

Minutes of the Pelham Planning Board

May 6, 2019

7 PM with Public Hearing called to order at 7:30 PM

Members Present: Judy Eiseman, Chair, (recording) Lexi Dewey, Leslie Laurie

Absent: Pete Wilson

Other attendees (signed in for public hearing): Tilman Lukas, Bob Agoglia, Cara Castenson, Abbie Jenks, William Pula, Joe Larson, Amy Spalding-Feeler, Jeff Eiseman, Barbara Cooper, Kristin DeBoer

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm for the purpose of setting up for the ensuing public hearing.

Discussion of minutes from April 8 and May 1, 2019 was postponed until after the public hearing with only a few housekeeping items discussed.

The Public Hearing was called to order promptly at 7:30 p.m. Eiseman explained the purpose of the public hearing, i.e., to hear testimony and public comment on the warrant articles being submitted by the Planning Board and citizens for consideration at town meeting and noted that due to the omission of specific article sections from the public hearing notice of the April 8 hearing, a second hearing was properly posted to include that language for discussion at this hearing. She noted that this hearing was properly posted and noticed in the Daily Hampshire Gazette on April 19 and 26 and explained that following the hearing a report will be finalized for presentation to town meeting, votes taken by Planning Board members as needed, and documents submitted to the Attorney General if the articles are approved by town meeting. She indicated some of the items that came up at the April 8 public hearing and proceeded to open the meeting to questions and comments.

Abbie Jenks found one of the explanatory handouts confusing so the question was put to the assembled members and attendees who felt the chart was clear, so Eiseman indicated that it would be used at town meeting and explained if the question came up then. Joe Larson raised a question about where Limited Business uses were allowed and where medical offices might be permitted and that he felt the Board had reached into the rest of the town by eliminating some uses. Member Laurie indicated that zoning can be changed in the future relative to Limited Business districts but that that was not a subject undertaken under these warrant articles.

Kristin DeBoer indicated that the changes proposed would enhance the zoning regulations for the Village Center but that she still hoped for disallowing retail and restaurants in the Village Center Neighborhood District and would seek to amend the zoning articles at town meeting and, failing that, to discuss the articles brought by citizen petition to amend rather than withdrawing them. DeBoer went on to say that given the limited possibilities for commercial activity she believed the focus should be on the VC-Mixed Use district and that “we need community, not business” in the Neighborhood district. Eiseman indicated she was sympathetic to the petitioners’ concerns but that there were perhaps other ways to achieve the desired results.

Mixed views on the value of permitting restaurants and retail were expressed by attendees.

The PUBLIC HEARING was closed at 8:42 and the Board returned to the regular meeting agenda.

Minutes were approved with corrections for the April 8 and May 1, 2019 meetings and public hearing.

UPDATES:

- Eiseman agreed to bring maps and handouts to town meeting.
- Lexi Dewey agreed to contact Kathleen Lugosch.
- Board agreed to have Eiseman sign the Planning Grant application and notify Select Board

- Reminder that Becky Batch will attend the May 13 meeting to discuss the Guide project
- Noted letter from Palmer regarding potential rail service and a brief discussion of the value and need in the western Mass for improved rail transportation