

Finance Committee Meeting
March 18, 2009
7:30 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room

Present: Chairman, Michael Thomas; Vice-Chair, Wayne Graf; Pasquale Barletta; Thomas DeLuca; Jackie Desrochers; Paul Helmreich; Cheryl McFaun; Lee Tarantino; Philip Zawasky; Town Manager, James Purcell.

Absent: Robert Bouchard; Lynn Regan.

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Call to Order

Meeting was called to Order at 7:35 pm.

MAY 29 2009

NORTON TOWN CLERK

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Ms. Desrochers to approve the March 16, 2009 Finance Committee minutes as amended. Second by Mr. Graf. Vote: All in favor, with Ms. McFaun and Mr. Zawasky abstaining. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

Mr. Charles Gabriel, Town Planner, addressed the Finance Committee regarding zoning articles on the Town Meeting warrant as follows:

Article 16 – The Palie Property – This article is as a result of a request from a property owner. The Planning Board has not yet voted on, nor had a public hearing for, this article. The public hearing will be held on April 7th.

Article 17 – Accessory Apartments – The Planning Board voted (6-1) to support this article, with some minor changes. In reviewing the article details, Mr. Gabriel said that the Board wants one of the criteria to be that the owner should occupy the primary structure, not one of the structures. Also, the Board wants to limit the amount of adults (age 18+) in the accessory apartment to no more than 2. A discussion ensued with the FinCom and Mr. Gabriel. A possible change that was discussed was naming the "primary residence" as the area in which the owner resides, as opposed to being defined by the size of the unit. Also, Ms. McFaun suggested that there be no restriction on the amount of children in the accessory apartment.

Mr. Gabriel stated that the Planning Board feels that it is important that the houses, and the neighborhoods that they are in, keep a "single family" look and feel. They do not want large numbers of people residing in these accessory apartments. Ms. Desrochers suggested asking other college towns, such as Bridgewater and Franklin, how they handle limiting the number of people (18+) that are allowed to reside in one apartment. Mr. Tarantino pointed out that the article is not trying to make rental apartments available, but rather help neighborhoods that have houses with mother-in-law apartments keep the single-family feel.

Mr. Gabriel said that he would take all of the FinCom's comments under advisement and discuss them with the Planning Board.

The committee and Mr. Gabriel jointly discussed and agreed to amend the wording concerning the accessory apartment to limit the total amount of people to 4, with only 2 people maximum over the age of 18.

Mr. Barletta stated that he objects to the limiting of the number of adults in the accessory apartment. He brought up the possibility of a couple with a special needs child over the age of 18.

Article 18 – Detached Accessory Apartments - The Planning Board has decided not to support this article.

Article 19 & 20 – Regulating and Prohibiting LED signs – The Planning Board has not yet voted on these articles. They had a public hearing last night (3/17/09) for these articles. Mr. Gabriel said that there are presently LED signs in town, though the town by-laws prohibit flashing and animated signs. The Planning Board wants to regulate the various qualities about the signs such as: 1 sign per lot, has to have a static message, needs to have a default mechanism for shut down if malfunctioning, brightness of light emitted, etc. Mr. Gabriel said that the reasons for concern are that the signs can be distracting to traffic, as well as being

aesthetically unpleasing. Mr. DeLuca questioned who would be responsible for enforcing the conditions of the change to the by-law. Mr. Thomas said that he feels the signs should be allowed in the areas in town that are zoned Village Commercial. Mr. Gabriel also mentioned that the existing by-law states that signs should be turned off from 11pm – 6am unless the business is open.

Article 21 – Floodplain Districts – This article will amend the town by-law by updating it with a new date. The Planning Board has not yet voted on this article. The public hearing is April 7th.

III. Communications

The School Board is holding a presentation on the Future of the Norton Public Schools on Monday, March 30th at 6pm in the Norton Middle School auditorium.

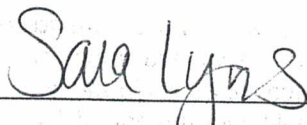
Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 23, 2009 at 7:30pm.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Zawasky to adjourn at 9:05 pm. Second by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Respectfully Submitted by:



Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary