Plainfield Planning Commission Minutes

Monday August 31st 2026

Present: Will Colgan, David Scheckman, Nicko Rubin, Karen Storey, Kayle Hope, Alicia Weiss, and Charles Cogbill

Will called the meeting to order and the first order of business is to approve the minutes from the last meeting which would be August 3rd. Nicko made the motion and David seconded it. The motion was approved.

Will started the meeting with the second item on the agenda which is to appoint an alternate zoning administrator (ZA) for the 3 properties Kayle Hope has recused herself from. The Planning Commission (PC) can recommend to the Select Board (SB) the name for an alternate or assistant ZA and the SB can appoint that person. The best option for Plainfield would be to find a ZA from a nearby town that has the skills and background to serve as the alternate ZA. He has spoken with Kevin Thompson from East Montpelier and he said Kevin would consider it once he has seen the property records. Kayle will be getting those records in electronic form that will be sent to Kevin.
Will proposed a motion that the Planning Commission recommend that Kevin Thompson, the Zoning Administrator from East Montpelier; be the assistant and temporary zoning administrator for the properties that Kayle Hope, the Plainfield Zoning Administrator, has recused herself from. Nicko seconded the motion. David asked about payment and Will said he hoped East Montpelier would charge the going ZA rate plus a little cushion. The alternative would be hiring a lawyer for Plainfield which would be more money. Nicko asked about the 3 properties. David said it was Kayle's property, the neighbor across the street and one more nearby but wasn't sure which one. Karen said she has worked with Kevin and said he would be a good choice. Nicko wondered about the conflicts with the properties. Karen said there multiple contentious issues over a long period of time. David said there were public comments at the last SB hearing and Karen said all her communications with the landowners are public record. She thought this temporary appointment was best for the town.
The motion was approved unanimously.
The next item on the agenda were needed changes to the draft zoning as a result of the SB hearing on the draft. The Development Review Board (DRB) had a recent hearing where they had trouble using the new draft due to there being two mentions of applications and two mentions of fees for the permit. Karen summarized the past use of the zoning regulations where she warned all the DRB meetings and worked with the landowner ahead of the Sketch Plan Review so that the only item in the DRB meetings was usually the waivers that were needed. She thought the system worked well. She thought the Sketch Plan doesn't need to be a fee. The warning period could be an issue.
Will said the warning period is 7 days since the requirement of a minimum of 15 days before the next scheduled DRB meeting wouldn't allow a longer warning period.
Will suggested that since any scheduled business before the DRB has a fee to cover the warnings and ZA time then perhaps a sketch plan fee of $100 (similar to other fees), Tthen the subdivision fee of $100 per lot could be used with the option of counting the sketch plan fee toward the subdivision fee. The application would be done ahead of the sketch plan. David said the draft changes brought the process from 3 stages to 2 stages by eliminating the preliminary plat. The preliminary plat was a middle review and by eliminating that the sketch plan becomes more important. Will said Kayle felt that the zoning permit was generated from the subdivision review application. Will's proposal would have the application for the sketch plan follow the process through to the permit actions which would be permit approved or denied. Karen said the sketch plan really decides whether the subdivision is major or minor. No surveys are needed and the expense to the owner is low. She said the Village Expansion project created the need to change zoning. She said in the past it was mostly owners subdividing land. She would like to keep the process simple at the beginning so the details could be known before a lot of money needed to be spent. She said the ZA should be a public service as well as a town employee. Will said that could still happen before the sketch plan review. David said there was language about meeting with the ZA ahead of the sketch plan.
Karen asked for more details from the SB hearing which was that the draft mentions two applications and two fees which confused everyone. David said it was basically an editing issue with the draft by not taking out the

second mention of application and fee. David said the town is entering a time where there will be many subdivision permits coming along and having a simpler system would be good for the DRB and ZA.
Will suggested taking out the fee in the sketch plan review and taking out the application ins the subdivision review section as the changes to be made. The question of the lower fee for the sketch plan is still a question. He wondered if just changing those two words would constitute a minor change and not need a new PC hearing. David liked that the sketch plan becomes more of a serious meeting rather than informal meeting. Having a warned hearing with an application helps reinforce the sketch plan review. Karen thought the zoning changes were a result of a particular project and not because the system was not working. She thought it was similar to spot zoning and not the way to correct zoning. Will thought the new draft does address the need to streamline the process by front loading it. Will said he was ambivalent on the $100 sketch plan fee. David thought the sketch plan fee would make the sketch plan a more serious undertaking. He was satisfied with the language and suggested a joint meeting with the DRB. Will said he invited the DRB members and will send them the minutes and hope to get some feedback. Karen said the waivers were an important part of the reviews. She isn't sure the zoning needed to be changed. David thought having the neighbors warned as early on as possible was really important for the public to be informed of what was happening. Nicko thought the sketch plan fee was a good idea.
Kayle thought the sketch plan was supposed to be more informal and this change would help applicants who were further along in the process. She felt there was a need for the ZA to meet ahead of the sketch plan review. The fees have to be paid along with the zoning applications. Will read many of the current permit fees so if the application starts at the sketch plan the fee could start there. The previous sketch plans were there to inform the applicant on what was needed. Will said the informal outline for the applicant can be done ahead of the sketch plan review with the ZA. Will said if an applicant had everything in place then they could go directly to the subdivision review.
David said the informal meeting with the ZA and perhaps the DRB ahead of the formal sketch plan is a part of the new zoning and we could add more information on that. Karen said anyone can come to a DRB open meeting and ask about any project. That information could be put in the zoning draft. David said even the old sketch plan had significant requirements.
Will said that feedback from the DRB would be good before the PC voted on any changes. Kayle wondered how big a difference there would be between the formal sketch plan review and the subdivision review. David said it was mostly a matter of presentation and accurate and detailed information. Kayle wanted to be sure there was still a provision for an informal review. Will thought there would be that option and will try to get the DRB informed and get some feedback.
Will hoped to set up another PC meeting for September 7th.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:10