

Town of Acton, Maine Planning Board Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Date: June 6, 2019 (approved 6/20/19)

Members Present: Gavin Maloney
Leslie Berlan
Donovan Lajoie, Executive Secretary (Alternate)
Dennis Long (Alternate)

Members Absent: Tom Cashin, Vice Chair (Excused)
Joyce Bakshi, Chair (Excused)
Yoli Gallagher (Excused)

Also present: Ken Paul, CEO; Brenda Charland, Land Use Secretary; Virginia DeBoer, Video Recorder; Jacqueline Antone; Lynn Morin; Mary D Letourneau; Erin T. Bartlett; Vicki Ridlon; Richard Nass; Joan Nass; Anne Walsh; David Butler; Beth Whitman Archer; C. J. Gardner; Greg Martin; Darlene Ham; Nicholas Ham; Linda Whitman; Christopher Whitman; Bridgette Whitman; Jon Bowtell; Kerrie Bowtell; Molly E. Hale; Jolene Koslowski, Roger Roy, Steve Klough, Elise Miller

The CEO stated that both the Chairman and Vice Chairman were absent for the Public Hearing. The Secretary called for a member to make a motion to serve as a temporary Chair for the Public Hearing. Gavin Maloney motioned for himself to act as the Chairman for the Public Hearing. Leslie Berlan seconded; motion passed

Public Hearings:

- **Whitman, 3000 Milton Mills Road, Map 247, Lot 026; Conditional Use Permit (Daycare):** Bridgette Whitman introduced herself and talked about her background in childcare and early childhood education. She stated that when she was thinking of getting back into early childhood education, she noticed a need in town for childcare and that is why she decided to open an in-home daycare at her residence on Milton Mills Road. She thanked everyone who came to the Public Hearing to support her.

The Chair opened up the Public Hearing for questions and comments.

Jon Bowtell stated that he is a friend of the Whitmans and that he is also a business minded person attending to support local business. He explained that there is definitely a need for childcare in the town of Acton and he couldn't think of a better person to provide this service than Bridgette Whitman.

Roger Roy submitted a picture and measurements of the driveway for Planning Board members to view. He stated that he designed that driveway to allow vehicles to turn around and drive in and out safely.

Beth Archer stated she has been driving in and out of the driveway at 3000 Milton Mills Road for over 30 years and has never had a problem with it. Ms. Archer also spoke about how great Bridgette is with children.

Steve Klough stated that he is a neighbor of the Whitman's on Milton Mills and that if Bridgette takes as good care of other people's children as she does her own, he definitely believes her business will be successful. Mr. Klough stated his concern is safety and the jeopardy of liability for the operation because his own house has issues that could be unsafe for children such as the wall that runs along his driveway as well as the driveway. Mr. Klough shared a story of a girl who hit an older couple pulling out of French Street because she was texting while driving and came around that dangerous curve and wasn't paying attention. He also stated there was another accident on that same curve where he had someone hit the tree in his yard. Mr. Klough stated again, his concern was mostly for safety, he also asked that there be some kind of fencing to keep the children from wandering off.

Richard Nass stated he lives on Milton Mills Rd. and has lived there for 45 years. He is supportive of Ms. Whitman opening a childcare facility but has concern regarding the speed of vehicles on Milton Mills Rd. He said the speed limit is about 25 mph through that area, the signs are dilapidated and covered in tree branches. Because of this, visibility is marginal. Mr. Nass stated he is hoping, in this process, they correct these issues to make the area safer.

Molly Hale expressed support for Bridgette Whitman and the proposed childcare facility. She is a parent of one child, both her and her husband work out of town and without Bridgette they wouldn't have anyone to watch their child before and after school. She stated that she feels like her child is safe at the Whitman's and has backed in and out of her driveway several times and never had a problem.

Jacqueline Anton said both she and her husband work full time. When they first moved to Acton, they didn't know anyone and Barnyard Daycare was full, so one of the teachers at the school provided Bridgette's phone number. Ms. Anton stated her children have been going to Bridgette's facility and love it. She said they come home excited about the crafts and activities and she is so happy they can go there. She said the community needs Bridgette to be able to move forward with her business.

Jolene Kozlowski read a statement about how she knows Bridgette and how great a person she is. Her daughter goes to Bridgette for before and after care and loves it. She said having this daycare is important for people in this small town.

CJ Gardener stated her children go to Barnyard for childcare but she knows that it's very hard to get into. It would be great for Acton to have another childcare provider. She said at one time, the Town of Acton had three child care facilities so she believes the town can support this type of business. She stated thousands of dollars are lost to other towns due to lack of childcare in Acton.

Vicki Ridlon is an abutter; she stated she loves having the Whitmans as neighbors. She loves the sound of the children playing and is supportive of this childcare facility.

Erin Bartlett is a Milton Mills Road resident; she explained that Bridgette is passionate about childcare and she really hopes the process will be easy for her to open this facility.

Elise Miller stated she is currently a Selectman and also a friend of Bridgette Whitman. She explained that she has worked in a home day care in Acton in the past that was located on route 109 and that the road was busy at that location as well. Ms. Miller said that in her experience, the children do not always arrive and leave at the same time; it's staggered so she doesn't believe there will be a huge pile up of cars with children running around in the driveway. She added at one point she ran a preschool from her home, also with a dangerous driveway, and there was never an issue with pulling in and out of the driveway.

The Interim Chair then closed the public comments section of the Public Hearing, he stated this will be discussed further at the meeting of June 20, 2019.

Bridgette Whitman thanked the attendees for coming and all the kind words.

- **Darlene Ham, Blueberry Hill Farm, Blueberry Hill Farm Road, Map 260, Lot 014; Conditional Use Modification:** Nicholas Ham explained that Blueberry Hill Farm is looking to modify the conditions of their current Conditional Use to include hosting events inside the existing barn located at the property.

The Chair invited the public to speak.

Ann Walsh is a Blueberry Hill Farm Road resident. She said that the Hams are great people and the business is well managed. She believes this modification is a great idea. Hearing no further questions nor comments, the Chair closed the hearing to public discussion. He added there will be more discussion regarding Blueberry Hill at the June 20, 2019 meeting.

The Interim Chair closed the Public Hearing portion of the meeting and convened the regular meeting at 7:36 p.m. Mr. Maloney stated that because the Chair and Vice Chair were unable to attend the meeting, discussion of the Whitman application and the Ham modification would be tabled to the next meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.