

Town of Cornish  
PLANNING BOARD

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**Monday, March 9, 2015**

**BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES (Approved 3/23/15) Vote: 5 Yeas, 0 Nays**

**In Attendance:** John Morrissey, Ken Hall, Bill Hoxie, Norm Harding, Mat Cama

**Guests:** Emily Ward, Dan Sherman, Nancy Perkins, Darrell Watson, Angel Eastman, Calista Cross, Steve & Mona Smith, Diann & Linwood Perkins, Roland & R. J. Scott, James Gledhill

**Call Meeting to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by John Morrissey

**New Business:**

1. Meet with BOS re: Parking Ordinance.
  - a. The Selectmen inquired as to the intent of the wording of Section 2, Part B Emergency Parking, Numbers 1 and 2. After discussion, the Planning Board will examine the wording at the March 23<sup>rd</sup> workshop meeting.
2. **Informal Meeting:** James Gledhill, trustee with the "Hilltop Baptist Church" re: Beginning renovations of former Cornish Elementary School.
  - a. Mr. Gledhill presented the Board with a Site Plan Review and a list of abutters.
  - b. Highlights of the renovations will focus on the modifications necessary for converting the individual rest rooms to a more central plan with a separate men's room and ladies room. The system is designed for a much higher capacity than the church will use.
  - c. A sketch of the proposed parking lot was furnished with the Site Plan Review Checklist.
  - d. The abutters will be notified that the formal review will be at the April 6<sup>th</sup> Business Meeting.
3. **Cornish Veterans Monument Organization (CVMO) re: Reopen application.**
  - a. The Cornish Veterans Monument Organization was represented by Calista Cross, Roland Scott, and R.J. Scott.
    - i. John Morrissey gave a brief overview of the events leading up to the request to reopen the application and asked who was going to speak on behalf of the CVMO. Roland Scott replied he was.
    - ii. John Morrissey asked what CVMO was looking for and Roland Scott replied "A permit."
    - iii. John Morrissey pointed out that the Board had provided a process for the CVMO to follow, and that they had chosen not to follow that path.
    - iv. John asked if there was a lease to the property; the only thing that was provided was a "permission note" from Richard Jiang, dated August 10, 2014. That is not a lease. A lease contains provisions and conditions to protect the lessee as well as the lessor/owner.
    - v. Roland Scott questioned why the Board wanted to see the lease. Roland stated that John had interfered with the process by engaging Richard's wife in a telephone conversation.
    - vi. John Morrissey replied that he called her on his personal time, trying to facilitate the process. [She (Richard's wife) may have initiated the call. John's wife (Karen) recalls that Richard's wife called Bill Hoxie, but he wasn't home, so she called John.] Either way, the call was legitimate.
    - vii. Norm Harding said that the Board always asks applicants to provide a deed or lease; why should the CVMO be any different.
    - viii. John Morrissey stated the lease was an important piece of the requirement to reopen the application, and the process could not proceed without it.
    - ix. Roland Scott and R.J. Scott walked out of the meeting at this point.
    - x. Calista Cross became spokesperson for CVMO. Her comments are summarized below:
      1. The CVMO has been working for over three years to get a veterans monument.

