



TOWN OF ACUSHNET

MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING BOARD

Mailing Address: 122 MAIN ST.

Office Address: 130 Main Street, Parting Ways, 2nd floor

ACUSHNET, MA 02743

<http://www.acushnet.ma.us>

Tel. (508) 998-0200 ext. 4260

Acushnet Planning Commission Meeting & Public Hearing Minutes for March 9, 2023

Open: 6:30pm
Adjourn: 8:27pm

Present: Mark Francois, Chairman
Rick Ellis, Vice Chairman
Bryan Deschamps, Member
Dave Davignon, Member
Steve Boucher, Member

Issue: The Chairman welcomes those in attendance and makes the media notification

Issue: A motion is made to open the Planning Board meeting.
So moved: B. Deschamps
Second: R. Ellis
Vote was 5-0

Issue: The Chairman asks the Board Members to introduce themselves

Issue: A motion is made to accept the Meeting Minutes of February 9, 2023 (with corrections)
So moved: D. Davignon
Second: S. Boucher
Vote was 3-0 (2 absent for that meeting)

Issue: A motion is made to accept the Meeting Minutes of February 23, 2023 (with corrections)
So moved: B. Deschamps
Second: R. Ellis
Vote was 5-0

Issue: **Discussion-Town Planner Staffing**
Town Administrator, Jaime Kelly, has joined the meeting to discuss Town Planner staffing options.

Jaime Kelly introduced Jennifer Thompson (via Zoom) of Capital Strategic Solutions. Jennifer is the Town's consultant on the administration of ARPA funding. Jaime explains there are two sets of funding, Federal & County. Jaime explains Jennifer is an expert on things such as grant writing and how to acquire grants. Jaime explains that the Planning Board budget is still open and the Board of Selectmen are looking for the Planning Board to give them input as for what

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the Board wants and needs for staffing. Jennifer explains that the Town's Master Plan and all of its components needs updating. These plans need to be updated in order to be eligible for grants. Mark F. asks how many dollars are potentially available. Jennifer notes that State & Federal funds could amount to several million dollars of grants. Rick E. asks for a list of potential grants and notes other town department heads could assist with identifying areas of need. Rick E. notes that significant details are needed to educate Town Meeting members and get there buy-in on the need for a full-time Town Planner. Jennifer agreed to provide the Planning Board with specific grant data and the potential dollars and benefits to the Town. Steve B. asks if the Town needs to provide matching funds for certain grants that may be available. Jennifer notes there are some grants that require too much of a match and are not worth going for in a Town our size and financial position. Discussion ensued about the amount of time is expended to administrate and manage the whole grant process. Mark F. asked Jaime and Jennifer if a part-time Planner could handle the everyday duties as well as updating Master Plans and administer grants with all of the research that goes with it. Jennifer answered no. Dave D. expressed his concern that if we hire a full-time Planner and the Town needs to dish out thousands of dollars for consultants to update Master Plans etc. What's the point? Dave D. is adamant that if we have a full-time Planner, that person needs to be able to update Master Plan's without additional consulting fees. Jennifer agrees that a "qualified" full-time Planner should be able to update Master Plan's without additional costs. Jaime notes that updating all of the Town's Plans could take 2-3 years, also, soon the Town will be an MBTA adjacent community. Jaime states that earmarks from the State of \$50K have been secured to help with Master Plan updates such as Traffic Studies etc. Jaime and the Board members discussed the budget and how to fund a full-time Town Planner along with some clerical support.

The Chairman asks for a yay or nay vote to allow the Town Administrator to move the Planning Board budget thru to Town Meeting to contain a full-time Town Planner salary at \$75,000 per year and a part-time clerical salary of \$10,000 per year.

The Board voted:
4 yay and 1 nay

Issue: **Discussion-Park Drive Solar, revised access road.**

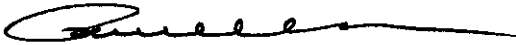
The Chairman notes that Syncarpha has sent in a plan modification for the access road to the site. Discussion ensued about abutter issues, the Fire Chief's need to review the access roads and the need to get the Building Inspector up to speed on the project. Dave D. notes that Town Counsel ruled that if the Proponent wants to amend the Special permit it needs to be a Public Hearing with abutter notifications.

Issue: A motion is made to adjourn the meeting.
So moved: R. Ellis
Second: B. Deschamps
Vote was 5-0

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Respectively submitted,

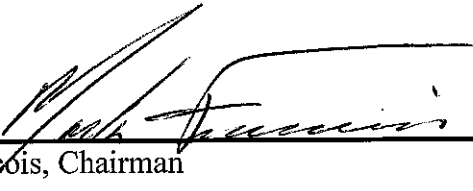
Paul Sullivan
Administrative Assistant



Paul Sullivan

4-24-23

Date



Mark Francois, Chairman

4/20/2023

Date

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