

Cabot Selectboard Public Hearing
Zoning and Subdivision Regulations
Thursday, January 14, 2016

The Cabot Selectboard held a Public Hearing on the Proposed Zoning and Subdivision Regulations in the Willey Building on Thursday, January 14, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. Those present were Selectboard members Jack Daniels (Chair), Jeffrey Gabrielson, Fred Ducharme, and Bernie Shatney; Planning Commission Chair Gary Gulka and Zoning Administrator Karen Deasy; and Town Clerk/Treasurer Betty Ritter. Also present were Cabot residents William Cobb, Rich Aronson, Leonard Spencer, and Amy Hornblas.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The first order of business was to review the Agenda followed by a discussion on the Proposed Meeting Rules.

The Chair then provided opening comments which included the following:

1. Thanking the members of the Planning Commission and the Zoning Administrator for their two and one half years of service researching and writing the proposed regulations;
2. Identifying reasons why the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations need to be updated (the existing regulations were written in the 1970's with some changes) and why it is so critically important that the new Regulations be adopted by the Town;
3. Discussing next steps in the process to include the Selectboard adopting the two Regulations at their next Selectboard meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2016 and then placing them on the Town Meeting Warning to be voted on by Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 1, 2016. However, if the Selectboard decides that significant changes are required to the proposed Regulations before they are ready to be voted on, then the Selectboard will return the proposed Regulations to the Planning Commission for modifications.

Planning Commission Chair Gary Gulka then presented an overview of the new Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. Gary commented on the purpose of each Article and highlighted the various Chapters and maps included in the proposed Regulations. Significant changes pointed out by Gary include increasing from 4 zoning districts to 8 zoning districts; adding sections covering the Flood and Erosion Hazard area and the Drinking Water Source Protection area; including for the first time a Chapter detailing Zoning Administration to include creating a Development Review Board to replace the Zoning Board of Adjustment; and, adding a Chapter with Definitions.

The Chair then opened the meeting up to the floor and asked those present if they had questions or concerns on specific sections in the Regulations. Bill Cobb expressed his opinion that several categories in Chapter 270, RURAL DISTRICT (RL), Section 275. Uses, Permitted Uses (such as Group Home and Essential Services) should be struck from the regulations as he believes that having a group home in a rural setting is not the right place. Rich Aronson asked what is the difference between a group home and a family home with 8 members and his question was not resolved. In response to Bill's concern about the proposed regulations for rural areas being too broad, Gary mentioned that he contacted the Town of Calais regarding their Conditional Use Conditions in which they added Light Industrial Use criteria and he will explore adding the same for the Cabot regulations. Bill felt that light industrial use is not explained very effectively and Gary responded that he would be glad to add a definition of Industrial Use in the Definitions Chapter.

Amy asked a question about a Floodway zone and Gary informed her that the FEMA maps do not identify a floodway zone at this time. Amy then expressed her concern about the wording contained in Article 1, Chapter 120 RIGHTS RETAINED UNDER THESE REGULATIONS, and Section 121 regarding the expiration of a zoning permit. Karen explained that a zoning permit does not expire if the work has started. Amy felt that the word expired does not sufficiently explain what this particular section means and Rich Aronson agreed with her. Gary and Karen will address the wording in this section and provide the Selectboard with alternative wording.

Leonard expressed his concern about junkyards and flood areas and asked if unregistered vehicles included in Article 1, Chapter 100 ABOUT THESE REGULATIONS, Section 103 (C) would be considered a "junkyard" as people tend to use unregistered vehicles as a storage area. Gary stated that the Planning Commission never considered unregistered vehicles as junkyards because junkyards are under the purview of the State. Leonard also expressed his concern that some of his buildings may be in the flood plain, or that they may be flooded from runoff from Whittier Hill. Jack asked Leonard to go to the Town Clerk's office to discuss the flood maps covering his property with Zoning Administrator, Karen Deasy.

Bill Cobb expressed his concern about expansion on Joe's Pond and Karen advised him that the State has jurisdiction over shore land development.

Jack thanked everyone for coming to the Public Hearing and stated that the Selectboard will take their comments under consideration. Jack also requested that those wishing to provide additional written comments should submit them to the Town Clerk's Office not later than Tuesday, noon, January 19, 2016. The Chair stated that if the Selectboard adopts the proposed Zoning and Subdivision Regulations at their meeting on January 19, 2016, then the regulations will be put before the voters by Australian Ballot on March 1, 2016. The Selectboard will also hold a Public Information Hearing at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, February 24, 2016 to discuss all Articles to be voted by Australian Ballot on March 1, 2016, to include the Articles on the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.

Fred motioned to adjourn the meeting and Bernie seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Betty Ritter, Town Clerk/Town Treasurer