

1 **TOWN OF EXETER**

2 **PLANNING BOARD**

3 **APRIL 8, 2021**

4 **VIRTUAL MEETING**

5 **APPROVED MINUTES**

6 **Zoom ID: 89318313763**

7 **Phone: 1 646 558 8656**

8 **I. PRELIMINARIES:**

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10 **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT BY ROLL CALL:** Chair Langdon Plumer, Vice-Chair Aaron Brown,  
11 Pete Cameron, Clerk, Gwen English, John Grueter, Jennifer Martel, Molly Cowan (@7:09 PM),  
12 Select Board Representative, Nancy Belanger, Alternate, Mark Dettore, Alternate, and Pete  
13 Steckler, Alternate (@8:00 PM).

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15 **STAFF PRESENT:** Town Planner Dave Sharples

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17 **II. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Plumer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and read out loud the  
18 public hearing notice. Chair Plumer read out loud the meeting preamble which indicated that  
19 an emergency exists and the provisions of RSA 91-A:2 III (b) are being invoked. As federal, state  
20 and local officials have determined gatherings of ten or more people pose a substantial risk to  
21 the community and the meeting imperative to the continued operation of Town and  
22 government and services which are vital to public, health, safety and confidence. This meeting  
23 will be conducted without a quorum physically present in the same location and welcome  
24 members of the public accessing the meeting remotely.

25  
26 The members introduced themselves by roll call and in accordance with the Right to Know Law  
27 noted they were alone in the room. Alternate Nancy Belanger was activated until Molly Cowan  
28 arrived at 7:09 PM.

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30 **III. OLD BUSINESS**

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32 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

33  
34 March 25, 2021

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36 Mr. Cameron and Ms. English recommended edits.

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38 ***Mr. Cameron motioned to approve the March 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes as amended. Ms.***  
39 ***English seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Belanger – aye, Grueter – aye, Martel***  
40 ***– aye, English – aye, Cameron – aye, Brown – aye and Plumer – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.***

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**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

**ADMINISTRATIVE WORKSHOP**

Mr. Sharples provided handouts to update the amendments to the zoning ordinances.

Yield Plan

Vice-Chair Brown noted he and Mr. Grueter have discussed the process of the Yield Plan at the Master Plan Oversight Committee Meetings. The Yield Plan process can be challenging and confusing. The question was asked how much due diligence should the Board require the applicant to make.

Mr. Sharples indicated a mathematical formula could be used which deducts a percentage for utilities but the challenge is to encourage more open space development which provides less infrastructure for the Town to maintain and more benefit for the environment while reducing the burden to taxpayers. Use of the formula may incentivize developers to do a conventional subdivision where they could yield more units than an open space.

Chair Plumer noted the costs of going to court which are passed on to the cost of the homes and questioned whether a set of criteria could be part of the process.

Vice-Chair Brown cited educating the public could be a starting point.

Mr. Dettore noted a lot of concerns can be addressed at a later date when the Board can see the full elevations and engineering can be done.

Ms. English noted developers know they have fringe properties and that their numbers will be whittled down. The Board is here to protect the neighbors and the environment and hear what the abutters say, so long as they are not allowed to be repetitive. Ms. Martel agreed.

Mr. Sharples reminded this was a general conversation and cautioned not to discuss any applications in particular.

Ms. Martel noted a lot of time is spent on legal arguments because the ordinances are subject to interpretation. Mr. Grueter agreed and questioned establishing stricter criteria.

Mr. Sharples agreed the language could be made clearer. The open space development regulations could be addressed next year by Warrant Article.

Mr. Cameron noted the use of the words “feasible and viable” were subjective and had to go so they are not interpreted differently.

82 Ms. English questioned how the math would work out on some of the plans the Board has reviewed and  
83 Mr. Sharples noted the Master Plan Oversight Committee did some of these kind of exercises and a lot  
84 depended on the characteristics of the lots, uplands and wetlands. If a Yield Plan approves a certain  
85 number of lots, the developer still has to come back to prove the number will work.