2. The town rejected placing the monument at the Fairgrounds. {Calista was referring to a Special Hearing held on Thursday, January 23, 2014 for the purpose of citizen review and comment regarding the placement and type of monument. A formal vote was taken on the warrant article as presented (black granite at Fairgrounds). Results: Yes 11, No 50.}
3. Steve Smith asked Wes Sunderland if he had talked to Richard Jiang recently about his position about having the monument on his property. Wes replied that he had bumped into Richard at Stoneridge Restaurant, and introduced himself as the CEO for Cornish. When asked about the status of the lease, Richard was noncommittal. Wes did not pursue it further.
4. The CVMO was offered a site at Riverside Cemetery, but the CVMO didn't like the location; they asked about the field across from the ball fields, but the Association had planned to use that section for a pet cemetery. Along the front of the cemetery (Route 25/Maple Street) the water pools, making the site unfavorable. Calista stated that the CVOM is not interested in wasting time again investigating other sites at Riverside Cemetery, as they have already spent six months going back and forth.
5. Steve Smith challenged Calista Cross to put an article before the town to see whether or not the majority favored Riverside or Stoneridge for the site, but felt that she wouldn't do that because she knew she would lose.
6. Sandra Watts told Calista Cross she would be more than willing to help her find an acceptable site at Riverside Cemetery.
7. Darrell Watson remarked that the Riverside Cemetery lot they were offered is the logical choice, since the Memorial Day Parade ends at the gazebo.
8. Diann Perkins asked Calista Cross if a group of people went to the Riverside Cemetery Association to help CVMO locate a more suitable site, would she be interested?
9. Calista responded, "... the monument was for living veterans as well as those who died. The cemetery is only for dead people, and I don't know of any veteran's monument in a cemetery".
10. Norm Harding replied, "I don't know what state you grew up in, but they are everywhere."
11. Diann Perkins asked again if Calista Cross would at least talk to the Cemetery Association to find a suitable location. Calista did not reply.
12. John Morrissey asked again about the status of the lease, because we (the Planning Board) keep getting contradicting information, and have yet to see a lease.
13. Calista replied that Richard Jiang "has put the whole thing on hold and will not talk to us (CVMO) until he hears from the town officials" about the harassing phone calls and e-mails from the "protesters". This statement was repeated several times throughout the meeting.
14. John Morrissey countered with a statement that the Planning Board members have been subjected to a multitude of e-mails containing innuendos, false or impertinent information, personal attacks, and other items that are counterproductive to the project moving forward. John would like to see Richard Jiang come to a meeting, sit down, and tell the Board that he still wants the monument on his property. John also said that the so-called "protesters" simply do not exist. There have been no sign-wavers or loud interruptions from the audience at any meeting related to CVOM. It appears that anyone disagreeing with CVOM is labeled a protester. Almost everyone wants the monument, but there is a process that must be followed.
15. Other Board members (Norm Harding, Mat Cama, Ken Hall, and Bill Hoxie) explained that it was not the function of "town officials" to negotiate a lease with the landowner; that is up to CVMO.
16. Calista Cross said Wes Sunderland had worked with the CVMO on the list of information the Board had requested in a letter dated August 4, 2014. The item of focus was the lease. (On January 25, 2015 Wes Sunderland gave the CVMO a list of five requirements; #4 was "a plot plan of the leased land, drawn to scale" and #5 was "a copy of the signed lease agreement".)

17. Calista said that the CVMO would reveal the lease to the Planning Board after six months "When they see how things are going."
18. John Morrissey replied that was unacceptable. In order for the project to move forward the lease is necessary to show representation and documentation. John asked "Who are the current members of CVMO?"
19. Calista replied "Calista Cross (President), John Brower, and Roland Scott."
20. Calista Cross stated several times that another town was interested in having the monument in their town, but did not reveal the town.
21. Calista stated that she had been to the Selectmen initially, and they would consider putting the monument on the front lawn. Since that time, they have not supported her plan.
22. Selectwoman Nancy Perkins rebutted:
  - a. John had the right and responsibility as chair of the Cornish Planning Board to communicate with whomever was needed to clarify information and facts regarding an application or project. (She was referring to the discussion with Richard's wife. See 3(a), (Items v. and vi.).
  - b. Initially, the plan was for a monument. Then it grew to benches, pavers, silhouettes, etc. Can you imagine placing all of that on the front lawn?
  - c. The "... saddest part of this ..." is that the CVMO has dwindled from many members to four or five. Why? Where are all of the supporters?
  - d. The CVMO attempted to pass the monument off as a "sign". "Would that pass the "straight face" test? I don't think so."
  - e. The area behind the Town Hall and, with a proper plan, could be investigated as a site.
23. Selectwoman Emily Ward asked John the status of the application. John Morrissey replied that currently there is no application before us; therefore we have nothing to vote on.
24. Board member Ken Hall said that we are bound by oath to follow the guidelines set forth in the Land Use Ordinance and are here to help you. How may we help? Calista did not reply.
25. John Morrissey ended discussion and addressed Calista Cross, saying her energy level was amazing, and her cause was noble. The Planning Board has given a process to follow, and he hopes that she channels that energy toward that process. But, at present, there is not an active application before us.

4. Approve Workshop Meeting Minutes of February 16, 2015.

a. On a motion by Ken Hall, seconded by Norm Harding, the above minutes were unanimously approved.

5. Other: Motion to adjourn by Norm Harding, seconded by Mat Cama. Vote 5 Yeas, 0 Nays

**Unfinished Business:** None

**Public Comment:** See above #3 (a) 1-25.

**Agenda Items for Next Meeting:** **Workshop Meeting – Monday, March 23, 2015 @ 6:30 PM**

1. Approve Minutes of Business Meeting of March 9, 2015.
2. Consideration of Selectmen's request to examine wording in the Parking Ordinance referred to in #2 (a) above.
3. **Informal Meeting:** AT&T Wireless requests permission to add an array of antennas to the F. R. Carroll tower at 200 Sawyer Road [Hosac Mountain] (Map R-6 Lot 19).
4. **Informal Meeting:** Krista Lair re: change in plans – no second floor seating. Instead, turn porch into 4-season seating.
5. Other: None

**Adjourn:** 8:10 PM

Respectfully Submitted,



William Hoxie,  
Planning Board Secretary

