

## Board of Zoning Appeals

March 7, 2019

Meeting Minutes – Administrative Meeting to Discuss BZA Application Process and March 6 Meeting (Hotel application process)

The meeting was called to order at 6:50 pm. In attendance were Board of Zoning Appeals members: Mike Buscher (Chairman), Laura Clark, Chris Craig, Linda Rago, and David Simmons (Secretary); Kevin Hamilton (OCO).

Scheduled next hearing for Pecheukonis property at 7pm on March 21. Reminder was given for Velez/May property hearing at 5pm on March 19.

BZA members reviewed application tracking form and process from application receipt to BZA decision. Checklist was marked with some recommended changes. One change was including due dates for each step. Mike B. was to revise the checklist and present to BZA for review at the next meeting.

BZA members discussed the elements of a complete application. Velez/May application (i.e., complete set of drawings) with list and defense of each variance along with the Historic Landmarks Commission report would be considered a good example.

Ms. Clark expressed concern about our recordkeeping and the risk of loss (e.g., use of cloud for storage of information, streamlined process). She suggested enlisting professional help with respect to this issue who would provide a plan for recordkeeping processes and also suggested we ask the Town Council to place this in the budget. Mr. Craig recommended an electronic summary of applications with various fields that can be referenced (lot/block, name of owner, current address) instead of physically changing the current filing system.

Kevin Hamilton left meeting at 7:20 pm.

Mr. Buscher suggested we engage a summer intern to help organize Town files. Other members suggested a professional set up an organization plan and the intern would implement the plan (i.e., put files in the proper order). Mr. Simmons was to talk with Kevin Carden (Town Recorder) to discuss current recordkeeping policies and our suggestions/ideas.

Members discussed the March 6 meeting with the Mayor and Steven Ball. Ms. Rago would like the BZA to have an attorney present since SWaN had an attorney present at that meeting. Ms. Clark indicated concern that the applicant is on defensive and is aggressively questioning town processes. She emphasized that BZA members must remain impartial in the process. BZA members disagreed with the process laid out by Mr. Ball (where he works with experts and applicant before the BZA gets involved). Ms. Rago felt Mr. Ball was attempting to streamline the application review process. BZA members agreed to start establishing a list of the experts starting with Mr. Ball's list followed by a request for funding from Town Council. Subsequent meetings will address the expert list and specifics of the process.

Ms. Rago asked if Mr. Ball is a Proper Authority appointed by the Town Council (as per the ordinance) and also indicated that, under Town ordinances, the BZA has authority to adopt rules and regulations for the process by which we review applications. BZA members emphasized the need for the scopes of work being used by Mr. Ball for the experts solicitations. Ms. Rago indicated the National Historic Trust expertise is not needed since we will be using the State Historic Preservation Office. Ms. Clark recommended that we have a final document once we select experts so that the public can be informed about our selection process.

Mr. Craig indicated he would like us to request funding to speak with a zoning attorney (Mark Sadd). He wanted to learn about the mechanics/timing of the fee (e.g., when BZA realizes more expertise is needed during a review, how will that expert be hired). BZA members began considering the overall review process, but will review the scopes of work prior to the next meeting. The role of Mr. Ball on behalf of the BZA was discussed with respect to the application review process.

Mr. Buscher indicated that four (4) candidates for alternate to the BZA are being considered at the next Town Council meeting. Ms. Rago wanted to know when each of our terms expire. Ms. Clark indicated her move out of town is impending and discussed the possibility of stepping down early to allow a new member to be ready for a hotel application.

The next administrative meeting was set for March 19, 2019 after the Velez/May property hearing. BZA members discussed inviting Mark Sadd to that meeting, but decided not to include him until all issues have been defined.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.