

Town of Starksboro
Planning Commission meeting
Minutes of
September 9, 2021
Draft

Board members present: Dennis Casey, Dan Nugent, Brad Boss, Jeff Keeney, Rodney Orvis, Denny Barnard

Unable to attend: Dan Harris

Others present: Kris Perlee (ZA), Carin McCarthy, Nancy Cornell, Herb Olson

The meeting was called to order to 7:20 p.m. by Chair Dennis Casey. The meeting was in person at the Town Office and conducted via ZOOM video/teleconference.

Visitor's Business – none

Current Business

Discussion of MAUSD Merger Plans

N. Cornell gave an overview of the group formed to try to understand the implications of Starksboro withdrawing from the district. There are about 10 people in the group. Their main objective is to ensure that no school would close without the vote of that town. They are watching the outcome of Ripton and Lincoln. They have meeting with the MAUSD business manager to discuss numbers. She stated that no one really wants to withdraw, but if the school board cannot assure them that town will be allowed to vote on the mergers, they may need to withdraw. D. Casey asked what the time frame is for a decision. N. Cornell stated that the Merger committee should make a decision by December. The group spoke with an attorney and they feel it would be tricky to withdraw if the committee recommends a merger. H. Olson feels that a vote would need to take place on town meeting day, but the town needs to decide ASAP. D. Nugent asked if the school would become private. N. Cornell explained that it would still be public, but would need to figure out many details like is students would attend Mt. Abe or if they would tuition students to other high schools. D. Casey asked if they should start the process now. N. Cornell think they should. She feels the public will want to know how it will effect taxes and kids. D. Nugent suggested that the committee should send out info so people could understand the issues. N. Cornell stated that they are working on this. N. Cornell explained the email from Brad Johnson. There was a discussion on the local census Starksboro used to do and what appears to be growing populations.

Discussion of Town Green project

C. McCarthy thanks Peg and Denny Casey for their hard work on the project. She also thanked the other PC members for their work on this project. They have about \$6000 so far in donations and grants. Hoping that upcoming events like the ham dinner will draw more attention to the project. D. Nugent said he might be able to pull together a fishing derby next spring as a fund raiser. J. Keeney asked if ARPA money could be used. C. McCarthy said the selectboard is looking into this. B. Boss asked where donations could be dropped off. C. McCarthy said the town office would be best.

Review past work on Zoning Bylaw revision.

K. Perlee reviewed some of the ideas he had about where to start on this project. He was working on trying to find a consultant that could do an economic review of the town currently and what could be done in the future. He also discussed ideas like the town working with landowners to purchase the development rights. He will continue to research possible consultants.

Letter to MAUSD school board ideas

- Discussion about PC ideas about growth of business, housing, and outdoor activities.
- The school is an anchor to the community
- Focus on the kids
- Work on the mobile home parks
- Housing is a priority of PC
- The school is the community
- Sports
- Outdoor trails
- Kids on the fringe are going to get lost
- Bussing concerns
- Starksboro doesn't have businesses, so the school is the social hub of the town.
- What happens if population go up

K. Perlee will work on a draft letter to the SB.

Approve June 3 Minutes

Motion to approve with edits from J. Keeney and R. Orvis made by J. Keeney, 2nd D. Nugent. So voted (6-0)

Motion to adjourn at 9:20 p.m.: D. Nugent moved, J. Keeney second.

Motion was approved unanimously.