

**TOWN OF WEBSTER
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES JUNE 18, 2020
(Due to COVID-19 Pandemic meeting held via ZOOM)**

At **6:40 pm** Chairperson Rauth convened the regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Board and took attendance. Members present were Paul King, Craig Fournier, David Hemenway (Ex-officio Select Board member) and Lynmarie Lehmann.

Public in attendance was Mr. Cory Keeffe, Consulting Utility Arborist, Contractor to Eversource Energy.

6:42 pm Chairperson Rauth opened *Public Hearing PB Case No. 20-02* per RSA 231:58 *Effect of Designation as Scenic Roads* regarding Eversource requesting permission from the Planning Board to remove trees and brush on two scenic roads: Bashan Hollow and Gerrish. Chairperson Rauth introduced Mr. Cory Keeffe to make his presentation on behalf of Eversource Energy. Mr. Keeffe stated he would be managing the vegetative line clearance operation happening in Webster this year. He explained the specifications call for the removal of brush and limbs 4 inches in diameter and less; 8 feet to the left and right of the wires, 10 feet above and 10 feet below. He stated the specifications were part of their scheduled maintenance trimming program that they do on a 4 to 5 year cycle. He added that the purpose of the program was to provide safe distribution of power to improve reliability to their customers. Mr. Keeffe informed the Board that in addition to the trimming on Webster's scenic roads, he asked for the town's permission to remove some larger trees and limbs that have defects of rot, decay, dead and dying that pose a high risk for utility wires. He stated those trees are marked with blue and white checkered ribbons. He stated that Eversource has contracted with ASPLUNDH Tree Expert Company to do the actual trimming, etc. Eversource requires the contractors to contact each landowner where the trees are to be trimmed prior to any work done on their property. He stated that typically individual concerns are addressed at that time. In closing, Mr. Keeffe stated that all brush and limbs on the roadside will be cut and chipped and dispersed into the woods. Mr. Keeffe asked if there were any questions. Member King asked when the last time this was done. Mr. Keeffe responded, 2016. Select Board Member Hemenway asked in the event that there are some trees that appear that they should also be included but are not marked, who would be the best contact for that. Mr. Keeffe stated he would be the one to contact. Chairperson Rauth asked would the landowner's permission be sought to take down trees on their land prior to the actual cutting? Mr. Keeffe stated that in the cases of trimming a card is sent to the property owner, but if they are taking out a larger tree, they will actually call the customer. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, they do not knock on doors. If they do not make contact with the customer, he said they will not take down the tree. Chairperson Rauth inquired about the timeframe for this to take place. Mr. Keeffe stated the best estimate would be mid to end of July to do the trimming.

At this time, Chairperson Rauth asked the Board if there were any more questions or comments. There were none and there were no call-ins from the public to the ZOOM meeting.

6:50 pm Chairperson Rauth closed the public hearing to testimony and opened it up to the Board for discussion. There was no discussion. Member Lehmann made a motion to accept the plan as proposed in accordance with the statute; seconded by Member Fournier and approved unanimously. Roll Call: Chairperson Rauth – yes; Member King – yes; Select Board Member Hemenway – yes; Member Lehmann- yes and Member Fournier – yes.

The next order of business was review of the draft minutes from May 21, 2020. Member Fournier made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as transcribed; seconded by Member Lehmann and approved unanimously. Roll Call: Chairperson Rauth – yes; Member King – yes; Select Board Member Hemenway – yes; Member Lehmann – yes and Member Fournier – yes.

Chairperson Rauth informed the Board that although Governor Sununu has transitioned from the “Stay At Home Order” to “Safer At Home”, there have been no changes made to the Emergency Order that allows towns to hold remote meetings or the Emergency Order that has relaxed statutory deadlines. She stated that NHMA has stated these orders will remain in

effect for the duration of the State of Emergency. Boards may still meet remotely and even if the Board chooses to meet in-person, NHMA suggests continuing to provide remote access options to the public, abiding by social distancing guidelines. Select Board Member Hemenway added that the Select Board had originally scheduled a discussion for that but some of the people were unable to make it. He stated the Select Board hopes to discuss how and when they might open up, but that has not happened as of yet.

Chairperson Rauth informed the Board that Leslie Palmer, Town Administrator, had resigned. Chairperson Rauth said the Board will miss her; she did a really good job keeping a lot of balls in the air and coordinating a lot of things for the Select Board and other Boards. Select Board Member Hemenway stated she has been amazing even though he had only been part of the Select Board for a short amount of time. He said she has been amazing to work with and she will continue to help out as much as possible. He stated the Select Board had many inquiries and several interviews.

The next order of business was an update on the proposed *Wetlands and Surface Water Protection Ordinance*. Chairperson Rauth stated the three person subcommittee was still working on this and plans to have a draft done by the end of the month. She stated she wanted to get it to the Planning Board as soon as possible but no later than a week before the next meeting. She stated there were some legal issues they were trying to work through. They will be reaching out to the NHMA Legal Services for some guidance. The Planning Board itself would work on potential conflicts of the ordinance with the Zoning Ordinance. A brief discussion ensued regarding buffer zones, setbacks, accessory structures, etc. Chairperson Rauth stated that the draft would be brought to a subcommittee of the Planning Board. She recollected that everyone on the Planning Board wanted to be a part of that. The entire Board agreed to be involved, therefore review will be done at the next Planning Board meeting on July 16, 2020.

At this time, Select Board Member Hemenway inquired about the status of a letter that was supposed to have been sent regarding a more permanent barrier for a driveway on Pleasant Street. Mrs. Larson informed the Board a letter had been sent and the daughter of the property owner responded via telephone told her they were going to put up a fence.

Select Board Member Hemenway then inquired about discussions regarding driveways that had been tabled a couple of times, specifically about the bends and turns in the long driveways. Member Lehmann stated that some towns do not allow driveways that are in excess of 300 feet without complying with Department of Transportation regulations on building, essentially a road. After a brief discussion, Member Lehmann stated that the prohibition would be to limit the length to 300 feet but in the event that someone wants something longer than 300 feet, the Planning Board needs to make sure you comply with some other more stringent regulation or more onerous on the property owner because from a safety standpoint from our perspective in the Town of Webster, we believe 300 feet is sufficient and the most safe. Chairperson Rauth suggested the Board review the Driveway Regulations. Select Board Member Hemenway stated in addition to updating the width and the length of the passing area to accommodate longer and wider vehicles, they will not be able to make the same type turns so the Board should also include something for turn radius. Chairperson Rauth asked Select Board Member Hemenway if he would be willing to find an example of that and then present it to the Board. He agreed to do so. A brief discussion followed. Member Lehmann stated she was having a hard time conceptualizing the discussion. The Board agreed that without seeing a drawing or model of what was being discussed, they were all having a difficult time. Select Board Member Hemenway stated he would try to find some examples and prepare graphical representations to present at the July 16, 2020 Planning Board meeting. By consensus, the Board was in total agreement.

7:30 pm meeting adjourned.

These minutes were approved as written at the virtual ZOOM Planning Board meeting of July 16, 2020.

Respectfully,

Susan Rauth, Chairperson