

**Minutes of Meeting
Grafton Planning Board
July 1, 2014**

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GRAFTON, MA

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The Grafton Planning Board was held a workshop on Tuesday, July 1, 2014 in the Planning Department office at the Grafton Municipal Center, 30 Providence Road, Grafton, MA. Present for the meeting were Chairman David Robbins, Vice-Chair Michael Scully Clerk Sargon Hanna, and Members Robert Hassinger and Linda Hassinger. Staff present was Town Planner, Joseph Laydon and Assistant Planner Ann Morgan.

Chairman Robbins called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

9. ZONING BYLAW WORKSHOP

The Board reviewed the current red line version of the draft edits relating to the sign bylaw including definitions, internal inconsistencies, formatting, and organizational structure. Mr. Laydon reviewed the edits and comments received since the June 23rd workshop. Mr. Hassinger noted that the previous comments were no longer visible. Mr. Laydon noted that they are still attached but were not printed to eliminate confusion and redundancy. The comments can be retrieved and printed if needed when developing a hand out for the public to show the changes and rationale. Mr. Robbins stated that it will be important to have a clear and succinct explanation for the public in the hand outs and in the warrant article. Mr. Hassinger stated that it would be best to get the warrant language published as soon as possible to allow the public time to read and digest the content.

The Board continued its discussion on signs for “for profit” businesses and “no-profit” organizations. The IRS has several classifications including the 501 (c)(3) and 501 (c)(4) but our by-law doesn’t make any distinction. Mr. Scully noted that the Board should investigate the differences and make a determination that best fits current practice. Mr. Robbins cited the example that the Lions Club was a (c)(4) organization but that classification may not be appropriate since donations to these non-profit groups are not tax deductible and can have political affiliations. He added that (c)(3) organizations are prohibited from political campaigning and the (c)(4) organizations are not. Mr. Hassinger stated that the Board should be sensitive to any changes in the by-law which engages in first amendment issues relating to political activity. He asked that Mr. Laydon find out how the Building Inspector makes that determination when evaluating sign permits for non-profit organizations. Mr. Robbins noted that this issue would be addressed at a later time and that the purpose of the current by-law review was to make administrative changes.

General discussion included topics of displaying the sign permit number on every sign, developing a Town fee schedule separate from the Zoning Bylaw (ZBL) that could be changed as needed instead of requiring Town Meeting vote, inefficiencies in the current use table format, and inconsistencies in the numbering system which would require a re-codification of the whole ZBL.

The Board reviewed changes made to Section 4.4.2.5 which added a new subsection #9 to address the visibility through the sign between 2 ½ feet and 7 feet. Issues discussed included how this language interfaces with setback requirements, size of the signs, and potential visual obstruction for motorists. Mr. Laydon noted that he had compared AASHTO standards which calculates visibility ranges based on placement of sign and the set back when make the recommended edits to the Town’s ZBL.

At 6:55 p.m. Mr. Hanna joined the workshop.

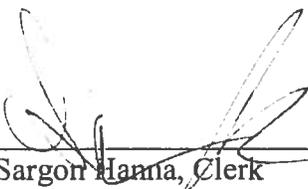
Directional and informational signs were discussed. Mr. Robbins asked if the Building Inspector had been consulted about his interpretation of this language. A twelve foot setback may not be in the best interests of the public because many of these signs need to be at entrances and exits where the motorists can see them quickly. Mr. Hassinger noted that there isn't any language to address that issue. He pointed out that signs had to satisfy both subsection .1 and new subsection .9. Mr. Laydon noted that subsection .1 applies to all signs but that new subsection .9 doesn't apply to all signs. Mr. Hassinger stated this matter requires additional thought and discussion and that he'd prefer to see a more discretionary approach.

MOTION to adjourn the meeting made by Mr. Scully, **SECOND** by Mr. Hanna. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

EXHIBITS

- **Zoning By-law Workshop**

- Sign Definitions and By-Law Amendments, Organizational and Housekeeping Changes, Draft #4; Prepared by the Town Planner; dated July 1, 2014; 17 pages.
- Email correspondence from Joe Laydon to Robert Hassinger, Comments on the Draft 3 redline, dated July 1, 2014; 2 pages.



Sargon Hanna, Clerk