

1 **TOWN OF EXETER**
2 **PLANNING BOARD**
3 **NOWAK ROOM – TOWN OFFICE BUILDING**
4 **10 FRONT STREET**
5 **JANUARY 12, 2023**
6 **7:00 PM**
7 **DRAFT MINUTES**

8 **I. PRELIMINARIES:**
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10 **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT BY ROLL CALL:** Pete Cameron, Clerk, John Grueter, Jennifer
11 Martel, and Nancy Belanger Select Board Representative
12

13 **STAFF PRESENT:** Town Planner Dave Sharples
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15 Pete Cameron indicated that in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair a Chair pro-tem should be
16 elected for the meeting in accordance with the Board’s regulations.
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18 *Mr. Grueter motioned to appoint Pete Cameron as Chair pro-tem for this meeting. Ms. Belanger*
19 *seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 4-0-0.*
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21 **II. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Cameron called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, introduced the members
22 present and activated alternate David Chartrand.
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24 **III. OLD BUSINESS**
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26 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
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28 December 22, 2022 - **TABLED**
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30 *Ms. Belanger motioned to table approval of the December 22, 2022 minutes to the January 26, 2022*
31 *meeting. Mr. Chartrand seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed*
32 *5-0-0.*
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34 **IV. NEW BUSINESS: PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

35 1. Public hearing on the proposed zoning amendments for consideration on the 2023 Town Warrant.
36 *Copies of the full text of the proposed amendments are available in the Planning Office and posted on*
37 *the Town website.*
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39 2. Public hearing on the proposed amendment of Article 9.4 of the Floodplain Development Ordinance
40 by adding language to the ordinance to strengthen the Town’s resilience to increased flooding events
41 and to reduce impacts associated with rising sea levels.

42 3. The Planning Board is considering to REPLACE the existing Town of Exeter Zoning Ordinance with a
43 new Zoning Ordinance that will reduce the number of zoning districts, encourage development where
44 infrastructure exists to support it, allow flexibility to property owners to utilize their property consistent
45 with the existing use while maintaining minimum standards to protect surrounding properties, and to
46 incentivize the creation of diverse housing options. The proposal also aims to reduce ambiguities in the
47 ordinance by revising wording and adding definitions. (Please note that although the proposal is to
48 replace the existing Zoning Ordinance, the majority of the existing Zoning Ordinance
49 will remain unchanged).

50
51 Mr. Sharples reviewed the goals of amending the zoning ordinance noting that Housing Advisory
52 Committee and Master Plan Oversight Committee were involved and at some point the Board would like
53 to have the ZBA involved. Mr. Sharples noted the revisions included changes which affected multiple
54 goals of the Master Plan and as it was a large undertaking for in-house a grant was applied for and
55 received from Invest NH and signed in October 21, 2022 after which consultant Horsley Witten was
56 contracted. Mr. Sharples indicated he would like the process to continue for the 2024 warrant and have
57 the public hearing on January 26, 2023 to get input and feedback from the public and the Chair and
58 Vice-Chair who are not present tonight. Over the course of the next several months Mr. Sharples
59 indicated he would like to have the Board review small amounts of the amendments to the zoning
60 ordinance and will provide an outline. Ms. McEvoy will make it a standing agenda item.

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62 Chair Cameron opened the public hearing at 7:14 PM.

63
64 Laura Barker of 62 Beech Hill Road indicated that she liked the goal and agreed the Board needed a map
65 to get where it wanted to go and agreed they should take more time. She noted she is a business owner
66 herself and has gone from having three businesses to one because employees cannot find any place to
67 live nearby in order to work in town.

68
69 Chair Cameron closed the hearing at 7:15 PM.

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71 Mr. Chartrand echoed her concerns as a business owner himself. Mr. Sharples added that employees
72 can't even drive a long distance anymore as that ability is being priced out.

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74 Mr. Cameron agreed there was a lot of reading and while he believes the existing ordinance works, it
75 needs modernizing.

76
77 Ms. Belanger agreed and was comfortable pushing the warrant to next year to continue discussions with
78 the public. Mr. Sharples noted 20 people showed up at the forum and had great questions.

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80 Mr. Chartrand commented that Mr. Sharples had much experience as a Town Planner and agreed to
81 continue the process throughout the year since this is one of the most important changes since the
82 Master Plan in 2017-18; that process had the most public input he has seen of any process since he
83 served on the Select Board for six years. Mr. Chartrand noted the ordinance should align with the new
84 Master Plan document done in 2017-1 and deal with outside influences, housing prices and taxes out of
85 control.

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Mr. Grueter agreed and noted there were a lot of questions two weeks ago.

