

Cherryfield Planning Board Meeting Minutes - March 15th, 2023

Present: Kim Smith, Crystal Hitchings, Laurie Lee, Billie Jo Brooks

1. Meeting called to order at 6:04pm. New Board member Kim Smith introduced herself.
2. Draft minutes from the February 15th were not voted on as they were distributed digitally and no printed copies were available to read at the meeting.
3. No adjustments or additions to the agenda were proposed.
4. No members of the public were present to make public comments.
5. The Board reviewed the request for an extension of the building permit for Giri Cherryfield Solar. The request notes that the extent of buried waste on the site is greater than previously thought, making the DEP approval process take longer. Motion to approve the extension through 2023 by Crystal, seconded by Billie Jo. The motion carries with 3 yes votes and one abstention (Kim).
6. The Board discussed the home on New Street that was recently demolished. The home is on the National Historic Register and part of the Cherryfield National Historic District. The Land Use Ordinance requires buildings with this status to provide a 45-day demolition notice to Maine Historic Preservation. New or substantial renovations must be reviewed for compatibility with the existing character of the District. Laurie notified Betsy Fitzgerald, CEO, about the building removal one month ago but has not been told whether the landowners were contacted or not. Betsy was invited to come to tonight's meeting. The Planning Board would like to work more closely with the CEO to strengthen communications about the permitting process and land use ordinances and would like for the CEO to regularly attend Planning Board meetings for Cherryfield. The Planning Board discussed the importance of the National Historic District to economic development in Cherryfield. The beauty of the architecture and river attracts new residents and businesses. The Historic district is also an important stop along the Bold Coast National Scenic Byway and the Blackwoods Scenic Byway, which provides Cherryfield the opportunity to establish itself as a destination for tourism. Community members, building owners, municipal officials, realtors, and the CEO need information about the district, why it was established, why it is important today, and what they need to know if they own or want to develop a site in the historic district. The public should also be aware that many commercial uses proposed in the Historic District need to be brought to the Planning Board for Site Plan Review, such as restaurants. It is likely that many people do not know about District or that there are ordinances specific to the District. Information can be provided to the Town Office, residents, and potential residents. Crystal and Laurie will attend the next Selectboard meeting to discuss these topics.
7. The Board discussed issues related to Air BnBs in more populated parts of town, and Billie Jo shared several examples of ordinances from other communities. Stonington just voted to require all rental properties, long or short term, to register with the Town so the Town can better understand the status of their housing stock. The Planning Board will continue to discuss how to balance the growing number of Air BnBs with year-round housing shortages, and how to insure that short-term rental units don't negatively affect established residential neighborhoods.
8. Motion to adjourn at 7:10pm by Crystal, seconded by Kim. All in favor, motion passes.

Crystal Hitchings _____

Billie Jo Brooks _____

Laurie Lee _____

Kim Smith _____