

MERRIMAC PLANNING BOARD

March 15, 2022

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Sandra Venner called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM

ATTENDANCE: Chair Sandy Venner, Members Thomas Abisalih, Vice Chair Karl Flannery. Absent: Member Dennis Brodie, Member Keith Pollman (previous commitment).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for 2/15/22: Motion to approve minutes with edits to Article Vote to state, Article 3- Karol Flannery in favor, Tom Abisalih- Abstain, Sandy Venner in favor 2-0-1, Article 4 Karol Flannery abstains, Tom Abisalih Abstain, Sandy Venner in favor- 1-0-2. Motion 1st Tom Abisalih, 2nd Karol Flannery, All in favor 3-0.

PUBLIC HEARING CALL TO ORDER by Chair Sandy Venner at 7:17 PM.

Public Hearing open for Zoning Bylaw to amend Article 3: BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL DISTRICTS, by eliminating sub-section 3.1.1 and Article 11: OFFICE AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT, by adding sub-section 11.4.17 Adult Use Retail Marijuana Establishments and creating a new Article 18A: ADULT USE RETAIL MARIJUANA ESTABLISHMENTS. Current article was "not allowing" adult use Retail adult use would be created to the criteria in Article 18A. Public Notice duly publicized 1 week and 2 weeks prior to the public hearing. All neighboring towns notified within required time frame. We have one modification as of 3/15/22. The Board of Selectman have asked the Article also read of the allowance of cultivation establishments. The Board opens the hearing for public general questions and comments and offering of changes. At the end this board will vote to recommend support to bring to Town Meeting. The Board of Selectman have already voted to place the article warrant on the Town Meeting agenda. A 2/3 vote is needed at Town Meeting to pass with the approval of the Massachusetts Attorney General.

Q; Member Karol Flannery: Where did the request originate from and what is the goal of this article?

A; BOS Member Chris Manni: The Board of Selectman spoke with Medical Marijuana establishment in town of which was the genesis of the request. The Board of Selectman voted 3-0 on 3/14/22 to recommend it be at Town Meeting. It focuses around the economics expected to be around 4-6 M in revenue of which 200-250K tax revenue for the town or around 5% of that.

Comment: Chief Shears spoke about the impact of public safety as being of no significance. There are no concerns of more traffic.

Citizen Bonnie Peariffian asked if there were any need for more police presence. BOS Chair Belieau said staffing of police and traffic will be monitored. Chief Shears will evaluate as it is a controlled environment. More police have been hired recently.

Citizen Meldyn Ball: Concern of lack of communication to the citizens. The website information is hard to find.

Chair Sandy Venner: Suggests Mr. Ball sign up for the communication alerts available for whatever Boards he is interested in getting information from.

Meldyn Ball: Is there a number of retail establishments we're limited to?

Commissioner Sinibaldi: It is based on population. The town of Merrimac only has one. The number of recreational Marijuana licenses is not to exceed 20% of the liquor licenses which for Merrimac works out to be one.

***Motion:** Member Tom Abisalih recommends this warrant article be supported at Town Meeting as submitted. 1st Tom Abisalih, 2nd Karol Flannery. All in favor, 3-0

***Motion to close Public Hearing at 7:40pm.** 1st Tom Abisalih, 2nd Karol Flannery, All in favor 3-0

Old Business:

Project Updates:

118 East Main Street/Merrimac Crossing: No new information. Commissioner Sinabladi stated work has started up again. There will be inspections on infrastructure as foundations are being added.

Abbey Road: Horsely Whitten has not resumed site inspections yet. Looking at April. All filings for the tripartite are complete and release from the former owner. New owner was informed of submitting 10K for new Escrow. Commissioner Sinabladi states construction of a foundation for 1 home has started. They are hoping to make more progress in a couple of weeks as the ground compaction test is needed.

1 Jana Way: No new business

OTHER OLD BUSINESS

MBTA Communities: CPTC webinar series, Tom Abisalih received an email showing a webinar for anyone interested in learning about the requirements for multi-family communities. Board to receive email and attend if interested. Commissioner Sinabaldi stated the form to submit to the state needs an official contact. The Chair should have the consulting planner help with that.

Discussion on possible Alternate Member to be added to Planning Board. Appointment would have to be authorized with a signature at the Registry of Deeds. Thought was an alternate would be readily available to come to a meeting if a Quorum was not present for administrative. Co-chair Karol Flannery stated we need to move forward- what can we do to get elected members to attend meetings so we don't have to look at an alternate. An alternate would only justify an elected member not attend.

Chair Sandy Venner reminded the board that a recall vote is only recourse. Carol Traynor suggested the alternate be on call for such things as signing warrants etc. Karol Flannery would like dedication to the board as non-attendance an no quorum holds things up for the town and its citizens. Regularly attending members should not carry the responsibility. Chair Venner asked if anyone was interested in spearheading a Recall vote. The information is available at the Town Clerks office as to how to proceed.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Department Heads Meeting:** A new Light Department commissioner has been appointed. The commissioner feels the need for more regulation for new streets and sub-division lighting. She has a number of ideas and concerns. We will try to get a meeting with her or have her come to the next meeting. Motion to invite Mary Usovicz to the next meeting: 1st Karol Flannery, 2nd Tom Abisalih, All in favor 3-0

WARRANTS:

1. Closing of Abbey Road Escrow/Groden 900.62. Motion to close, 1st Karol Flannery, 2nd Tom Abisalih, all in favor 3-0
2. Legal Ad for PH Marijuana. \$145.50. Motion to pay warrant, 1st Tom Abisalih, 2nd Karol Flannery, all in favor 3-0
3. Closing of Escrow Gosselins/118 West Main. \$4890.50. Motion to close Escrow, 1st Tom Abisalih, 2nd Karol Flannery, All in favor 3-0

NEXT MEETING: April 19, 2022 1st Tom Abisalih, 2nd Karol Flannery. All in favor 3-0

ADJOURNMENT: 9:16 PM

MERRIMAC PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 5, the Merrimac Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 7:15 PM at Merrimac Town Hall, 4 School St., to amend Articles 3: BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL DISTRICTS, by eliminating sub-section 3.1.1 and Article 11: OFFICE LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT, by adding sub-section 11.4.17 Adult Use Retail Marijuana Establishments and creating a new Article 18A: ADULT USE RETAIL MARIJUANA ESTABLISHMENTS. Full and complete copies of this proposed Zoning Amendment are available at the Offices of the Town Clerk and Planning Board during regular business hours.

Sandra Venner, Merrimac Planning Board Chair

Publish dates: 2/28/22, 3/7/22