

1 FINAL

2 Minutes of the Planning Board Hearing

3 August 10, 2021, at the

4 Meeting House

5 Members Present

6 Kent Ruesswick (Chair), Lucy Nichols, Scott Doherty (Vice Chair), Anne Dowling,
7 Greg Meeh, Joshua Gordon, Robert Steenson (BOS rep in lieu of Cheryl Gordon),
8 Hillary Nelson (alternate)

9 Others Present

10 Anne Berry and Jay Berry, owners of Canterbury Hall Trust

11
12 AGENDA

13 1. Call meeting to order

14 Kent Ruesswick called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

15 2. Minutes of July 27, 2021

16 Joshua moved - -Greg seconded – no discussion – all voted in favor.

17 3. Discussion of Site Plan Review Application from Canterbury Hall Trust

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19 Kent invited the owners of Canterbury Hall to introduce themselves. Ann
20 gave some history. Canterbury Hall has been in existence for 30 years, had served
21 the community with assisted living facilities and they were forced to close because
22 of extreme staff shortage. Bob Steenson said this was common in all long-term care
23 facilities.

24 Members asked questions about the past operations at Canterbury Hall and the
25 proposed new ones. The whole of the residential building was served with
26 sprinklers from a large reservoir.

27 There was a difference of opinion regarding whether or not the previous ZBA
28 approvals (1992 and 2005) for Bed and Breakfast and 'minimal care home for the

29 elderly' could be said to cover the new proposed use that excluded the care
30 component.

31 The owners felt that they had always had elders who were independent or required
32 little care and did not see this as a new use of the property. This was the view of
33 the Board of Selectmen, who had determined that 'congregate living' and 'transient
34 occupancy' were already approved. The Selectmen often have to make decisions in
35 a 'grey area' and they were comfortable about this case.

36 The wording of the proposed new use was raised as a question. The application
37 form is limited in terms of the boxes applicants can check. Ann Berry had checked
38 'multi-family' and this is not permitted in the Agricultural zone. It had not been
39 clear which box should be checked. The form needs updating. Ann had talked with
40 Joe Halla, Chair of the ZBA, and had been told she did not need to come before the
41 zoning board.

42 Some members felt that the proposed new use was not assisted living and really
43 constituted a new use. The units at Canterbury Hall would be commercial since Ann
44 and Jay Berry do not live there. People living there are tenants. There is a type of
45 breakfast available, self-serve. Ann said these units were not rented on online
46 platforms. They were relatively affordable, something that is hard to find in town.

47 Kent Ruesswick as Chair determined there were enough questions about the issue
48 of a ZBA rehearing for a vote to be taken. He wanted to be sure all legal channels
49 were followed.

50 The owners responded that they had not changed things since the site plan of 2005
51 was approved. They had included several waivers as a result. They had seen these
52 uses of the property as one way to maintain this historic property in town. It has a
53 large property tax bill to pay.

54 **The Chair asked for a motion. Joshua Gordon proposed the motion that the Site**
55 **Plan Review Application be tabled, and the applicants be referred to the Zoning**
56 **Board to determine whether there is a new use in the proposal and if a variance**
57 **needed to be issued. Greg Meeh seconded. Members voted. Greg Meeh, Joshua**
58 **Gordon, Lucy Nichols and Anne Dowling voted yes. Bob Steenson and Scott**
59 **Doherty voted no. The Chair abstained. The motion carried.**

The Planning Board would hear the Site Plan Review Application after the ZBA hearing. Ann and Jay Berry expressed interest in being involved in the Plan for Tomorrow work and zoning issues. They left the meeting.

4. Plan for Tomorrow discussion

Hillary Nelson joined the discussion. Members discussed several issues that could be raised on October 2 vision sessions including:

- They should work on updating the zoning ordinance regarding home businesses, to determine which should go to ZBA for a Special Exception
- The criteria for assessing home businesses should be laid out – these could include things like the presence of workshops or use of equipment, whether or not the public are coming and going, if there are employees, what is the impact on neighbors, is it a short-term rental etc.
- Is there a different model of housing that could work in town, utilizing land that is currently unavailable due to the 300 ft lot frontage rule, or could multi family units work with rural/arable land surrounding?
- It would be sensible to focus on one issue at a time – there is no need to complete the Master Plan work fully by March
- Those members (Kent, Lucy, Greg) who had met with the Agricultural Commission on July 29 found it very helpful to listen to those members raising issues pertinent to farmers in town – these included the need for workforce housing for agricultural workers, the need for some kind of animal processing center to be available in town, how to address climate change and food insecurity
- **Kent had notes to share with PB members as well as some info on wetlands from Mark Stevens**
- Making suggestions about development in Agricultural or Rural zones needs to be carefully thought out because of resistance likely – what examples are members aware of that show successful housing projects? What kinds of water/sewer provisions are made?
- It could be helpful to look at other similar town's Table of Uses to get an idea of how to update the Canterbury ones

- Should the Agricultural zone and Conservation zones be re-defined?
- Would Conditional Use Permits be helpful to reduce the numbers of applicants having to go to ZBA?
- With regard to workforce housing for farm workers Bob Steenson suggested looking at the zoning ordinance permitting a farm accessory dwelling for 'a person'. This could be amended to plural, 'persons', in a fairly easy move.

5. Other business

Kent had to send an email with an issue raised by Mandy about a potential site plan application.

6. Adjournment

At 8:30 pm, Joshua made a motion to adjourn, Scott seconded.

NEXT MEETING TUESDAY AUGUST 24, MEETING HOUSE, 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Scribner, secretary