

THE BOROUGH OF BANTAM PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 416

BANTAM 06750

INCORPORATED 1915

February 7, 2023
REGULAR MEETING
Bantam Borough Town Hall
7.00 pm

MINUTES

Present: Adam Yarrish, Chairman
Carol Powers, Vice-Chairwoman
Pete Donohue
Brett Seamans

Absent: Lex Sidon

Public: Kim Griffen

Chairman Yarrish called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Commission welcomed Brett Seamans to the Commission and noted that he has been approved by the Board of Burgesses.

1. PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the January 3rd Regular Meeting and made the following motion:

Motion made by Ms. Powers to approve the January 3, 2023 Regular Meeting minutes as written. Motion seconded by Mr. Donohue and carried on a 3-1 vote with Mr. Seamans abstaining.

2. PERMITS

A. Bantam Art House, 1062 Bantam Rd. Arthur Matuszewski. Sign permit.

Mr. Matuszewski was not in attendance this evening. This item will roll over to the March meeting.

B. Chairman Yarrish stated that he has issued a permit to Jill Bigelow for a chicken coop at 1174 Bantam Road as meeting all required setbacks.

C. Chairman Yarrish noted that a requested sign permit for Farmers Insurance at 710 Bantam Road was denied and the applicant was directed to the Building Inspector as the proposed sign was part of the structure and not a free-standing sign. Ms. Powers stated that the applicant's check would be returned.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Kim Griffen addressed the Commission with regard to the use of sandwich signs in the Borough. Her concern centers around the signs being left out overnight after the business has closed. Chairman Yarrish stated that signs are permitted to remain outside unless severe weather is anticipated. If leaving signs outside would become a hazard, then the business is expected to bring them inside.

4. OLD BUSINESS - None

5. NEW BUSINESS - None

6. CORRESPONDENCE

A. WRITTEN FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Powers stated that resident could reach the Commission by either telephone or email. She suggested limiting correspondence to email only. Chairman Yarrish stated that his preference would be to continue with either telephone or email as responding to applications or questions was easier, for him, by phone. Ms. Powers will remove her number from the website.

B. CONVERSATIONAL NOTES WITH PEOPLE

Chairman Yarrish stated that he had spoken with Dennis McMurrough of Berkshire Engineering regarding a certificate of approval for a sign at Arethusa Farm. He noted that the certificate was created in 2012 at the request of the farm, however, it was never signed. Chairman Yarrish informed the Commission that he has signed the form.

A second phone call was received from Tom Russo regarding 760 Bantam Road. Chairman Yarrish stated that Mr. Russo would like to possibly use the building north of Bantam Pizza as a Tap House with café type food. There was a brief discussion on the status of a suitable kitchen on the property. Mr. Russo was instructed to appear at the March meeting prepared to answer questions with regard to the proposed use, parking, hours, employees and more.

7. COMMISSION DISCUSSION

A. Discussion re vacation rental by owner in the Borough.

The Commission reviewed several ideas on how to monitor short term rentals (ie: VBRO and Air BnB). Ms. Powers handed out information from the Horsley Witten Group regarding a very extensive list of items to be considered if regulating short term rentals. Other options discussed was outright banning short term rentals or limiting the areas that the practice was permitted. Additionally, the Commission discussed limiting timeframes, parking and number of renters at a time. Chairman Yarrish asked all members to review the information disseminated and come back next month ready to hammer out some details.

8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The annual election of officers was held.

Ms. Powers nominated Mr. Yarrish for Chairman, the nomination was seconded by Mr. Donohue. No other nominations were received. Mr. Yarrish nominated Ms. Powers for Vice-Chairwoman, the nomination was seconded by Mr. Donohue. No other nominations were received. A vote was taken on the nominations with the proposed slate passing unanimously.

The Secretary position is replaced by the work of the hired clerk, Valerie Douglass.

9. ANNUAL REVIEW OF BYLAWS

The Commission reviewed the bylaws and found that the following sections needed updating:

Article VI – Section 1. Ms. Powers suggested updating the time of the annual organizational meeting from 8:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the beginning of the meeting to more actually reflect the Commission’s meeting time.

Article VIII – Section 1. Ms. Powers suggested updating the starting time of the regular meeting from 7:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to reflect the selected meeting start time.

Article XII – Section 1. Ms. Powers suggested updating this section, in part, to remove reference to a Director of Planning. In its place the sentence would read, “The Chairperson shall be authorized to employ personnel and retain consultants upon the approval of the majority of the Commission”.

Article XIII and Article XIV. Ms. Powers suggested removing these sections as irrelevant to the workings of today’s Commission. A review of the sections by the members found all to agree with the exception of Article XIII – Section 3 as it relates to Special Committees. The members felt that this section should remain.

Lastly, the Commission requested that the language in the bylaws be updated to remove gender and that minor typos be corrected. Mrs. Douglass will pull changes together into a new document and present at the next meeting.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH COMES BEFORE THE COMMISSION - None

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business Ms. Powers moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m. Motion seconded by Mr. Donohue and carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie L. Douglass
Commission Clerk

