

**Planning Board Meeting Date:** April 2, 2025

**Time:** 7:00 PM

**Location:** In-person/Zoom

**Attendees In-person:** Dee Daley (Chair), Lou Alvarez (Ex Officio) Bruce Ruotsala, Craig Smeeth, Graham Heagy, Aaron Bertram, Robert Fournier, Steven Satterfield

**Via Zoom:** None

**Citizens In-person:** None

**Citizens Via Zoom:** Christy Warrenner

## **7:00 PM: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call**

- Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.
- The group stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **7:04 PM: Review and Approval of Minutes**

- Motion made by Craig and seconded Lou to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as written.
- Vote passes unanimously, with one abstention. Motion carried.

## **5. Chair/ Selectmen/Board Updates and General Discussion**

### **Water Resource Advisor**

- Request was made to bring in a water resource specialist to discuss wells and water capacity.
- Three tentative dates proposed for visit: April 16, May 7, or May 21.
- May 21 favored due to anticipated public interest and potential for greater attendance.

### **Select Board Update – Social Media Policy**

- A draft policy is under development regarding employee and board member conduct on social media.
- Discussion around ensuring accountability and preventing reputational risk for the town.
- One amendment remains before it is released for broader review.
- Once finalized, it will be shared via Dropbox for planning board access.

### **New Ipswich Chili Cook-Off**

- Rescheduled from 3/29/25 to 4/5/25 due to inclement weather.
- No official time listed on invitations.
- Concern was expressed about short notice cancellation and lack of clarity for rescheduling, which could discourage future participation.

### **Master Plan Forum**

- Thanks were extended to all members who attended.
- Survey from the forum remains open for two more weeks.
- Participation is at 400 responses; the goal is to reach at least 600.
- Board encouraged to share with friends and family to boost response rates.

## **Legislative Updates and Concerns**

Several bills at the **State** level discussed that could significantly impact local planning and zoning. Topics include changes in minimum lot sizes, multi-unit allowances, reduction in local control, private building inspectors, broad parking changes and ambulance billing reform. Steven will forward NHMA updates to Board members to increase awareness.

## **Upcoming Subdivision Hearing: Ray Aho Map 7 Lot 1-5.**

- **Date:** April 16, 2025 @ 7:30 PM
- **Project:** Two-lot subdivision on Turnpike Road (north side of previously approved five-lot subdivision).
- Parcel borders Old Ridge Road at the rear and Turnpike 120 at the front.

## **7:20 PM: Public Hearing – Application Procedures & Fee Schedule Update**

- **Documents Reviewed:** Revised application submission timeline, fee schedule, escrow requirements.
- **Public Comment:** None received in person or via email. Christy Warrender (Zoom) had no comment.
- **Board Discussion:**
  - Implementation of new procedures for first application under the updated policy has gone well.
  - Coordination process with engineering firm (CHA) and applicants is being tested and refined.
  - Procedural framework is being documented for email authorization, cost estimate approvals, and fee reconciliation.
  - One minor formatting correction was noted (header alignment on the proposed fee schedule page).
- Motion made by Bruce to continue public hearing to April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 7:20 PM.
  - Seconded and approved with all in favor.
  - Reason for continuation: Ensure full board attendance and opportunity for final comments or revisions.

## **Old/New Business**

### **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Discussion**

- **Overview:**
  - Draft CIP spreadsheet with 71 entries reviewed.

- First cycle using new software to centralize project tracking, cost projections, and timelines.
- Data entered by various departments with varying levels of accuracy and specificity, with a goal to get increased accuracy and planning details.
- **Board Comments:**
  - Several FY25 items are aspirational or outdated; they need to be shifted to FY26 or removed.
  - It is important to reconcile approved warrant articles with CIP entries to ensure accuracy.
  - A few items were updated or discrepancies corrected based on what was passed in the town meeting regarding funding amounts, etc.
    - **DPW vehicle replacement estimates** (e.g., \$70K vs. actual \$50K in warrant)
    - **Fire Department cascade system funding was already done via ARPA funds** (actual cost for CIP ~\$5,000 for electrical hookup vs. original \$58,000 estimate)
    - **Emergency communications system upgrade** (\$48K estimate pending results of \$5K survey)
- **Suggestions:**
  - Improve internal review to validate and clean up data.
  - Consider establishing new capital reserve funds (e.g., for police equipment beyond cruisers).
  - Evaluate replacement cycles for major equipment (e.g., cruisers every 5–6 years, radios every 2–3 years).
  - Ensure sustainability of current fund balances against long-term capital needs (e.g., looming need for 2 fire trucks at \$1.2M–\$1.8M each within 10 years).
  - Assign planning board liaison(s) to CIP and building committees for ongoing involvement.
    - Rob Fournier suggested due to experience with construction and capital projects.
- **Follow-Up Needed:**
  - Confirm actual project costs, planned replacements, and approved budgets.
  - Engage department heads for clarification on vague or duplicate entries.
  - Continue refining CIP following presentation to Select Board and ensure champions are in place.

## 8:45 PM Adjournment

- Craig makes a motion to adjourn and passes unanimously.
- Next meeting scheduled for **April 16, 2025**, including:
  - Continued public hearing on application policy at 7:20 PM
  - Hearing on two-lot subdivision
  - Further discussion on CIP priorities

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Satterfield