

TOWN OF BROWNVILLE

JOINT MEETING OF THE PLANNING BOARD & BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS MINUTES

Monday, November 25, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
American Legion Post #92 ~ 67 Railroad Ave. Brownville

1. Byron Weymouth opened the meeting at 6:00pm beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Planning Board Members Present: Felix Blinn, Chairman; Michael Washburn; Lynn Gerrish & Ronald Gerrish

Selectboard Members Present: Byron Weymouth, Chairman; Kevin Emery; James Hartin; Shelly Ekholm and Gary Chapman

Others Present: Shawn Mitchell, Code Enforcement Officer; Felice Lyford, Town Manager; Residents: Charlie & Linda Scrofano.

2. Discuss proposing and drafting of several ordinances to include land use and property maintenance regulations. The meeting started with introductions of all who were present and was then turned over to Shawn as he asked for the two Boards to convene. Shawn started by giving a little history on how we got to this point. In recent months, the Town has been fielding a great deal of complaints and citizen concerns related to land use and condition of properties and buildings. We have been addressing as many of those concerns as possible with the standards and regulations that are in place, mainly state statutes related to dangerous buildings/junkyards, plumbing and wastewater disposal, but we are finding it isn't enough to enforce the problems that we are seeing.

As a town, we require building/demo permits, but do not have any type of property maintenance ordinances/regulations. We are seeing an increase in campers being lived in year-round. Their construction is not fit for use as permanent living due to lack of proper egress, electrical/plumbing standards, heat and overall durability. This is a major concern for life safety and sanitation. Licensed campgrounds are inspected and regulated through DHHS; therefore, they do not fall under this category.

Currently, we do not have any ordinances to regulate folks moving into areas or on roads that are barely accessible for emergency services let alone basic infrastructure. Since the pandemic, we have seen an uptick in people making year-round homes in areas that have typically been seasonal access, without being aware of the fact the roads are privately maintained by the landowners on them and generally difficult or impossible for emergency services to access them. It was suggested we have some sort of acknowledgment signed by the owners, possibly at the time of a building permit application, to increase awareness. We have brainstormed the idea and will investigate it a bit further.

Another common concern is the increase in farm animals everywhere, including in town on very small lots very close to neighbors. Due to the food sovereignty law, it is more difficult to create ordinances to regulate such things.

At this point, we need to know if the Planning Board and Selectboard support the drafting of ordinances to address these concerns. Currently, our only Land Use Ordinances are Shoreland Zoning and Wellhead Protection Zoning.

Felix polled the Planning Board, and they are very much in favor of moving forward with proposing ordinances to support life safety, health and quality of life for residents, but not too restrictive (i.e. grass must be kept at a certain length etc). The Selectboard is also in favor as they have been hearing the concerns at their monthly meetings.

Shawn and Felice will work together to come up with some conceptual draft ordinances to present and discuss with both Boards. It was discussed and suggested to have the ordinances brought to a vote by the people all at once.

3. Next Meeting – To be determined, but consensus was for it to be held after the holidays.
4. Adjourned at 7:00p.m.

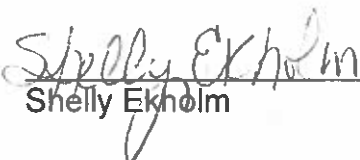
Respectfully submitted,

Felice M. Lyford

Selectboard:


Byron Weymouth, Chairman

Kevin Emery


Shelly Ekholm

James Hartin


Gary Chapman

Planning Board:

Felix Blinn, Chairman

Michael Washburn

Lynn Gerrish

Ronald Gerrish

(vacant)