

**Charlemont Planning Board**  
**June 15th, 2023, 6:00 pm Meeting Minutes**  
**Via conference call and in person, Town Hall**

Members Participating: Bob Nelson, Lori Shulda-Merrigan, Star Atkeson  
(Secretary/member)

Others Participating: Jennifer Mooney (member not yet sworn in)

Called to Order by Bob Nelson at 6:05 PM

6:00-6:15 CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

APPOINTMENTS:

**6:15 Chad Cellana of NerdCanna to discuss opening a retail dispensary in Charlemont.**

The Board heard from Chad Cellana of NerdCanna about his desire to open a cannabis dispensary in Charlemont. He told the Board of his experience with Clarksburg, MA. He has a dispensary as well as a cultivation license there, although there is no active cultivation happening yet. It was a 15-month long process. He will pay a quarterly community impact fee of 3% in Clarksburg. He created 8 jobs in Clarksburg. He imagines he will be renovating a dilapidated structure in Charlemont as he did in Clarksburg.

The Board told him what Charlemont's zoning requirements are: 500 feet from schools (LSM says it can be lessened to 300 ft.) There is a zoning map with a Marijuana Retail District. Charlemont can not have more than 2 dispensaries. Chad will look at the available spaces and wants to come back to a Planning Board meeting in July.

Chad asked what the sentiment towards cannabis dispensaries in town was. The Board reported that they thought it was neutral —no one really wanted to have a dispensary next door to their residence for fear of lowered property values, but otherwise there were not strong feelings voiced one way or the other.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Welcome Jennifer Mooney; Star Atkeson to Planning Board

The Board welcomed Jennifer Mooney and Star Atkeson to the Board. J.Mooney needs to get sworn in. S.Atkeson is unsure whether the Ethics Commission will find a conflict of interest with her job as Secretary to the Boards. She would like to continue to be the secretary and count the meeting hours as hours worked and will see what the Ethics Commission says.

B.Nelson explained the general duties of the Board and gave a description of the workload of the past few years. He told J.Mooney that when she has access to the Town's outlook 365 account there are some good resources for her to look into about roles and responsibilities of the Zoning Board and the Planning Board. FRCOG's CPTC (Citizen Planners Training Center) is a great resource (founded by Gisela Walker) they have meetings and trainings online and in person.

The overall goal of the Planning Board, aside from making sure zoning bylaws and subdivision requirements are being followed, is to try and make it easier for people to move to town— to get

creative and try to increase the amount of affordable housing stock. For example, if the Town could somehow procure the 50 acre O'Dell property and subdivide it, they could create a lot of housing. The Board wonders if there is a way the Town could buy those acres and subdivide it. The Board is happy that the town has accepted Sarah's proposal to bring a few roads up to standard which could then have building permits issued.

2. Review Approve / Minutes 5/11/2023, 5/18/2023

**Bob Nelson moved to approve the May 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes as written. Lori Shulda-Merrigan seconded the motion. B.Nelson and LSM are in favor. The minutes were initialed.**

3. Appoint Planning Board member to Earth Removal Committee.

This Committee deals with potential gravel pits. There is an Earth Removal bylaw that they follow.

**Lori Shulda-Merrigan made a motion to appoint herself to the Earth Removal Committee. Bob Nelson seconded the motion. Bob Nelson, Star Atkeson and Lori Shulda-Merrigan are in favor**

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

1. Brief refresher of upcoming Planning Board business/ topics

- Planning Board Rules and Regulations and hearing scheduling to update revisions

They review every year after town elections and recommend updates to be approved at a public hearing in a PB meeting. There is a draft with pending changes that need to be approved. S.Atkeson will send out the last draft that had revisions, and schedule the hearing for July 20<sup>th</sup>, and post legal ads for 2 weeks prior to hearing.

- Update approved zoning bylaw revisions

The zoning revisions that passed in October 2022 as well as those revoted at the May 2023 Town Meeting need to be included in the Charlemont Zoning Bylaws as a whole and published on the website to be enacted as the official bylaws. B.Nelson wants a Planning board member and volunteered himself as well, to do it \*out of a meeting and then review and approve in a meeting. He'd like to make sure the lettering gets fixed on the Special Permit Criteria but does not want to change the skipped numbering yet.

