

Town of Randolph

Planning Board Minutes

November 4, 2021

Members Present: John Scarinza, Tim Mather, Robert Ross, and Kevin Rousseau

Members Excused: John Turner

Public Present: Edith Tucker, Paul Robitaille, Paul Cormier, Dwight Bradley, Cecile Mather, Joshua White, SSgt Michael Cote, Patti Rousseau, Suzie Santos, William Demers, Bob Harris, Tara Bamford (via phone) and others

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by John Scarinza.

Public Hearing on Proposed Amendment to Land Use Ordinance

John Scarinza read the proposed land use amendment to Section 6.04 Permanent and Temporary Residences. Scarinza explained that the purpose of the change is to address tiny homes on wheels in the same manner as recreational vehicles and ensure the safety of temporary residences. Section B would allow for temporary permits to be issued during the construction of a dwelling. Scarinza advised that they would be required to show proof of proper disposal of waste in compliance with NHDES regulations.

William Demers asked if they could live in a camper or tiny home for up to 4 months and Scarinza advised that they could, as long as they show proof of the tanks being pumped out.

A member of the public asked what would happen if someone were not in compliance and Scarinza advised that it would be handled by the Board of Selectmen and there is a process that includes fines assessed per day.

Dwight Bradley asked about tiny homes that are not on wheels, and Scarinza advised these would need a building permit and septic like any other home.

John Scarinza closed the Public Hearing at 7:12 pm.

On a motion by Kevin Rousseau, seconded by Tim Mather, the Board voted to approve the proposed amendment to Section 6.04 of the Land Use Ordinance to be voted on at Town Meeting in March.

Tara Bamford advised that she will run the amendment by town counsel and will let the Planning Board know if there are any issues at the December meeting. John Scarinza advised this will be a ballot question at Town Meeting.

Public Discussion on Randolph Police Department

John Scarinza advised that it was suggested at Town Meeting in March of 2020 that a committee be set up to start looking at the future of police services in Randolph. They would like to find out what the community wants for services and what they are willing to pay for. The committee will consist of 5-7 members and several people have shown interest in being involved, including Bob Harris and Bill Arnold. Edith Tucker suggest that women also be included on the committee to represent a larger spectrum of the town.

Staff Sergeant Michael Cote of NHSP spoke to the public in attendance about the role of NH State Police as it pertains to the North Country and small towns. John Scarinza advised that the state statute says that NHSP has primary jurisdiction in communities with a population less than 3,000. Sgt. Cote advised that NHSP Troop F covers from Hanover to Canada and explained the reality of available resources. Sgt. Cote advised that they will always be there to cover any major incidents, however response time may be an issue depending on where the troopers on duty are responding from. Sgt. Cote advised that many of the less serious calls, such as barking dogs or damaged mailboxes, are better handled by a town police department. Sgt. Cote stated that it is important to have those inserts in small towns to assist in getting a better response time, along with a better quality of life and safety. Sgt. Cote noted that local police officers have more local knowledge of the people in the community. Bob Harris asked about the availability of the Coos County Sheriff's Department and Scarinza advised that although they can and do help with criminal investigations in other counties, in Coos County they serve civil paperwork, provide court security, and transport prisoners. Sgt. Cote advised that not all towns have a local police presence and many of those towns contract with either State Police or neighboring towns for assigned patrols. However, the cost for NHSP to provide patrols is \$75-\$80 per hour. Sgt. Cote noted that Randolph needs to decide what it would like as a community and stated the additional safety net of a local department may be worth the investment for security.

Joshua White noted that a local officer would notice things such as an unplowed driveway which may prompt a welfare check, that someone that was not from the area would not notice.

John Scarinza stated that Alan Lowe did a good job for many years providing police service to the town, and they need to discuss how they will move forward.

A member of the public asked about the current budget, which John Scarinza advised is \$14,000. Scarinza noted that in town reports from the early 1980's, the budget was \$36,000.

Edith Tucker noted that Randolph is more residential now than it was in the 1980's, and what they do going forward should reflect the wants and needs of who is here now. Tucker also suggested that they would want someone who is knowledgeable about Town Ordinances.

William Demers asked how much of the \$14,000 budgeted was spent and Scarinza advised he did not have the numbers tonight, but would put together a spreadsheet. The budget has been minimal for the last 10-15 years, and they will have to start thinking about what the cost would be to hire someone.

John Scarinza noted that there are things that happen in Randolph that the general public is not aware of, and that Route 2 is a major east-west corridor. Scarinza also noted that the ambulance contract with Gorham requires police response to calls. If Randolph does not have someone available, Randolph would be billed for a Gorham officer to respond.

Cecile Mather asked if there was a time limit for reporting back on the committee's findings. John Scarinza advised that the Selectmen would like information available for the Town Meeting, but Scarinza would also like the opportunity to include the summer residents in the discussion. Edith Tucker suggested that seasonal residents could be sent a survey to complete.

Sgt. Cote noted that many towns are no longer able to provide coverage 24 hours a day, which leaves NHSP to cover even more area. Cote warned that calls need to be prioritized, and that crimes against persons take a higher priority than crimes against property. NHSP has the same manpower available today as they did 40 years ago.

Paul Cormier noted that the people don't need to be sold on the need for police presence, as at some point they will need something as there is lot going on.

Edith Cloutier asked if they could budget more this year, as waiting until the following meeting is a long time. Bob Harris suggested that they may start budgeting now for future costs, such as a cruiser or sending an officer to the police academy. John Scarinza stated that in the short-term, they should plan for some equipment upgrades, such as tasers. Scarinza noted that jackets have been purchased, which were budgeted for last year.

Edith Tucker advised Sgt. Cote of the problem of cars speeding on Route 2, and Cote agreed, also noting that it is a deadly stretch of highway, with many fatal accidents occurring there. Sgt. Cote advised that they do what they can, but troopers in the area have less time to spend on patrol. Tucker noted that the population has gone down, but visitors to the area have increased.

Dwight Bradley asked that Scarinza adjust numbers to provide for inflation, comparing the \$14,000 that is currently budgeted to the \$36,000 that was budgeted in the 1980's.

Edith Tucker noted that there have been times, such as during the beginning of Covid and during the Jefferson fires, that people have been afraid and it would be nice to have something in place.

A member of the public asked if a log was kept as to the types of services provided. John Scarinza advised that there is information included in the Town Report on the number of accidents, and other crimes, however a records management system would be helpful to track these more accurately. Scarinza also noted that Police Standards and Training requires each town to have Standard Operating Procedures and these also need to be updated.

Scarinza advised that the committee will be formed and they will start meeting to discuss these issues.

The information session ended at 8:32 pm.

Minutes of October 7, 2021

On a motion by Robert Ross, seconded by Kevin Rousseau, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes from the October 7, 2021 meeting as submitted.

Adjournment

On a motion by Tim Mather, seconded by Robert Ross, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelli Fortin
November 5, 2021