

PLANNING BOARD - TOWN OF MACHIAS

JUNE 7, 2017

This meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Acting Chairman Ed Pellon. In attendance were Board members Joe Gurney and Arthur McCurdy; Secretary Cathy Lord; Town Manager Christina Therrien; Scott Ackley, Bill Kitchen, Kimberly Roberts, Jimmy Ackley, Lewis Spencer, Gillian Gatto.

1. MINUTES - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by Arthur McCurdy, seconded by Joe Gurney, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the May 3, 2017 Board meeting.

2. BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATIONS - REVIEW AND ACTION

The Board reviewed a building permit application submitted by Judy Armstrong and Michael Kull for renovations to an existing home located at 149 Court Street. Mr. Scott Ackley, project carpenter for the applicant, reviewed the permit application with the Board answering questions on the setback dimensions.

On a motion by Joe Gurney, seconded by Arthur McCurdy, the Board
VOTED:

To approve a building permit application submitted by Judy Armstrong and Michael Kull for renovations to an existing home located at 149 Court Street.

3. DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED MUNICIPAL ORDINANCES

Mr. Pellon noted that the Planning Board is currently reviewing proposed municipal ordinances that the Board of Selectmen has drafted and receiving citizen comments and concerns regarding these proposed ordinances. The Board listened to comments from citizens on the appearance of ditches on the Kennebec Road which need to be mowed, the general appearance of the area of downtown Machias, the penalizing of working homeowners, the need to pressure "slum lords" to address garbage on their rental properties, dirty streets, piles of sand on roads, sidewalks not properly cleared and maintained, concrete sidewalks in disrepair, appliances, plastics, and furniture abandoned on properties for extended periods of time, and the concern that the only time town officials are concerned about the appearance of the town is just before blueberry festival time. Another citizen comment centered around the question of if it is up to the town to tell homeowners what to do with their properties.

Machias selectman James Whalen explained that one of the biggest concerns in town is the existence of rotting garbage on properties making it unfit to live in some areas. He noted that there is a need to educate and address this type of problem with property owners.

Mr. Whalen pointed out that the proposed ordinances are in the first draft phase and will go through whatever revisions citizens see fit to make before there is any official consideration to put any of these ordinances into effect. Mr. Whalen assured citizens that someone would knock on doors to discuss problems with homeowners before any enforcement action.

Town Manager Christina Therrien explained that much of the concern is directed at unkept homes with garbage in open view on the property and unkept lawns that attract wild animals with diseases such as rats. Ms. Therrien also noted the need to address safety issues such as porches falling in and bricks falling from chimneys and that these municipal ordinances would address issues aimed at protecting people. Comments from citizenry noted that many unkept homes are overwhelmingly owned by the elderly who have difficulty maintaining their homes

Members of the Planning Board pointed out that there is still a lot of work to be done on the ordinances in their present form and that citizen comments and concerns will be utilized in tweaking and improving the ordinances to meet the needs of Machias. It was noted that there will be another public hearing or hearings scheduled before there is any official action taken to adopt the ordinances by citizens at a town meeting.

On a motion by Arthur McCurdy, seconded by Joe Gurney, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 PM.