

TOWN OF CENTER  
HARBOR PLANNING  
BOARD

Meeting

Tuesday, July 16, 2019

7 p.m.

Chair Charles Hanson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Board members present Selectmen's Rep Harry Viens, Secretary Bill Ricciardi, Member David Reilly, Kelli Kemery. Alternate Member Winnifred Boynton and Clerk Aimee Manfredi-Sanschagrin. In the audience Code Enforcement Officer Ken Ballance. There were 7 members of the public in the audience. Absent were Peter Loudon, Mark Hildebrand and Rachel Xavier.

**Voting Members: Charles Hanson, Harry Viens, Bill Ricciardi, David Reilly, Kelli Kemery and Winnifred Boynton.**

**I. MINUTES:**

Bill Ricciardi motioned to approve the minutes of June 4, 2019 as presented. Seconded by David Reilly. Minutes pass unanimously.

**II. PUBLIC HEARING –CATALYST PARTNERS – FINAL PLANS MAP 226 LOT 043**

The Board approved a NRSPP for Catalyst Partners on June 4, 2019. The final plans have been submitted to the Board for signature. Clerk and Chair verified the plans noted the conditions that were set forth by the Board during the hearing. The conditions that were contained in the notice of decision which were as follows:

The approval grants outdoor boat storage only. There will be no maintenance, repair, oil changes or startups on site. Shrink wrapping is allowed for storage purposes. It is noted that security measures, such as lighting, cameras or other modern means may be installed. There will be no boat valet service or public access to the facility. Boats are to arrive on trailers in the fall already winterized mechanically, but may be wrapped on site at any time. Said stored boats will be removed in the spring for the summer season. In addition, new (unpurchased) boats may be stored at the site. The wetland buffer area is to remain undisturbed, as well as the side line setbacks, only maintenance, such as to remove dead trees or branches growing into the operational area is allowed. Any expanded use beyond the proposal as stated by the applicant and as reflected in this notice of decision, accepted application and recorded minutes of the hearing held on June 4, 2019, shall require additional Planning Board approval(s).

**Motion: Bill Ricciardi motions to sign the final plan(s). Seconded by Kelli Kemery. All were in favor of the motion.**

A final plan will be sent to the current property owner (Jordan) and to the applicants (John and Matt O'Neill). The remaining plans will be kept in the Planning Board folder for this case.

### **III. PUBLIC HEARING/INPUT SESSION – SECTION 6 SIGNS**

Chair announces the start of the public input session providing those in attendance a background into why the Board is reviewing this section. Signs have been an issue in town for many years and recently have generated some complaints at the Town Office. The Selectmen decided it was time to get the businesses that were not compliant into compliance. On May 29, 2019, the Selectmen's office sent out a letter to all the businesses in town giving them a grace period to bring their business into compliance if they were not compliant. The Selectmen's office also asked for us, the Planning Board (PB), to revisit the sign ordinance. The Board decided to hold a second session August 6<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. Our goal tonight is to hear from the public and see if what we currently have is not restrictive, too restrictive, fine the way it is etc. It's possible that people like what we have and we don't change anything but we want to hear what people have to say.

Chair opens the dialogue asking for input from the public.

Julie Willis wanted to know what some of the complaints had been. Chair states besides the complaints about the amount of signs, we often hear complaints about the flags/banners. Chair mentions the Master Plan guides the PB on what the residents of the town want the town to look like which is the quaint back home look. (Bill Ricciardi adds that the Master Plan, for anyone interested in reading it, can find it on-line under the PB page). Chair continues, my take on what I've heard is that they don't like the flashy flags and banners that are being displayed. Chair asks if Ken Ballance would like to add his comments. Ken Ballance states the primary complaints are the amount of signs and the feather flags such as the Keno flag, the BBQ flag and the Verizon flag.

Julie Willis, I think the quality of the signs should follow the intent of what the town wants to display which I believe is a quaint little town. When businesses want to attract customers their sign is the first thing someone looks at so to me the quality of the sign to me should be the image of the town we want to portray. Some of the signs are of a lesser quality than what we would like to see. Julie Willis states the material of the sign can make a difference and the size of the sign can also dictate a quaintness or portray the opposite. Being a little town a big sign can look even bigger in a small environment. My comments and my reason for coming is because I think we can give our town a better face with some nicer signs. Wood vs. plastic etc. I don't want to cite specific things unless you want that. Chair responds, this is your time so if that is something you feel would be helpful we would like to hear it.

Julie Willis, my personal opinion is that the "Just Hit Print" is a definite eye sore. It is not an attractive sign and does not make me feel like I'm in a nice little village at all. The other thing that bothers me is when there is a flea market or craft fair they roll out that big plastic sign instead of putting out something of quality and character. The size of the ACE Hardware sign is enormous. Chair, just so you know that is a pre-existing non-conforming sign which is one of the two in the down town area so that cannot change. Julie Willis, those are my observations and I have heard the same thing from others so I would love to see it improved and bring it up to what I feel is really special about Center Harbor.

Chair, one thing we would take into consideration is that times change, what draws people's attention today is not the same as it was 30 years ago. I think we at least need to be cognizant of that and I would love some input from the businesses.

