

CANDIA PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES OF November 6th, 2024
APPROVED MINUTES

PB Members Present: Tim D’Arcy, Chair; Mark Chalbeck, Vice-Chair; Brien Brock, BOS Representative; Kevin Coughlin Scott Komisarek; L. Carroll (sitting in for Judi Lindsey)

PB Members Absent:
Judi Lindsey (excused)
M. Santa, Alt.

* Tim D’Arcy, Chair; called the PB meeting to order at approximately 6:30PM, followed immediately by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The agenda for the meeting is light, and the chairperson opens the floor for public comment. It is noted that there are no participants on Zoom.

The discussion shifts to the need for alternates on the planning board. The chairperson encourages anyone interested to send a note expressing their desire to be considered. The benefits of Zoom meetings are discussed, with members appreciating the ability to access agendas and minutes online, which enhances participation. The members agree that having a transcript of the meeting is beneficial, and they discuss the logistics of managing large meetings with many participants.

New Business:

Old Business:

Other Business:

- Regulations
- Town Planning

The agenda includes a discussion about splitting the ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) proposal into two distinct items. The chairperson has prepared a revised document reflecting this split and invites members to review it. The group discusses the implications of allowing detached units and the need for clarity in the language used in the proposal.

Members provide feedback on the document, suggesting grammatical corrections and clarifications. The chairperson emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the definitions used are accurate and reflect the intent of the proposal. The discussion includes the need for adequate water supply and sewer compliance as part of the requirements for the ADUs.

The chairperson mentions that the proposed changes are highlighted in the document and discusses the potential for public outreach through pamphlets to explain the changes to the community. The group considers whether they can use HOP (Housing Opportunity Program) funds for this outreach and agrees to verify the legality of using these funds.

The conversation shifts to the importance of community engagement and the potential impact of the proposed changes on property values. Members express a desire to approach the changes incrementally, allowing for community feedback and adjustments as necessary. The chairperson plans to make the necessary edits and schedule a public hearing for further discussion.

The chairperson offers to draft an explanation for the proposed changes, emphasizing their experience with written communication. The group reflects on the broader context of housing issues, noting that this is a significant topic at both the state and national levels, particularly in light of rising housing prices and demand.

The discussion revolves around the challenges of addressing housing affordability, which is a cornerstone of the campaign. There is an acknowledgment that the environment surrounding housing issues is unlikely to change soon. The conversation highlights that housing affordability is a national issue, particularly pressing in the state due to high house prices driven by tight demand. The issue transcends political affiliations, with both conservatives and liberals recognizing the need for solutions.

The conversation touches on the historical context of housing prices, comparing current costs to those in the 1950s when houses could be purchased for significantly less. The speakers express a desire for more affordable housing options, suggesting that smaller homes or ranch-style houses could help drive costs down. They reference innovative housing solutions, such as Musk's "casita," as potential breakthroughs in addressing housing costs.

The need for community discussions about zoning changes to facilitate affordable housing is emphasized. The speakers recognize that public perception may be a barrier to implementing new housing strategies, such as allowing tiny houses or smaller lot sizes. They stress the importance of engaging with the community to gauge feedback and address concerns about these proposals.

A personal anecdote is shared about a visit to a town in Connecticut where tiny houses were well-maintained and integrated into the community. This example serves to illustrate that smaller housing options can be attractive and not necessarily detrimental to property values. The speakers agree that if the town wants to attract younger families and address housing affordability, zoning changes will be necessary.

The speakers reflect on the demographic challenges facing the town, noting that older residents dominate participation in local elections. They express concern that this may hinder the passage of new housing initiatives. However, they believe that thorough planning and community engagement can lay the groundwork for future housing developments.

The importance of effective communication with the public regarding housing initiatives is highlighted.

The speakers discuss a recent housing development in Raymond that raised concerns due to its density and infrastructure challenges, such as a one-lane bridge. They express skepticism about the feasibility of such developments given the existing conditions. The conversation reflects a cautious approach to new housing projects, emphasizing the need for thorough evaluation and consideration of community impact.

The speakers discuss their relationship with the engineering firm Stantec, noting that they had a productive meeting and are considering their services for future projects. They acknowledge the importance of maintaining continuity with existing projects while also exploring options with other firms. The conversation underscores the need for due diligence in selecting engineering partners to ensure successful project outcomes.

Discussion revolves around the potential for obstructionism in project applications, with concerns that such actions could lead to appeals to the state. An applicant may have the right to specify their choice of engineer, as indicated by one participant who believes they can request a different engineer if they have had past issues. There is a disagreement on this point, with another participant, Amy, expressing skepticism about the applicant's rights in this regard.

The first speaker plans to consult their attorney for clarification on the matter, as they have been informed that applicants can indeed request a different engineer. The conversation touches on the financial implications of using a different engineer, with the understanding that the applicant would bear the costs. The discussion shifts to the town's engineer, who is expected to act in the town's best interest. There is a consensus that while applicants can request a different engineer, it does not guarantee approval, and the town retains the right to choose its engineer.

The speaker expresses a desire to confirm their understanding of the applicant's rights regarding engineer selection, noting that it may not be a common practice. The conversation highlights concerns about billing practices and the history of disputes between developers and engineers, suggesting that applicants may want to avoid engineers with whom they have had negative experiences.

- Approval of Minutes: 10.16.24

The efficiency of using AI for assisting with minute-taking is acknowledged, with members expressing sympathy for Amy, who previously managed this task alone.

S. Komisarek: **Motion** to approve the minutes of 10.16.24 as amended. **Second.** L. Carroll. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

- Any other matter to come before the Board.

The group discusses the upcoming schedule of meetings, noting that January 1st falls on a Wednesday, which is a holiday.

There is a general agreement that holding a meeting on that date would not be ideal, as many members would likely be unavailable.

The idea of combining meetings or rescheduling is proposed, with the understanding that they can cancel the January meeting and reconvene if necessary.

The group considers the frequency of meetings, noting that some communities meet more often due to higher development activity, but they agree that they only need to meet at least once a month.

The conversation turns to the logistics of public notice for meetings, with Amy stating that she usually posts notices as soon as a meeting is canceled.

The group unanimously decides to cancel the January 1st meeting, agreeing that it is not a reasonable time to meet.

Motion to adjourn: K. Coughlin. **Second:** S. Komisarek. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:11M.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy M. Spencer

Land Use Coordinator

cc: file