86

87 Public Input

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89 Neil Bleiken asked to provide input. He noted he was pro development but cares a lot about the  
90 number of homes in his neighborhood as his home is his single most investment. He noted he expects  
91 the Board to be dispassionate arbiters and felt the Board was dismissive toward abutters. Mr. Bleiken  
92 cautioned about making policies in non-public session as it is unlawful.

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94 Mr. Sharples explained the Board is not formulating policies. Ms. English added that when the Board  
95 goes into non-public session it is to consider the advice of Town Counsel. Vice-Chair Brown agreed. Mr.  
96 Cameron noted as long as he has been a member of the Board non-public session has been for focusing  
97 on advice of Town Counsel.

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99 Vice-Chair Brown noted with the exception of Mr. Cameron who is a lawyer, the Board relies upon  
100 advice of counsel and often gets multiple differing legal opinions, from the applicant, abutters and the  
101 Town's attorney. The only way the Board is allowed to discuss this is in non-public session.

102

103 Laura Knott opined the Board lacked clarity and uncertainty about the zoning ordinances and site plan  
104 regulations and that is what encourages lawyers to be brought in. Ideally there would be no  
105 subjectivity. Cost should not be a consideration. Residents understand open space is not conventional  
106 as R-1 with more density. 20 homes versus 18 is not a big deal but six homes versus 18 is. Mr. Sharples  
107 instructed the public not to discuss or appear to be discussing a particular application. Mr. Cameron  
108 agreed. Ms. Knott added the language needs to be clear and understandable and not open to  
109 loopholes.

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111 Ms. English recommended having Mr. Sharples present his discussion on Yield Plans and the differences  
112 between cluster and conventional with diagrams. Mr. Sharples noted the Town could make the  
113 language clearer and he would put illustrations in. Ms. Belanger noted the presentation could be taped  
114 and replayed for the public. Mr. Cameron cautioned about appearing to prejudge. Mr. Sharples noted  
115 the Board is not suggesting a policy but formulating a draft that would not take place until voted on by  
116 the public.

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118 Housing Advisory Committee

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120 Ms. Belanger updated the Board on the activities of the Housing Advisory Committee. They did a  
121 storyboard map with RPC with 15-16 buildings showing conversions from single-family to multi-family  
122 and the data from tax revenue. Exeter is considered to have its fair share of affordable or diverse  
123 housing, however, "Fair Share" is not defined. Tomorrow will be their third meeting and business  
124 owners have been asked to attend to voice their concerns about the inability to hire employees due to

125 the cost of housing on the seacoast. Mr. Cameron agreed this is seriously impacting Exeter. Mr.  
126 Sharples noted it is beneficial to add where infrastructure already exists.

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128 **V. OTHER BUSINESS**

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130 Master Plan Discussion

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132 Mr. Sharples summarized the Town's Master Plan was adopted in February of 2018 and there is  
133 an action agenda with 67 items in six categories: supplemental, preparation, stewardship,  
134 growth, connectivity and communication. 46 items are either complete or being worked on  
135 with 21 yet to be started.

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137 Ms. English asked if the report could be posted online. Mr. Sharples noted he will submit it to  
138 the Select Board and post it on line as well as in the Board's packets.

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140 Field Modifications

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142 Bond and/or Letter of Credit Reductions and Releases

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144 **VI. TOWN PLANNER'S ITEMS**

145 **VII. CHAIRPERSON'S ITEMS**

146 **VIII. PB REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT ON "OTHER COMMITTEE ACTIVITY"**

147 **IX. ADJOURN.**

148 *Vice-Chair Brown motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 PM. Chair Plumer seconded the*  
149 *motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting*  
150 *adjourned at 8:22 PM.*

151

152 Respectfully submitted,

153 Daniel Hoijer,

154 Recording Secretary