Sheila Mohan, my personal opinion is that I do not like the feather flags either. Senters Market

for example, a lot of planning went into the exterior of that building to keep it quaint and nice. Those feather signs make it look like Weirs Beach, I think they are terrible. The flags you see on route 25 are very distracting as you drive by. As far as neon signs, personally I don't have a problem with neon signs but a majority of the voters in this town do. It has been this way for many years and many votes. They do not like them and do not want them. Chair, just to be clear neon signs are not allowed under this current ordinance and so we do have an out of compliant town. Ken Ballance, internally lit signs of any kind are not allowed under the current ordinance. Sheila Mohan, again I personally don't have a problem with say the lit Open or Closed signs but they are currently not allowed so either we need to make a change and say "yes you can have them" or "no you can't" and have them removed. The rest of the section involving neon signs should be adhered to and should not be changed. Anatole Paquette is allowed a moving electronic sign because that is his business which is to create such signs. He is the only one allowed to have it and I don't think the people in town would want to see signs such as that anywhere else. Perhaps a letter could go out in the tax bills this fall that would say "how do you feel about...." And list a couple of things the Board may be looking to change or get input on.

Chair states, Ms. Willis also sent an email to the Selectmen's Office stating what she said tonight along with accolades to the departments regarding the 4th of July activities so thank you for that.

Karen Ponton, I am generally supportive of everything that has been said tonight. I too do not like those feather signs. When we moved here which was around 1996, my recollection of the down town area was quaint and charming and no clutter of signs. When I drive around this area now I feel inundated with signs it's almost too much that I don't even see them anymore. I think it's important for businesses to know that when there is too much we don't see anything.

Karen Ponton continues, another concern I have is when there are repetition in signs. For example, Verizon. They have a feather flag, space on the new big sign at Senters Market, a sign outside of its business and another on the roof above the location. That's a lot of signage and I think that should be looked at. The other piece which I don't really have a handle on is the break down on the amount of signage a business can have based on square footage of their building. I wonder how much signage we would lose if someone were to produce a rendering showing us a building of a certain size with what would be allowed signage for that building. Chair, well I may have an answer for you, as of August 27th in theory, every business should be compliant. If they are not there may potentially be fines so we should have a grasp on what the approved signage should look like by that date.

Ken Ballance, to clarify for Karen, every business in town is allowed 5 signs. It's a matter of how they break down those 5 signs with the square footage allowed for their building size. For example, 2000 sf condo that your business is in you can have 75 sf of signage dispersed across 5 signs. Total square footage in signage not for each sign.

Where we do have a glitch is we have multiple businesses in one building and each businesses is calculating their own sf to come up with signage.

Ken Ballance continues, theoretically we could have one building with 450 sf of signage based on multiple businesses. The Campbell's are here in attendance, they own probably the heaviest signed building for its size. I've worked with them on taking an inventory of what they have and there is absolutely no problem with that building based on our ordinance in relation to the

amount of signs. The issue with signs I believe focuses on what people see for signs like the banner flags and so on. Verizon may very well be over signed based on square footage of their space but unless we have an inventory of what's there we are only guessing. I just wanted to clarify each business is allowed 5 signs it's the square footage that we need to address and the type of signs that are being displayed. Chair, one thing to mention and Ken touched on this that in **Section 6:10 All signs except Identifying and Directional Signs as defined in Section 6:4** shall require a construction permit March 2007. So this is part of the enforcement, if we could get the permitting part of this done for what is out there, I think we would know what has been approved and would make enforcement easier in the long run. Ken, we need to add that anytime a business changes they are required to get a building permit for their signs, every time. Our current ordinance does not clarify that so I think we should make sure it's clear by adding that statement.

Sheila Mohan, do you think you could add that into both the ordinance and into the site plan review section and perhaps on the application. When businesses change, if the new business will be more intrusive than what was there before, they are required to come in for site plan review. During that process there is a lot of information shared and I think it would be helpful to make sure there is a discussion regarding signs and what is required.

Karen Ponton, it was mentioned earlier there are two signs in the village area that are pre-existing electronic signs Ace being one of them, what is the other one? Chair responds Yikes.

Luke Royea, I was looking for clarification on total square footage on a regular sign and then found a referral to a 20 sf allowance for a sandwich board sign. Is that 20 sf part of the regular allowance for the sign? Ken Ballance, we would have to look at that separate. We have no mechanism for combining and we are fairly specific about the type.

Chair asks for any other comments or questions. Hearing none Chair continues the hearing to August 6th at 7 p.m.

Julie Willis asks if there would be time to have a questionnaire added to the fall bills. Chair responds, no we would not have adequate time. (The Board needs to have proposed Ordinances written and ready for public hearing by December in preparation for vote at Town Meeting in March. The date in which the falls bills would be issued and questionnaires received back would not allow enough time for the Board to have a final draft ready for public hearing by the required state deadlines.)

Chair concludes, the minutes will be on line and we advertise the hearings well in advance. It's the citizen's responsibilities to be aware of what is going on in town. We have to meet deadlines in which we have to file any proposed changes for Town Meeting. The PB proposes rules and the people in town vote on the rules.

**IV. PERMITS:**

Board reviewed permits (Holtzman, Powers, Crockett, Downs, Andersen, Blanchard, Catalyst Partners, Davis) no discussion.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m. Next meeting scheduled for August 6, 2019 @ 7 p.m. respectfully submitted by Aimee Manfredi-Sanschagrin.