

NORTH BERWICK PLANNING BOARD

MINUTES OF PLANNING BOARD SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

Present: Anne Whitten, Jon Morse, David Ballard, Mark Cahoon, Scott Strynar, Matt LeConte, CEO

Absent: Chairman Geoffrey Aleva

Also Present: Scott Anderson, James McIntyre, Joy McIntyre, Jack Olec

1. Call to Order:

Vice Chairman Jon Morse will be the Acting Chairman for tonight's meeting. Acting Chairman Morse called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Anne Whitten told Matt LeConte that they should put the clarification between what a Public Meeting and a Public Hearing are as he explained to the audience at the last meeting somewhere on the website. She stated that she is more than willing to reach out to Dwayne and ask him to do it. Matt LeConte and the rest of the Board agreed.

2. Review Previous Minutes:

David Ballard motioned to approve the minutes of September 9, 2021 as written. Mark Cahoon seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

3. Public Meeting:

Request: Extension of Conditional Use Permit for Verizon Wireless antenna installation on Town Hall Roof including associated equipment to be located at 21 Main Street otherwise known as Assessors Tax Map 018 Lot 90.

Scott Anderson stepped forward to discuss the project. He stated that he does local permitting for Verizon Wireless in Maine. He said that they met with the Planning Board via ZOOM last July or August where Verizon was proposing to put antennas on the chimney on the Town Hall. On August 13th, the Planning Board issued a Conditional Use Permit for the installation. Mr. Anderson stated that, what normally happens with these projects is that the engineers look at the location and look at where the antennas are going to go. There is equipment that was proposed to be installed in some of the rooms including the basement of the Town Hall to support the antennas. Once the Planning Board approves it, the project goes out to bid to the actual contractors that will install the antennas to the facility.

Mr. Anderson stated that the antennas were originally going to be on the chimney and the cables were going to go down through one of the flues in the chimney. They were then going to break off through the chimney into the equipment rooms and then down into the basement. In working with the Town Manager, it was determined that this would not be the best way to go. There might have been some structural issues with using the flue and then breaking through the chimney. Mr. Anderson stated that there is a 1-year term on a Planning Board permit. They were trying to get the redesign done in time to install it by August, but they were not able to sort it all out.

Mr. Anderson stated that they have come up with a new design and it has 2 primary changes. The antennas are in the same place up on the chimney. Now they are going to build a false dormer right in front of the chimney that will allow the cables to be routed down through the roof. They will do it in a weatherproof fashion. The other change is located on the lower right-hand side looking at the front of Town Hall. They will be putting AC condensers there. It will have conduits going into the building from the AC units that will cool the equipment rooms. Mr. Anderson stated that the radio heads that are sending and receiving the signals get warm so when they are inside, they need to have AC units.

Mr. Anderson stated that everything else is pretty much the same as the original proposal. They are asking the Planning Board to extend the Conditional Use Permit that they previously obtained to allow them time to do the installation.

Acting Chairman Morse asked Matt LeConte if he had any comments or issues. Mr. LeConte stated that because the previous approval has lapsed, he told the applicant that the best course of action was to submit another application and come back before the Planning Board. It is the Board's decision if they want to go through the full Public Hearing process again or if they want to grant them a reasonable extension. Mr. LeConte stated that aesthetically, it will not be seen. David Ballard asked if the dormer was going to blend in with the chimney. Mr. LeConte said that they are going to brick the façade of the dormer so it will blend in more. Mr. Anderson stated that the shingles will be done to match the existing roof and the siding will be done to match the existing building.

David Ballard asked if there were any concerns that the equipment that they were putting in on the outside of the building would have any impact on what we currently have there now. Matt LeConte stated that there would be no impact on our equipment. Mr. Ballard asked if Verizon is responsible for all maintenance that will be needed on the equipment and Mr. LeConte said that the applicant would be responsible for all of it.

Acting Chairman Morse asked the public that was present if they had any questions. James McIntyre asked what the purpose was for the antennas. Mr. LeConte stated that it was to expand cellular coverage. Mr. McIntyre said that he lives on Abbott Road, which is about 7 miles away, and wondered if it would benefit him. Mr. Anderson said that it probably would not benefit him. He said that the benefit of using a building is that you don't have to put up a new tower. The

new tower sites that come in are usually about 130 and 190 feet and they put them up to try and provide a lot of coverage over the biggest area you can get. A site like this one that is on a building are used to improve the coverage within about 2 miles of the location. Because there is a downtown area with some roads where the existing system is being overloaded by the amount of phone use. Largely, this is because people don't just make phone calls anymore. It is mostly because of data usage, and this requires a larger signal. After Verizon goes out and puts the first few towers up to provide initial service, they come back and find sites like this to fill in and strengthen the service that we have. He said that it won't go out as far because they are not as high up in the air, but it will strengthen the signal within the vicinity around Town Hall.

Anne Whitten motioned to extend the Conditional Use Permit for Verizon Wireless to install antennas on the Town Hall roof at Tax Map 018 Lot 90 for 1 year. Scott Strynar seconded the meeting. VOTE: 5-0

3.2 Planning Board discussion and vote to revise the November and December Planning Board meeting schedule.

Matt LeConte stated that November 11 and November 25 are holidays. Also, December 23rd is close to Christmas. He needs the Board to decide when they want to meet for these months. David Ballard asked Mr. LeConte if he feels that there will be a need to have 2 meetings for these months. He doesn't think there will be a need for it. He is proposing that they could meet on November 18th for that month and cancel the December 23rd meeting.

Anne Whitten motioned to not have any meetings on November 11th and November 25th but have one on November 18th and to have the December 9th meeting but cancel the December 23rd meeting. David Ballard seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

4. Other Business:

David Ballard asked if Matt had received any more letters of concern for the gravel put project. Mr. LeConte said that he did receive some and will be putting them together with all of the other paperwork for the next meeting. He will send them to the Board members next Wednesday, so they have them a week before the meeting. Scott Strynar stated that he can send all of the information to him, and he can add them to the Drop Box for the members to see at any point.

5. Adjournment:

David Ballard motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 pm. Mark Cahoon seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

Matthew Leconte
Planning Coordinator

Respectively submitted,
Susan Niehoff, Stenographer

Chairman Geoffrey Aleva

Jon Morse

Anne Whitten

David Ballard

Scott Strynar

Mark Cahoon