

Greensboro Selectboard

July 25, 2024 – Minutes

[This was a hybrid meeting held at the Greensboro Free Library, with some participants joining remotely]

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ellen Celnik, MacNeil, David Kelley, Eric Hanson, Bobbie Nisbet

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT in person: Beth Meachem, Kent Hansen, Christine Armstrong, Tim Nisbet, Lise Armstrong, Janet Showers, Josh Karp, Dede Stabler, Naomi Ranz-Schleifer, Jennifer Ranz, Brett Stanciu, Kim Greaves

OTHERS PRESENT remote: Peter Romans, Paul Brierre, Mike Lammert, Nancy Lammert, Janet Long, Elissa Mackin, Gary Circosta, Elizabeth Sartorius

CALLED TO ORDER: 6:30 PM

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 'MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS' ZONING BYLAW PROPOSAL

Eric said the planning commission has forwarded this proposal to the selectboard for consideration.

The selectboard is holding this public hearing to gather public comment, and will consider such comment as it decides how to move forward with the proposal.

The planning commission calls these proposed bylaw changes 'Miscellaneous Amendments' since they include numerous minor changes throughout the bylaw.

Kent gave some background on the proposal. He said as the planning commission reviewed the bylaw, it found sections throughout that needed updating, along with recent changes to state statute that had to be incorporated.

Eric asked if there was any public comment.

Gary asked if the addition of language in §5.4(D) *Conditional Uses* and §5.7(B)4 *Appeals* regarding multiunit dwellings, affordable housing, and the phrase 'character of the area affected' is required by state statute. Kent said the language is required by statute. Gary asked if this new language might impact the RuralEdge proposal for housing at the town hall. Janet said the RuralEdge proposal has more than four units so wouldn't be covered by §5.4(D) *Conditional Uses*. Kent thought the RuralEdge project might be covered under §4.9 *Planned Unit Development*.

Depending on how 'affordable housing' is defined, it appears changes to §5.7(B)4 *Appeals* could affect the RuralEdge proposal.

For §5.1(D) *Subdivisions*, Gary asked why it is proposed that survey maps can't be older than two years. Both Brett and Kent said that the town was seeing old, outdated surveys of questionable accuracy.

Tim asked about new language in §4.2 *Accessory Dwelling Units* that says units 'rented overnight or for a longer term' are considered 'public buildings'. Janet said this language is required by statute, and is meant to ensure rental properties meet health, fire, and safety codes.

Naomi asked if rental units that are not ADUs must meet these same codes. Christine said that they do.

Dede asked about the change in §5.7(B)4 *Appeals* from 10 to 20 persons. Janet explained there are various categories of ‘interested persons’ who have the right to appeal decisions of the zoning administrator, and the category that was ‘any 10 persons’ has been changed to ‘any 20 persons’ in state statute.

Naomi asked about the addition of a definition for ‘emergency shelter’. Janet said this is required by state statute.

Naomi asked why there’s a change in §3.6(B) *Limitations on Municipal Bylaws* from ‘accepted agricultural practices’ to ‘required agricultural practices’. Janet said this is a statutory requirement.

Gary said bylaw proposals have gone before the voters for about 20 years, is the selectboard planning to send this proposal to the voters, or will the board vote to approve it instead?

Eric asked how members of the planning commission would feel if the selectboard voted on the bylaw instead of the public. Kent said this is up to the board.

Gary asked the board to consider the long tradition of voter approval of the zoning bylaw.

Discussion of the best way to deal with ‘technical errors’ in the bylaw. MacNeil said when he was on the planning commission a number of small errors, such as misspellings, were found in the bylaw and there was a feeling that it would be more efficient if the planning commission could forward these small changes to the selectboard for approval. Naomi said this issue came up at town meeting a few years ago and at that time, the example given of a ‘minor’ change was, to her and some others, not so minor.

Janet said if there are substantial changes proposed that are not required by statute, the bylaw should probably go to the voters.

Josh said going back and forth between a selectboard vote and a public vote, depending on how significant the bylaw changes are, seems impractical.

Eric asked if anyone present feels there are substantive changes in this ‘Miscellaneous Amendments’ proposal. He added it would be useful to know exactly what changes are required by statute and what changes were made at the planning commission’s discretion. Naomi agreed.

Janet said she has an annotated version that can help clarify this distinction, which she will send to the selectboard and it can be put on the town website.

Bobbie said if approval can wait, why not hold an Australian ballot vote on the bylaw at the 2025 town meeting?

Janet said now that the selectboard has held a public hearing, the bylaw proposal immediately goes into effect for 120 days. If the selectboard doesn’t approve the proposal by October 17 the process starts all over, starting with public hearings hosted by the planning commission.

Janet said the planning commission will review the statutes governing the approval process and report back to the selectboard at its next meeting. Eric said the board can then decide how to proceed.

Naomi said it would be helpful if the next meeting agenda made it clear whether the board will be voting to approve these bylaw changes, or just discussing the approval process.

Ellen thanked the planning commission for their work on the bylaw. She said it’s complicated work and it’s hard to keep up with constantly changing state requirements.

Mike thanked both planning commission and selectboard members for their dedication and for serving the town during a contentious time.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk