

**TOWN OF SHEFFIELD  
PLANNING BOARD  
MAY 10, 2023  
TOWN HALL FIRST FLOOR MEETING ROOM  
7:00 PM  
MEETING MINUTES**

Board Members Present: Chairman George Oleen  
Robbie Cooper  
Kenneth Smith  
Sari Hoy  
Brittany Ebeling

Others Present: Josh Risen - Board Administrator  
Catherine Miller – Zoning Board of Appeals Member  
Attorney Gail E. Garrett  
Members of the Public

Chairman Oleen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Continuation of Public Hearing on Proposed Tiny Homes Bylaw.**

Chairman Oleen stated that the more time he spends researching tiny homes the more it seems to him that it is just a fancy name for a mobile trailer. B. Ebeling stated that she had spoken with a Board of Health member and was told that there can be circumstances where the use of alternative solutions for disposing of grey water is permitted. A discussion regarding alternative solutions to the grey water requirements ensued. R. Cooper stated that the septic regulations should be up to the Board of Health.

R. Cooper discussed the financing of tiny homes and the hurdle that the lack of financing causes. R. Cooper informed the Board that there are no traditional financing options available to tiny home buyers, sometimes the company selling them will provide financing.

Chairman Oleen stated that he thought the issue could be best summed up as whether they will be allowed on wheels or traditional foundations. A discussion about the differences between a trailer home and a tiny home ensued. S. Hoy stated that we need parameters to use in deciding what should be allowed. R. Cooper responded by informing the Board that he had been in touch with Great Barrington and that they established an Accessory Dwelling Unit Bylaw (ADU) with the following criteria- a tiny home is not required to be attached to the primary dwelling unit; is not required to be the primary residence of the owner; they must have skirting that hides any wheels from sight; and they must have water and septic systems as required by Title V.

S. Butler expressed her concern about what would happen if the Tiny Homes Bylaw passed in its current form. She felt that a person who owned an Airstream camper should be able to rent it out as an ADU just as though it were a tiny home.

T. Ingersoll stated that he wanted to be sure that the discussion included the practicalities that occupants of mobile homes have to deal with every day. He stated that he has been living in a mobile home with his family for approximately a year and a half waiting for an engineered septic system to be installed. He also stated that there are many obstacles ranging from labor shortages to supply interruptions that prevent the efficient construction of new homes.

T. Ingersoll stated that the housing situation has become a pervasive hardship and discussed how getting the correct wording in the definitions of the bylaw is pivotal. He further stated that he employs about 12 people and that at least 9 of them have to drive 45 minutes to work because they cannot find affordable housing in Sheffield. Chairman Oleen explained that this is the basis for the Board's decision to create the bylaw.

L. Wienchicki suggested that the Board impose an occupancy limit on the tiny homes so that overcrowding doesn't become a problem.

C. Miller stated that the Board should adjust their concept of tiny homes as a solution to the lack of affordable housing, based on her understanding of the Tiny Homes Bylaw it would not operate to provide any substantive reduction in housing costs.

A discussion on short term rentals ensued in which R. Cooper stated he thought that short term rentals should be prohibited. C. Miller commented that the Board should draft something that is workable to meet the goals of providing more affordable housing. T. Ingersoll asked if there were any reasons not to pass the Tiny Homes Bylaws. B. Ebeling responded that the reason people are against tiny homes is due to classism. A discussion on enforcement of the Tiny Homes Bylaw ensued.

D. Wienchicki stated that one of the reasons people want to live here is because of the restrictive zoning bylaws that preserve the look and feel of a small town and stated that if the rules change to allow for ugly tiny homes, then it is possible that people will no longer want to live here.

C. Miller stated that the Board should limit where tiny homes can be located, she wouldn't want to see tiny homes on Main Street. K. Smith responded that tiny homes are allowed currently, as the bylaws do not determine the size of a home. C. Miller suggested that one alternative to the tiny homes would be cluster homes. She suggested that a group of home owners could pool their resources to share the costs of a septic system. S. Hoy stated that this discussion brings the topic back to the multi-family dwelling matter.

