

Planning Board Minutes

Date: 2017

Time: 7:34

Present:

X	J. Hargraves	X	A. Pease
X	J. Lindquist	X	W. Stacy
	A. Leonard	X	T. Foster (ad hoc)

Also attending: Mark Archambault, Land Use Agent, and members of the public

Documents:

Minutes:

Jeanie was welcomed back into the PB fold with altogether too little fuss made of her. I mean, really. Way too little. But never mind. It's OK. It was just brain surgery.

AP moved to approve the minutes of Sept 13. JH 2nd. Approved with one abstention.

Alan noted that the CTPC is holding some PB training workshops in Leominster this fall. The PB can cover the cost of attending a workshop, and Tricia was encouraged to look over the options. Well, everybody was encouraged to look over the options, but probably Tricia is the only one who will do so...

The Board moved upstairs to the Selectmen's room so the public forum could be televised.

7:45 The Board opened the **public forum** to discuss the permitting of marijuana facilities in Ashby. Approximately 9 citizens and one reporter were in attendance, plus the camera. Alan Pease read written comment into the record from Roberta Flashman. Discussion proceeded with questions, responses, and opinions.

Can we restrict the type of facility to medical only? Can we restrict the number of facilities permitted? What about taxes? The Town can collect up to 3% of gross revenues.

What size facility and what resources will it use? A medium size new facility looks like a warehouse in the 10,000 sq. ft. range. Facility must supply its own water, most likely through digging wells. 3 – Phase power is necessary to run the heating and ventilation systems. No one is sure if there is much noise associated with a facility.

Is it economically viable for a small operation to function? A range of opinions on this question, but basically no knows that either.

Fact: The growing of marijuana is considered by the laws of the Commonwealth a commercial or industrial use, not an agricultural use. The Board discussed the possibility of permitting a marijuana facility in our Industrial zone, or in the Commercial zone closest to Fitchburg. Fitchburg already has three medical marijuana facilities. Opinion: Make the zone bigger to make siting a facility in Ashby more attractive.

What about selling? There is no requirement that selling (retail use) must be on the same site as the growing. Can other products be sold alongside recreational marijuana? The State is still creating rules, but it is up to the Towns to decide where it can be sold. There was a diversion at this point in the discussion relating to the various possibilities of sales, but it is not worth recording in the minutes. The Executive Secretary did feel compelled to remind the group that this was a public meeting that was, in fact, being recorded, and order was restored.

Several more concerns were brought up. What about fertilizers and pesticides in the growing process and how are they to be disposed of? What sort of fire standards ought to be in the bylaw?

Alan clarified that a municipal agreement would be negotiated between the Town and the facility, and that the town can apply a 3.75% sales tax on retail sales.

Jim suggested that we get an advisor to help us figure out the ramifications of various decisions before we bring a bylaw to Town Meeting.

The next public forum is tentatively scheduled for January 17, 2018. Citizens are encouraged to come to the Board meetings and give us input.

Adjourn: 8:45 ish

Submitted by Jeanie Lindquist, Executive Secretary