Ms. Martel also agreed and noted she would like more time to dive into the document, to educate the public and hear what they have to say.

Mr. Sharples noted a virtual forum may be the next step.

Ms. Belanger asked if the contract with Horsley Witten would include the additional hearings or be amended and Mr. Sharples noted it was made clear to them and to Invest NH and the contract is to finish the whole scope of the work.

Mr. Sharples noted there would be clarity and consistency and many changes are unsubstantial. There has been a lot of relief from variances so in that respect the current zoning ordinances may not be working for the type of development the town wants and where they want it, cost to build without existing infrastructure, growth and density incentives. Multiple businesses wrote letters in support due to housing needs of their employees. Mr. Chartrand added that it makes environmental sense and eases political divisiveness.

Mr. Cameron asked if there were discussions with internal staff and Mr. Sharples indicated he had a strategy for that.

Mr. Cameron opened the public hearing for the changes to the Flood Plain Ordinance and read the public hearing notice.

Mr. Sharples noted this amendment is ready for the 2023 warrant and will stand alone. There have been several studies done. He referenced the documents dated 12/22 and 12/30 with the red lined items being removed and green to be added.

Mr. Sharples reviewed 9.4.2 which adds a purpose statement telling why and what is being accomplished.

Mr. Sharples reviewed 9.4.3 definitions which were added including the advisory area he will talk more about further on.

Mr. Sharples reviewed the flood opening language on Page 3 concerning having a path for water to flow through an enclosure such as a foundation wall. Mr. Grueter asked if a screen could be used and Mr. Sharples indicated as long as it pops out with water pressure and breaks away. Louvers are often being used.

Mr. Sharples pointed out language no longer necessary since Exeter does not have a port.

Mr. Sharples reviewed federal compliance with flood regulations and the requirement that if 50% of improvements are made it must comply with market value. The amendment will allow owners to

129 choose whether to use the town's appraised value or get an appraisal. There is more specific language
130 on how to get a permit rather than just stating the homeowner needs a permit.

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132 Ms. Martel asked about the substantial structural damage language on Page 7 and Mr. Sharples noted
133 there would be exemptions in A and B from the requirements, for life safety or historic exemption.

134

135 Mr. Sharples noted new or substantially improved structures had the proper term used to obtain an
136 elevation certificate.

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138 Mr. Sharples reviewed 9.4.5 which would state that no new or expansion of a septic system be allowed
139 within the flood plain, making replacements with assurances. Septic systems in the flood plain are not a
140 good idea especially with the Administrative Order by the EPA concerning nitrogen loads in the
141 Squamscott River and downstream.

142

143 Mr. Sharples reviewed the addition from 1' to 2' above base flood elevation. This would change from 1'
144 to 2' in residential, non-residential and manufactured housing. Mr. Sharples reviewed removal of the
145 language ready for highway use. In another area amounts were removed as they are not up to the town
146 to decide. He noted an owner would pay more for insurance if they obtained a variance and did not
147 build the required freeboard height.

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149 Mr. Sharples reviewed the new section, 9.5 which would add an advisory SLR risk area and have no
150 enforcement or requirement, just to know the risk and recommend considering building at the higher
151 level.

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153 Mr. Sharples noted there would be a second public hearing on January 26, 2023.

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156 VI. OTHER BUSINESS

- 157 • Master Plan Discussion

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159 Mr. Sharples noted he was working on an analysis of the action items which would be
160 presented to the Planning Board then the Select Board to show what hasn't been
161 addressed yet.

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- 163 • Field Modifications

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- 165 • Bond and/or Letter of Credit Reductions and Release

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167 Mr. Sharples noted he had a request which needed an as-built on the five-lot
168 subdivision and then the bond was released.

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170 VII. TOWN PLANNER'S ITEMS

171 Mr. Sharples reported that he attended the Rockingham Regional Planning Commission meeting last
172 night and RPC did a presentation on housing needs. Ms. Belanger also attended. She noted HAC will
173 have the documents available and they will be posted on the website. Ms. Belanger noted an oversight
174 mechanism needs to be in place with housing incentives so that as Mr. Sharples pointed out they are not
175 sold and then rented out at market rate.

176 **VIII. CHAIRPERSON'S ITEMS**

177 **IX. PB REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT ON "OTHER COMMITTEE ACTIVITY"**

178 **X. ADJOURN.**

179 *Ms. Belanger motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM. Mr. Grueter seconded the motion. A vote*
180 *was taken all were in favor, the motion passed 5-0-0.*

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182 Respectfully submitted,

183 Daniel Hoijer,

184 Recording Secretary

185 Via Exeter TV