K. Smith proposed that the Tiny Homes public hearing should be closed as it makes more sense to focus on amending the bylaw to address ADUs. Chairman Oleen summarized that the Board is changing direction away from tiny homes in favor of updating the bylaw for ADUs. *R. Cooper made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by K. Smith. The motion passed unanimously.* The Tiny Homes Public Hearing was closed at 7:59 PM.

#### **Discussion/Possible Action Regarding Proposed Multi-Family Bylaw.**

The Board decided not address this matter until C.J. Hoss is present for the discussion.

#### **Discussion/ possible action regarding proposed Dark Sky Bylaw.**

K. Smith updated the Board regarding the changes he made to the Dark Sky Bylaw incorporating the suggestions received from Town Counsel, who suggested that the bylaw be passed as a general bylaw not a zoning bylaw.

#### **Discussion/Possible Action Regarding Access Road - Hewins St.**

Attorney G. Garrett representing the Aragis stated that they have enjoyed the use of an access road on the right of way on of Goodchild's property. Attorney G. Garrett is requesting that the Planning Board direct the Zoning Enforcement Officer to issue an order requiring that the Goodchilds return the access road to its previous size or alternatively build it to be in compliance with zoning regulations.

Attorney G. Garrett stated that the Curb Cut application was never approved and was a misrepresentation of what work was performed. Allegedly the access road was reduced instead of enlarged. Attorney G. Garrett stated that a new right of way should be at least 30 feet wide, have a shoulder, and not have any double curves. Essentially, she argued that the access road should be constructed to accommodate large trucks.

Attorney G. Garrett stated that the Enforcement Officer suggested she bring this matter to the Planning Board before he would make the determination. Chairman Oleen responded that because this was a Curb Cut matter he thought it was a matter for the Select Board. Attorney G. Garrett argued that because the access road services more than two lots it falls under the jurisdiction of the Zoning Bylaws and therefore is a matter for the Planning Board.

*K. Smith made a motion asking that G. Oleen write a letter to the Enforcement Officer and to the Select Board directing the Enforcement Officer to enforce the Zoning Bylaws with respect to this matter, seconded by R. Cooper. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **Approval of Minutes from 4.26.23.**

The Board reviewed the minutes for April 26, 2023. K. Smith identified an error that required switching the term "General Bylaw" with "Zoning Bylaw." *K. Smith made a motion to accept the April 26, 2023 minutes as amended, seconded by R. Cooper. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **Board Member Items.**

S. Hoy asked about how to request funding to upgrade the Information Technology (IT) that is available to the Board and stated that the reason for no longer having hybrid meetings was because the internet connection at Town Hall was too weak. As such she is interested in upgrading the internet and any other necessary equipment to allow for hybrid meetings. K. Smith suggested that S. Hoy request funding for this from the Select Board.

A Discussion regarding Zoning Bylaw and Accessory Dwelling Units ensued. The Board requested that this matter be put onto the Agenda for the next Planning Board meeting.

Chairman Oleen read a memo to the Board from Town Administrator R. LaBombard, which requested that the Board consider a bylaw amendment regarding mobile food trucks/carts. The Board decided to put this matter on the agenda for May 24, 2023.

#### **Review Mail.**

Chairman Oleen presented the mail to the board

*K. Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by R. Cooper. The motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:



Josh Riser  
Board Administrator

The following documents were reviewed at this meeting:

- Draft meeting minutes for 4/26/23.
- Draft Tiny Home Bylaw
- Map and Photographs of Access Road - Hewins St.
- Memo from Town Administrator

## Sheffield Planning Board

Date: 5.10.23

PLEASE PRINT: Your Name

Street, Town

SUSAN BURR

Stumparts - Sheffield

GAIL GARRETT

MT WASH

TOM INGERSOLL

VEELEY RD, SHEFF

Catherine Miller

Clayton Rd

Lynda Wiechnicki

Veelen Rd

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