

1 DRAFT

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.**

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

63

64 4. Plan for Tomorrow discussion

65

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

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

- 93 • Should the Agricultural zone and Conservation zones be re-defined?
- 94 • Would Conditional Use Permits be helpful to reduce the numbers of
- 95 applicants having to go to ZBA?
- 96 • With regard to workforce housing for farm workers Bob Steenson suggested
- 97 looking at the zoning ordinance permitting a farm accessory dwelling for ‘a
- 98 person’. This could be amended to plural, ‘persons’, in a fairly easy move.
- 99

100 5. Other business

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

103 6. Adjournment

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

105

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

107

108 Respectfully submitted,

109 Lois Scribner, secretary

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