

**Zoning Board of Adjustment
Town of Walpole
Wednesday, December 19, 2018
7 pm**

Present: Board Members: Vice-chair Jan Galloway Leclerc, Judy Trow, Tom Murray, Pauline Barnes. Alternate: Don Sellarole. Absent: Chair Myra Mansouri, Bob Anderson.

Recording: Marilou Blaine. These minutes are unapproved and will be reviewed at the regular January 2019 meeting for corrections, additions and/or omissions.

Roll Call: Ms. Leclerc called the meeting to order at 7 pm. One Board member was absent so Alternate Don Sellarole was asked to fill in.

Minutes: Ms. Trow corrected the spelling of Google Earth on page 1. Ms. Barnes made two corrections. One was on page 1 at the bottom of the page, last line. Add “the” before properties. On page 2, first paragraph on signage, second sentence. Change “say” to “stay.” Ms. Trow made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Ms. Barnes seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Signage for Hooper Golf Course and Watkins Tavern

Fred Dill, the owner of Watkins Tavern property, was at the meeting. He explained that the members of the golf course want to replace the sign at the entrance of the driveway. It would be on two posts, not one. It would be one-sided and it would be about 30 square feet. The property is in the rural/ag district and permits a 32-square-foot sign.

Mr. Dill said the sign would advertise both the golf course and tavern and would also say it was a golf course, not club, and both are open to the public.

Ms. Leclerc said it could be grandfathered and there would not be a problem as long as it meets the setbacks of the ordinance. Then you’re all set. But if it doesn’t meet the setbacks, you will need a variance.

Mr. Dill would also have to fill out the sign form, submit a drawing of the sign and after it is up take a picture and give a picture of the sign to the secretary to file.

Ms. Barnes read the setback rule. No closer than 20 feet from the front, side and rear of the property.

Mr. Dill said his concern was that it was next to the restricted area. (The golf course was created with a conservation easement of the Monadnock Conservancy.) He checked with the Conservancy and they were alright with the placement of the sign.

At this point Mr. David Howell entered. He was representing the members of the golf course. He had pictures of the old sign, the new sign, as well as a map showing where the sign would be placed.

Ms. Leclerc said it has to be 20 feet from the property line. Mr. Howell said it isn’t 20 feet and it can’t be 20 feet. He pointed out where Prospect Hill is, where the road that was built in 1788 and is now a Class VI road is, where the stone wall is and where the driveway is. “There is no other place to put a sign,” Mr. Howell said.

Ms. Barnes asked about putting it on the other side of the stone wall. Mr. Howell said then it would be on his property, meaning Mr. Dill’s property.

Ms. Trow said that if you were replacing the existing sign with a sign that was the same size, there wouldn't be a problem. But this sign is a larger size, a different shape and on two posts not one post.

Mr. Sellarole said that you're too close to the road. Mr. Howell pointed out that the sign is just as you turn into the driveway. The road is way over there, he said, pointing to a section on the map.

It has to be 20 feet from the front of the property, Ms. Leclerc said. That's the problem, Mr. Howell said. It's right on the property line. Mr. Howell explained, "It's a shared interest. The sign says Hooper Golf Course and Watkins Tavern. This is something that a lot of people contributed money for. It says Public Welcome. It's totally for the public. We want people to come," he said. "The sign has been there forever. His property (Mr. Dill's) is on the other side of the stone wall."

At this point Ms. Leclerc said that Mr. Howell needed a variance.

Where else could you put this sign? Mr. Howell asked. That's your argument for a variance, Ms. Leclerc said. "Why are you making us go through this when it so obvious?" Mr. Howell asked.

Ms. Trow said, "Because there are rules."

Ms. Barnes said, You're already making some very good points as to why you should get a variance. Among the questions asked is if denial of the variance resulted in unnecessary hardship because of the circumstances of the property. And another question is would the proposed use be contrary to the ordinance. It seems you have some very good arguments, she said.

Mr. Howell wanted to fill out the application at the meeting and settle the whole thing. He was told he had to have a Public Hearing in January and abutters needed to be notified. Mr. Howell said he was going away for 2 ½ months. These are state laws, Ms. Leclerc said.

Ms. Trow made a motion to hold a Public Hearing for a Variance in January pending the receipt of an application and fees. The motion was seconded and the motion passed. Mr. Howell asked, "What fees?" Mr. Dill said abutters needed to be notified and there's an application fee. It's around \$400." Mr. Howell said he wouldn't be here. He said someone else would handle it.

Application forms. Ms. Leclerc said she was at a Planning Board meeting and they were talking about the expense of having a hearing for a Special Exception and it costing them money because they have to pay for the legal notice in the paper because there is no application fee. The Planning Board wanted the Zoning Board to take care of everything. Originally, Ms. Leclerc thought it would be okay, but she was told there has to be a division of the money. The Planning Board has its budget and the Zoning Board had its budget. Ms. Leclerc was told that the accounting has to be separate.

So Ms. Mansouri, Ms. Leclerc and the secretary worked together to put together two applications – one for the Planning Board and one for the Zoning Board. If we had a packet to hand out with all the applications and the matrix, this might solve the problem, Ms. Leclerc said. The forms were a draft of the final forms. Ms. Leclerc asked Board members to read them over and then they'll be discussed at the next meeting.

Vose resignation – Although Ernie Vose resigned a couple of months ago, he sent a letter stating his resignation on Oct. 24, 2018. There being no meeting in November of the ZBA, the ZBA Board was apprised of the resignation letter at this meeting. Copies will be given to the Town Clerk and the Selectmen.

Prospect Hill sign complaints – The sign complaints are moot because the signs that a couple of people were complaining about are no longer there.

Zoning maps – There was discussion of the 8-inch-by-11-inch map given out with the Walpole Zoning Ordinances. A complaint by one Board member was that it was so small it was hard to read where the zoning districts started and left off. It was also difficult to determine the streets. It was decided that the secretary will have larger copies made for all the Board members.

Group photo - It was also decided that since two board members were absent, the Board would wait until January to take a photo for the website.

Handout: A Keene Sentinel article about the increase of airbnbs in the Monadnock Region.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilou Blaine, Recording Secretary

cc: ZBA, WBA, North Walpole Commissioners, Selectboard. Town Offices, The Walpolean.
Posted: Inside Town Offices, outside bulletin board at the Post Office.