

**TOWN OF THORNTON
PLANNING BOARD
Planning Board Work Session Minutes**

Thursday, September 7, 2023

Approved on: 9-21-23
PB Initials: MS
Rec'd by Town Clerk on: 9/26/23
Town Clerk Initials: Adm

Members Present at Town Hall: Nancy Decoteau, Chairman; Donna O'Donnell, Vice Chairman; Frank Freeman; Cynthia Schofield; David Levin; Kerrin Randall, Board Assistant

Members Absent: Steven Babin, Ex-Officio; Matt Peltier, Alternate; Jack Gaites, Alternate

Ms. Decoteau opened the work session at 3:00 p.m.

Application Process Following Approval

Ms. Decoteau stated that it was brought to her attention that the fee schedule on the Planning Board applications is unclear and has not been followed correctly. She stated the wording has been rearranged for easier understanding, and moving forward, all fees noted on the applications will be assessed correctly.

Land Use Administrator Job Posting

Ms. Decoteau stated that after speaking with TA Mahurin, the Land Use Administrator position will be reposted with a proposed salary that will be commensurate with experience.

'Land Banking' idea from Owl's Nest to increase density on the Pope Parcel

Ms. Decoteau asked for comments on the concept of 'land banking.'

Mr. Freeman stated that what has been proposed from an applicant is not 'land banking' and the term needs to be clarified. After brief discussion, the Board agreed that the term 'key transfer' is clearer when speaking about the applicant in question.

Mr. Freeman stated that should the key transfer occur, the other Town(s) included in the transfer need to be actively involved in the process. He stated that in the case of Owl's Nest, in order to look at the key transfer, one would have to view the resort as a whole area, rather than what is in Campton and what is in Thornton.

Discussion on the remaining 'keys' in Thornton once development is completed occurred, as well as the additional 'keys' they are trying to obtain occurred.

Ms. Decoteau asked the Board if they agree with the current allowance of one dwelling per acre as is written in the LDA. The consensus of the Board was yes, as that is the basic premise for zoning.

Ms. O'Donnell stated that the question is, does the Board want to allow for the increase in density. She reviewed that many residents she has spoken with were unhappy with the current density and concerned with the idea of increased density at Owl's Nest. Ms. O'Donnell stated that she was surprised at the number of responses to the Master Plan survey that referenced density concerns.

Ms. O'Donnell also stated that a 48-unit subdivision at North Lake has been approved and houses are starting to be built. She reviewed the need for higher density that was

given by Mr. Lash was to pay for the infrastructure of the 'Pope Parcel', but the North Lake homes are listed for over one million dollars; discussion continued.

Mr. Levin stated that Owl's Nest already has access to the 'Pope Parcel' via NH Route 175, and another road or further infrastructure could be done once the allowance of units has been reached.

Mr. Freeman stated that should the key transfer occur, the integrity of the LDA in both towns needs to be maintained. Ms. Decoteau clarified that the current allowances in both LDA documents would be used, and nothing over those allowances would be permitted and Mr. Freeman stated that he concurs with that reasoning unless the Applicant can present a compelling case to justify more keys.

Ms. Decoteau stated that she thinks the communication to Owl's Nest regarding the idea of a key transfer needs to be done clearly and effectively; the Board is not inclined towards allowing more units than those currently available in the LDAs for Thornton and Campton. She stated that there will need to be written consent and agreement from both Campton and Thornton to allow for a key transfer that will use only the 'keys' remaining according to the LDA of each town.

Zoning Amendments for 2024

Ms. Decoteau stated proposed Zoning Amendments need to be discussed and asked if the Board feels that any items in the ordinance need to be defined. Discussion on the pros and cons of having terms defined occurred. Ms. Decoteau asked Board members to review the ordinance and note if they feel that certain items need to be defined.

Discussion on the language regarding short term rentals occurred. Mr. Freeman asked what the vote was that gave the Board authority to create regulations for short-term rentals if needed. Ms. Randall reviewed that that vote was 141 in the affirmative and 137 in the negative and lengthy discussion continued regarding potential processes for permitting and/or regulating short-term rentals.

Ms. O'Donnell asked if rezoning should be looked at and Ms. Decoteau suggested that something be sent to a professional planning office (North Country Council) to look at the zoning maps.

Ms. O'Donnell stated that the Master Plan has a potential rezoning map that the Board can look at before anything further is done. Ms. Decoteau asked that rezoning be added to the future agenda for discussion, as she does not think it can occur in time for a vote at Town Meeting this year.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kerrin Randall
Board Assistant