



Plympton Bylaw Review Committee

Minutes for September 17th, 2020

6:30 PM, Zoom Call

The meeting, having been duly posted with an agenda, was opened by Chair, Alan Wheelock at 6:30 PM.

Committee Members Present, via Zoom: Ted Taranto, Ken Thompson, Alan Wheelock, Dominique Sampson, Kim Russo, Dave Alberti, Ann Sobolewski, Jean Cohen

Regrets: Amy Cronin

Guests: Mark Russo, Jen McDonald, Mike Lemieux

- 1. Minutes Approval.** The minutes for September 3rd, 2020 submitted by Alan Wheelock were unanimously approved.
- 2. Zoning Enforcement – Mark Russo, representing the Plympton Board of Selectmen(BOS), joined the meeting to discuss Enforcement.** Alan opened this portion of the meeting by recapping the BLRC's recent discussions and concerns in regard to the current state of zoning regulation enforcement in the Town of Plympton. Alan reiterated that the consensus of the BLRC was that the extensive work they have invested in updating and modernizing the town's by-laws for the last three and a half years do not appear to have had any measurable impact on the reality of zoning enforcement in the field. He also stated that members of the BLRC were not intending to criticize the work on zoning enforcement being currently performed by Plympton's Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO). He also noted that it was not the intent of the BLRC to in any way undermine the authority of the ZEO by asking that all three parties – the ZEO, the BOS, and the BLRC get together on one call to discuss zoning enforcement issues and opportunities. Instead, the goal of the BLRC in proposing such a call, was to simply facilitate communication between the three parties.

Mark told the BLRC that they should be reassured that their concerns regarding enforcement had been heard by the BOS – who, by law, are responsible for overseeing zoning enforcement efforts and activities. He also recapped the chronology of the BOS's efforts to respond to members of the BLRC on this issue. Specifically, he cited:

- Christine Joy, representing the BOS, had met with the BLRC in February and listened to the concerns expressed by various members of the committee.
- Following the February meeting, the BOS had met with Tom Millias, ZEO, and thoroughly discussed the enforcement issue.

- At that meeting, Tom expressed the opinion that the Town should make a distinction between enforcement activities that relate to new projects in Plympton versus long term, unresolved instances of clear cut zoning violations. Tom felt that the Town has a good handle on current zoning enforcement issues.
- Mark noted that the BOS felt that the ZEOs suggested approach was a sound and balanced approach.
- Mark stated that in July, he and the Plympton Town Administrator had met with Alan Wheelock, Chairman of the BLRC, to update him on the actions being taken by the BOS and ZEO in regard to enforcement. Mark stated that Alan had expressed his opinion at that meeting that the actions being taken by BOS were directionally correct and helpful, and that the action items committed to by the BOS during that discussion included:
 - The BOS would meet with the ZEO for updates on a consistent quarterly basis going forward.
 - The ZEO agreed to step up enforcement activities pertaining to the long term, festering violations in Plympton.
 - The BOS had agreed to update the BLRC as to their progress on these issues once a quarter.

Mark also reminded members of the Committee that the ZEO does not report to the BLRC, and that he thought that it had not been a good idea to propose a meeting of all three groups together. He also committed to the BLRC that the BOS will consistently follow the updated **Enforcement** section of Plympton's Zoning By-law, **Section 2.1.1**, updated by the BLRC and passed overwhelmingly by Town Meeting in May of 2017. He noted that the law clearly requires the ZEO to respond to all complaints alleging zoning violations – in writing – within 14 days of receiving a complaint. He felt that if the BOS consistently requires that the ZEO follow Section 2.1.1, then BLRC members should feel assured that their concerns have been addressed.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of how the BLRC can assist both the BOS and the ZEO by producing several educational tools that will make the process of enforcement easier and more transparent to the general public. Attendee Mike Lemieux, co-owner of Full Circle Homes, which has completed many residential restoration projects in town, noted that his company has found it to be confusing working with the building department, and that he thought that prescribed workflows and educational materials would be very helpful.

Next Meeting: The next scheduled meetings of the Committee will be Thursday, October 1st, and Thursday, October 15th. Meetings are typically held every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by Alan Wheelock at 8:00 pm. These minutes are respectfully submitted by Alan Wheelock.