

Aquinnah Planning Board Plan Review Committee Meeting April 25th, 2018

Members Present: Peter Temple, Chairman, Sarah Thulin, Jim Wallen, Berta Welch, Jo Ann Eccher, Jim Mahoney and Isaac Taylor

Meeting opened at 6:38pm.

First on the agenda was the review of the 4/11/18 minutes. Peter entertained a motion to approve the 4/11/18 minutes as presented and amended. Motion was moved by Jim W and seconded by Berta. **The PBPRC voted 7-0, the motion passed.**

First on the agenda, the Committee discussed the succession of the Committee Chair. The Committee agreed that the Administrative Assistant should attend classes and trainings (some held by the Planning Organization for the State) so that she could take on more responsibilities and lessen the workload of the Committee and Chair. Peter briefly discussed the tasks he takes on as the Chair including preliminary discussion with applicants, realtors, and fielding questions from local engineers. The capacity and roles of Committee members was briefly discussed. There was discussion on creating a “cheat sheet” for applicants and communication to the public about the permitting process. In addition, the idea of writing a guideline book that outlines the history of the Town and preservation was also discussed. Retrieving a list from PAL of resources (findings and protected areas) in Town since the bylaw was created was discussed. Rotation of Committee members chairing hearings was discussed as a way to divide workload amongst the Committee.

The Committee agreed that having a “training course” to review and discuss the bylaws would be beneficial for themselves and would help reduce the workload of the Chair. Peter felt that the “training course” would be beneficial in other ways as well such as identifying areas of the bylaws that should be changed or revised and discussing the future of the Town. The Committee asked to review data and figures regarding approved permits and development in the Town and for information on the economics of how zoning effects taxes. There was discussion on the future and affordability of the Town. A copy of the updated MVC buildout map was requested to review. There was discussion on creating another commercial district (Manning property area if the Town continues with the development planning there) and the concept of a Town center. Per Town Council, Peter informed everyone that the Town only has two districts: marine commercial in Menemsha/West Basin and Lobsterville. The Committee briefly discussed these commercial districts for potential future growth.

Next, the Committee discussed meeting decorum. The Committee agreed that the Chair needs to be firmer during hearings that may be more emotional. There was discussion on how to define recusal of Committee members and what classifies a disruption. The order of hearings was discussed. The Committee agreed that hearings should be done in the following order: presentation of application and project, questions and discussion between applicant and Committee (in formal),

public inquiry (formal if needed) and then Committee decisions and discussion. Peter noted that at the beginning of each meeting, a preliminary speech regarding the order of hearings should be relayed to the public to decrease tension and keep the meeting on track. The Committee agreed that they need to respect each other. There was general discussion regarding a recent letter to the Selectmen from a town resident and local builder regarding their experience with the PBPRC. The Committee agreed that the letter was out of line and portrayed the Committee in a negative light, specifically two Committee members. Sarah expressed that she was hurt by the letter and the quotes from other Committee members written in the letter. The Committee again agreed that what the letter expressed was not their feelings regarding the Committee or Sarah. There was discussion regarding how the women on the Committee had been addressed during those meetings with the author of the letter. There was further discussion on the idea of a “cheat sheet” for applicants to help them in the application process and decrease emotional hearings. The Committee agreed that the sheet would be helpful, but the process will not always be black and white given the terrain and history of the Town.

It was noted that there may be a general feeling of the public that the Committee is anti-development, but the Committee agreed that they are for responsible development and they rarely (if at all) deny applications. In addition, the Committee recognized the difficulty in interpreting the bylaws but noted that while the Committee writes the bylaws they are voted on by the Town and reflect how the Town wants to see development in Aquinnah. Again, the Committee agreed it was time to review the bylaws together and get the public's input. There was discussion on who the Committee represents when reviewing applications and it was agreed that the Committee represents the Town and the spirit of the bylaws.

After further discussion, Peter identified the following list of topics for the Committee to address: roof mounted solar panels as a right, updating Moshup Trail DCPC so that other roof and building materials can be permitted in not visible areas, revisiting zoning determinations in the cliff and coastal districts, increasing zoning determination square footage maximum, zoning administrator delegation, addressing commercial districts, removing duplication within the bylaws (specifically between section 3 and 13), adoption of the State General Law Chapter 39 Section 23D (adjudicatory hearings; attendance by municipal board, committee and commission members), height restriction along State Road, and marine commercial district (possibility of future development in West Basin). The Committee agreed to hold numerous public hearings over the summer to discuss the current bylaws and potential changes. They also agreed that generating a detailed survey to be sent out to both seasonal and year-round residents will help the Committee get a better sense of what the Town wishes to see. The Committee scheduled the next meeting for May 17th at 6:30pm and an overflow meeting for May 30th at 6:30pm to review and discuss the zoning bylaws. The Committee scheduled their hearing meeting for June 12th at 6:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:38pm.

Respectfully submitted, Sophia Welch, Board Administrative Assistant