

**Walpole Zoning Board of Adjustment Minutes**  
**February 21, 2024**  
**Town Hall**  
**7pm**

**Roll Call:** Board members Chair Dave Edkins, Clerk Tom Murray, Pauline Barnes and Tom Winmill. Alternates: Shane O’Keefe and Myra Mansouri. Absent: Alternates Don Sellarole and Carolyn Vose.

**Call to Order:** Mr. Edkins called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. Mr. Edkins asked Mr. O’Keefe to serve as the fifth board member. He agreed.

**Minutes:** Mr. O’Keefe made one clarification. Regarding ski areas near where he works in Londonderry, VT, he changed Okemo to Stratton. Ms. Barnes, on page 2, second paragraph, added an “s” to the word requirement. Mr. O’Keefe moved the motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Ms. Barnes seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**New Business:**

Mr. Edkins said he spoke with Walpole Planning Board chair, Jeff Miller, and Mr. Miller invited the Zoning Board to a workshop meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month, Tuesday, February 27, in the conference room in the basement of the Town Hall to discuss updating/recodifying the Walpole Zoning Ordinances. He sent an email to the board about the meeting shortly after talking to Mr. Miller. Ms. Barnes said she thought Mr. Edkins was going to talk with him about hiring a consultant to work with the Zoning Board on the language of some of the zoning ordinances. Carol Ogilvie’s name was mentioned at the January meeting as a consultant that had recently worked with the Planning Board on updating the Natural Features section of the Master Plan. Mr. Edkins replied that he thought Ms. Ogilvie was semi retired and wasn’t sure if she would be available. He added that the Planning Board had money, \$10,000, in its budget for consultant work. In the past they have used Southwest Region Planning Commission.

Mr. Edkins asked the board for topics or sections of the document that should be discussed. Mr. O’Keefe said he wasn’t ready to answer that request yet. He wanted to spend some time before the meeting rereading the document. Ms. Mansouri suggested starting with one item, maybe definitions, and that would lead to next item. Mr. O’Keefe said he didn’t think we have the expertise to do this. We need some help from a consultant who has done this before and knows the latest statutory language. But before the board spends any money, it has to figure out what it wants. We have a year to do this before presenting anything to the public. This will make it easier for the public to understand this document. Mr. Edkins said he didn’t see doing a radical reformatting of the document. It just needs updating of some of the language and clarifying some definitions. Mr. O’Keefe said “like the word boarding house.”

Someone suggested that the ZBA could use the Southwest Region Planning Commission.

The secretary explained that the problem the Planning Board had with SWRPC last year was that it was understaffed. Several times last year the commission was scheduled to work with the PB on its Master Plan but canceled right before the meeting because it had no one to attend the meeting. Mr. Edkins and Ms. Barnes said there are other people, such as in the Department of Municipal Services. People such as Tara Bamford, whom they both mentioned as worthy of considering.

Mr. Murray said we've done this before. He mentioned the board's work on signage and the bed and breakfast ordinance. The board spent a good deal of time working on ordinances about feather flags and temporary signs. Both issues were brought to the board's attention by the public. It took a while but the language was worked out and it was put on the warrant and ultimately is in our current sign ordinance.

Ms. Barnes said in the beginning of the document should be a description of the type of ordinance the town of Walpole has, which is a permissive ordinance. A permissive ordinance means if something is not mentioned in the ordinance, it is not permitted. If you can't find it there, you probably need a variance to do it.

Someone suggested starting with definitions. Article XVII is a sections solely devoted to definitions on all subjects. Article XVIII Flood Plain District has definitions related to the flood plain but there are also definitions about manufactured housing and historic homes. Besides putting all the definitions together in one article, Ms. Barnes stressed that they should be alphabetized.

The board agreed there are Articles in the ordinance that are untouchable such as Article XIX Wellhead Protection Overlay District Ordinance. That article was written by members of the Walpole Conservation Commission and members who had expertise in groundwater and drinking water matters and were concerned about contamination. It includes definitions specifically related to this matter, and an explanation of where the district is, spill prevention and control, a countermeasure plan and a list of permitted, prohibited and conditional uses.

So the board's marching orders were: reread the Town of Walpole's Zoning Ordinances document and be ready to discuss at next Tuesday's workshop with the Planning Board zoning ordinances or sections on which the board needs to focus its attention to the language. Also, discuss getting a consultant who would be knowledgeable about the current statutory language.

## **Handout**

Board members received a copy of an update of the state of local land use regulations printed in a copy of the January/February 2024 copy of Town and City compiled by the NH Municipal Association.

## **Adjournment**

Mr. O'Keefe made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Murray seconded the motion and the motion carried. The time was 8 pm.

**These minutes are unapproved and will be reviewed at the regular March 2023 meeting for corrections and omissions**

Respectfully submitted,  
Marilou Blaine  
ZBA Recording Secretary

cc: ZBA, WPB, Town Offices, The Walpolean.  
Posted: Inside Town Offices, on bulletin board outside the Post Office, [www.walpolenh.us](http://www.walpolenh.us).

3.

Secretary's Note

### **Let them eat cake**

Something unusual happened at tonight's meeting. Mr. Edkins retrieved a cake from the refrigerator and told the board it was a gift. The note attached to the carrot Bundt cake said "For the Zoning Board Members. Thanks for your hard work and tough decisions. Your effort much appreciated." In the 11 years I've been secretary of the ZBA, no one has ever expressed their appreciation for the volunteers who appear every month on time to take care of the town's business.

On last Wednesday night every floor of the Town Hall was busy. On the second floor the Walpole Players were rehearsing for an upcoming production. In the basement a half a dozen teenagers and a couple of mentors were discussing the building of a robot. And in the main meeting room the ZBA was discussing its ordinances. Think about it. How many people volunteer their time each week in the Town Hall to do something that will benefit the town?

Thank you Jim and Pam Baucom for making us feel appreciated. Scrumptious cake with a delicious sugar icing. Yum!