- Broadband Bylaw revision / upcoming appt. with Jonathan Mirin

B.Nelson explained J.Mirin's plan to update the Broadband bylaw definitions to restrict certain placement of 5G cell towers in Charlemont. A lot of work had already been done on the wording with Peggy Sloan and others, but it had been tabled when Bob Handsaker, of the Broadband Committee, thought that the wording could potentially be read as excessively restrictive. B.Nelson would like J.Mirin to reach out to B.Handsaker as a first step before starting the process again. B.Nelson says that Massachusetts won't allow restrictions except for aesthetic purposes. LSM wants to see if it was accepted in Shelburne and approved by the Attorney General.

- Housing / Cluster Developments

The aim of this, as mentioned before, is to get creative in increasing the housing stock. The Board would like small houses to share septic and water and the cost of utility hook-up. B.Nelson said that the current bylaw allows many people to build an ADU. J.Mooney points out that they would have to modify the septic. She knows of a development in VT where there are 5 two-bedroom houses hooked up to shared septic and water. She also told of a community in Shelburne off of North Street that had shared solar, septic utility and water.

- Campground bylaw

The Board has been wanting to do a comprehensive campground bylaw for some time and have requested technical assistance through the DLTA Grant from FRCOG. They haven't heard back yet whether it was approved. B.Nelson's thinking was that perhaps the minimum lot size didn't need to be ten acres. LSM wondered if someone didn't have enough acreage if they could be granted a Variance. J.Mooney thinks the size of the parcel could be dependent on the number of campsites. Possibly an acre per unit. It would also depend on where it was located, an open field would be more problematic for abutting properties than a wooded area. B.Nelson would like the Board to talk about their ideas for campgrounds as well as the cluster developments before getting help from Peggy.

2. June/July Meeting schedule

The Board decided to meet on July 20<sup>th</sup>.

3. Pending Home Improvement Grant from FRHA for properties in need

LSM spoke to S.Reynolds, administrator, about Home Improvement grants for properties in need that she had applied for. This grant could help with downtown beautification, it would help to cover the cost of siding and a paint job for example. The Board thinks it could be advertised in the newsletter or put on a bulletin board in the post office. B.Nelson suggested a robocall. LSM hopes that they can get the word out as the Town is looking good, although there are a few houses that could use some help. Residents within a certain income level could be eligible. B.Nelson wishes people could get together and help people with their houses as a community. He would be up for volunteering hours in that capacity (like Habitat for Humanity)

Other Topics:

1. The Master Plan

The Master Plan was well done. They recommend J.Mooney read it. They had thought about updating it but B.Nelson thinks it's too much for the PB, they would need a Master Plan Committee. However, simply updating the sections where recommendations were implemented, and updating the recommendations that were made by recently completed RKG Economic Development Study could be straightforward enough.

2. AirBnBs. Board members try to figure what to think about AirBnBs. They do take up housing stock, but some of that space may not otherwise be used for long term rentals. The situation to avoid would be housing stock that could be affordable housing or housing in general bought up and used exclusively for AirBnBs. LSM will look into the AirBnB issue.

3. Next Meeting. Bylaw revisions draft complete by next meeting. B.Nelson will do it if no one else does. Wants to schedule the appointment with Chad Cellana for 6:30 and have the Rules and Regulations Hearing at 6:15. B.Nelson would like secretary to reach out to J.Mirin to have him talk to B.Handsaker before coming to a meeting.

B.Nelson motioned to end the meeting at 8:14. Seconded by LSM, All in Favor.

NEXT MEETING: July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Respectfully Submitted by Star Atkeson 07/17/2023

Documents reviewed in meeting:

Minutes of 5/11, 5/18/2023

Agenda for 06/15/2023 Meeting

Public Hearing Notices from Abutting towns:

5/3/2023 Colrain ZBA—Special Permit/ fabrication, equipment/automotive repair/ 92 E. Colrain Rd.

5/3/2023 Colrain ZBA—Variance for barn within side-line setbacks at 152 Wilson Hill Rd.

5/10/2023 Buckland Planning Board Site Plan Review ground mounted solar array 17 Sears Street — also a Notice of Decision, application approved.

6/07/2023 Colrain Planning Board — Public Hearing for proposed Bylaw revisions on Short Term rentals and creation of Flood Plain overlay district.

6/07/2023 Colrain Planning Board amendment to the cluster development approval/ reconfiguration of multiple lots.

6/14/2023 Buckland ZBA Special Permit to install concrete Pad for sand and salt structure at HWY dept. 2 Sears St.