

# Town of Benton, New Hampshire

Chartered in 1764

## Zoning Board of Adjustment

### Meeting Minutes of Inaugural Meeting – 05/20/2024

Appointed Board Member Attendees: Laura Richardson (3-year term), Gilbert Richardson (2-year term), Joseph Boutin III (1-year term), Dwight Swauger (1-year term), Michael Stiebitz (2-year term)

Also in attendance: Kimberli and Louis Carpenter, Petitioners. William Darcy, Planning Board member and Selectboard Chair and Joseph Boutin Jr., Road Contractor, arrived before the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting was opened at 6:05pm. The board members nominated and elected Laura Richardson as Chair, Michael Stiebitz as Clerk.

In the event future projects requiring approval by the ZBA have conflicts of interest among the board members, Lou Carpenter agreed to serve as an Alternate.

The Carpenters provided the board with a letter requesting a variance for an approaching project they propose. The board accepted the letter but explained that organizational efforts to set up the ZBA had to occur prior to addressing their project. Furthermore, they will need to submit an application and fee, which will soon be developed.

Laura had done research into the various forms required for ZBA functions and reviewed some specific ones from local communities. She then suggested that the generic forms published by the State of NH might be a better place to start in order to keep things as true to the "Benton Ethos" as possible, i.e., the simpler, the better. The board then voted to accept the State of NH forms as the basis of our forms. Laura volunteered to "Bentonize" them, provide drafts to the board, and once approved distribute the proper form to the current petitioners ASAP.

Discussion then turned to the matter of fees for submission of variance requests. After a short investigation, it was determined that the publication fee in the *Bridge Weekly*, the local free newspaper, would be approximately \$68.00 and the cost of copies and mailings would bring the total to around \$75.00. While the notice for the subscription *Journal Opinion* would be slightly less expensive at \$55, everyone in Benton receives the *Bridge Weekly*. It was later suggested that the cost of notifying abutters depends on the specific application, and the fee should be adjusted based on the number of notifications sent out. In some cases, there are many abutters and, as in the current case, only 3 abutters. For the first ZBA project, the fee will be \$75.

The subject of scheduling meetings and the requirement for notification of the Public Hearing were discussed next. Laura agreed to generate the notice, send it to the board for quick review, and submit it to the *Bridge Weekly* for publication. The notice will also be posted at the Town Building and Coventry Garage as well as on the Town website. The *Bridge Weekly* submission is required by Friday, 5/24/2024, and will be published in the following Friday's edition, 5/31/2024. It was decided that the ZBA will convene on 6/3/2024 at 6:00pm to formally accept the Application for Variance and related materials. The Public Meeting will be scheduled for 6/17/2024 at 6:00pm, and if there are no objections from the public, the meeting to announce the verdict, the decision, and the notification will occur after the Selectmen's meeting on the same day.

Michael Stiebitz agreed to supply the list of abutters to Laura and the Carpenters via email.

William Darcy stated that the abutter notifications should be sent USPS Priority Mail in order to have the tracking information for the record.

As a member of the Planning Board, William Darcy stated that the Board had reviewed the initial Application for a Building Permit and had no objections to the plan, save for it not meeting the required setback from the adjoining property, thus triggering the need for a variance. He agreed to submit the Planning Board Meeting Minutes and Recommendations regarding this project to Laura.

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The motion to adjourn was made and the meeting ended at 7:13pm.

A true copy, attest:

Michael P. Stiebitz – Benton ZBA Clerk

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