

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

10/15/2020

Board Members

Present: Casey Campetti, Chuck Walkovich, Al Patenaude, Travis Jones, Joyce Morrow

Staff: Lisa Davis, Planning Consultant

Absent: Paul Lonergan

Guests: Andrew MacLean, Town Administrator

1) Call to Order

Mx Campetti called the Planning Board Public Hearing to order at 7PM.

She then read the Public Notice into the record.

2) 7:00PM – Public Hearing – Recreational Marijuana Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Proposed Amendments to Section 6600 of the Zoning Bylaw, Adult Use Recreational Marijuana Establishments. The Proposed Amendments would revise Subsection 6640.5a) and Section 6650 to set the limit on the number of Marijuana Retailers at a maximum of two establishments.

Mx Campetti presented the rationale for changes to the Recreational Marijuana Zoning Bylaw that led to tonight's meeting. Andrew MacLean was present to discuss the overview and reasons for the Public Hearing regarding changes to the Recreational Marijuana Zoning Bylaw.

Eighteen months ago the Town voted to approve a Recreational Marijuana Zoning Bylaw, using language from the Commonwealth. Shortly after the meeting, the Town received numerous calls from companies interested in opening a cannabis business in Pepperell. A list of qualifications was developed to ensure that those companies were serious contenders and met license requirements. Two companies arose from this interested group that met the qualifications and obtained provisional licenses. These two companies have applied for Special Permits to open establishments in Pepperell using property in the commercial zone on Main Street; and those properties are currently vacant.

When reading the original bylaw, the Town was led to believe that they had 8 licenses to issue, based on state definition; however, the Select Board had issued only 3, which meant the Town was eligible to offer only one license to one of the two establishments, not two. Mr. MacLean met with the Select Board explaining the misreading of the bylaw, and the Select Board agreed to amend and simplify the bylaw. Instead of Subsection 6640.5 a) reading a percentage, it now will read "not to exceed two". Subsection 6650 will use the same language of "not to exceed two". In this way the Bylaw is consistent throughout, and the Town has put the Bylaw Amendment on the Warrant for the upcoming Town Meeting to be held November 14, 2020.

In the absence of questions from the Planning Board, questions were open to the public. One resident stated she was not in favor of having a concentration of alcohol/marijuana establishments on Main Street. She further stated that it was not family oriented and she will be proposing a counter amendment at Town Meeting.

Mr. MacLean noted that the Town has a vested interest in these establishments because they will financially benefit the town and community. No one person made this decision, nor one board, but the Town of Pepperell will have the final say at Town Meeting.

Mr. Walkovich pointed out that these businesses are on point with the Master Plan in utilizing vacant properties on Main Street.

Ms. Morrow, who is also a member of the Economic Development Committee, noted that Main Street would be the only place where any/all businesses would have the opportunity to locate as there are no other vacancies in any other commercial area in Town.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Mr. Patenaude, second by Ms. Jones. All in favor.

A motion to recommend the Recreational Marijuana Zoning Bylaw Amendment as written was made by Mr. Patenaude, second by Ms. Morrow. All in favor.

3) Reports/Correspondence/Discussion

There were no reports/correspondence or discussion

4) Future Meeting(s)

- a. October 19, 2020
- b. November 2, 2020

Mr. Walkovich moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:30PM; Mr. Patenaude seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Joan Ladik.