the zoning office in Highgate issued 105 permits, 16 of which were for new homes / mobile homes / manufactured housing. We have an approved town plan and a capital budget, so we are eligible to look into impact fees and if they are a good fit for our town. Richard asked about the pros and cons. There was also discussion on encouraging or discouraging development in Highgate. The PC will continue to review the materials in preparation for the possible joint meeting with the DRB on February 13th. There are many ways this can be approached, such as concentrating on certain zoning districts and whether or not the town wants to limit or expand development in each district. The DRB also has a list of zoning bylaw updates started and ultimately will want a full bylaw rewrite, which also involves the PC. Different impact fees could be assessed in different zoning districts. Commercial property was discussed also. We need to keep in mind how any changes will affect people and the value of their properties going forward. At one time the Town of Highgate tried to make those sensitive areas (districts) of land harder to develop and that did not go over well. Currently the lot size, town wide, to develop is 1 acre. Heidi shared an opportunity for funding through Rural Development and the application is due by March. A letter of intent has been done already.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Bruce Ryan to adjourn the meeting @ 7:16pm. The motion was seconded by Richard Noel – **APPROVED**.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Wendy Dusablon Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk
Wendi Dusablon

2-13-2020
Date

Minutes approved by:

Tom Conley, Planning Commission – Vice Chair
Tom Conley

2-13-2020
Date