

**DRAFT**  
**Brandon Planning Commission Meeting**  
**March 27, 2017**

**Board Members Present:** Stephanie Jerome, Ethan Nelson, Bill Mills, Lisa Rovi

**Board Members Absent:** Phyllis Aitchison

**Also in Attendance:** Anna Scheck – Zoning Administrator, Doug Bailey, Seth Hopkins, Richard Baker, Bill Moore

**1. Call to order**

Stephanie Jerome called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

**2. Agenda Approval**

A motion was made by Ethan Nelson to approve the agenda as presented. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**3. New Business**

*a. Reorganizational Discussion/Appointments*

A motion was made by Ethan Nelson to appoint Stephanie Jerome as the Committee Chair. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Stephanie Jerome will email Phyllis Aitchison regarding the status of her participation on the Planning Committee. Ms. Jerome requested the Zoning Administrator distribute an email/contact list to the Commission members.

Ms. Jerome reported the Select Board will be having a hearing this evening on the revised Sign Ordinance. The Zoning Administrator was asked to provide a list of the issues in the Brandon Land Use Ordinance (BLUO) that was distributed to the Board members. Ms. Jerome also had a conversation with the Town Manager to discuss potential issues. Ms. Jerome noted that one of the largest concerns is the signage regulations and suggested this be the priority for the Planning Commission, as it will make a significant impact for the Town.

Anna Scheck stated another issue is accessory structures. In addition, Maria Ammatuna, as previous Planning Commission Chair, had motioned to have a moratorium on permits for signage in the construction area. It is unclear whether it was for all signage, but it appears that it is for the extra signage so that people can be aware that the businesses are open. Ms. Scheck stated whether the Town treats the signs as accessory structures or signs, she sees this is an issue. Ms. Scheck stated signage should be separate from accessory structures. Ms. Scheck advised that another issue is the reduction of lot sizes. The state indicates if there is a road or a right of way it is a natural subdivision. The BLUO indicates that it is a natural subdivision if it meets the lot size requirement and is separately deeded, which is inconsistent with the state. Illuminated signs is a big issue and Ms. Scheck suggested this is something that should be reviewed as there is conflicting statements in the ordinance. Another item for review is mobile homes and mobile home parks, as they have not been required to obtain a permit in the past when they are moved in and out of a mobile home park, which sometimes creates issues with delinquent taxes. Ms. Scheck suggested it would not be difficult for a mobile home park owner to request the permit. Ms. Scheck advised off-street parking is also addressed in two different parts of the ordinance and it would be helpful to consolidate it into one area.

Seth Hopkins stated the Select Board's #1 priority is the signage issue. Bill Moore stated from an economic development standpoint, he has spoken with the Town Manager regarding the sign ordinance being a hurdle for small business owners. He suggested there could potentially be a default sign that each business could be authorized to have. Mr. Moore thinks the permitting is cumbersome and is not business friendly and suggested it be more forgiving. Mr. Moore also indicated there is an issue with the ordinance regarding chickens. Anna Scheck advised she has information for the Commission on the new agricultural requirements. She noted there have been many problems with chickens/roosters. Ms. Scheck stated the Committee might want to address the small backyard "farms", as they are popular in the area. Doug Bailey stated a couple of businesses just moved within the downtown and had to go through the signage process, which created additional work for the Zoning Administrator. Mr. Atherton agreed with Bill Moore that a default sign for businesses would allow for a more user-friendly sign ordinance for new businesses that are starting up. Mr. Atherton thought the process needs to be more streamlined. Mr. Moore reported he recently attended an Economic Development Conference that included discussion of streamlining processes at the municipal level, as it is more difficult to make changes at the state level. Ethan Nelson asked the process for changes in the current BLUO as to whether it is a replacement or is added to the text. Anna Scheck advised that the Planning Commission could change sections of the ordinance; however, there is a process for approval that requires a Planning Commission hearing and two Select Board hearings. Ms. Scheck stated there is a hearing this evening that includes several changes, as well as waivers. Bill Mills requested a copy of the BLUO that is currently in effect. A priority list was outlined for the Planning Commission's future work: 1) signage 2) farm animals, 3) Act 174 – solar standards, 4) mobile home parks, 5) subdivision and 6) conditional uses.

Ms. Jerome suggested reviewing Bristol, Vergennes, Middlebury and Randolph's ordinances relating to their sign ordinance and signage application. Ethan Nelson to review Bristol, Lisa Rovi – Randolph, Bill Mills – Middlebury and Stephanie Jerome – Vergennes. Ms. Jerome provided the Zoning Administrator a proposed application rewrite for review and comment.

### **3. Old Other Business**

Stephanie Jerome advised the Planning Commission has previously met the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of the month. It was the consensus of the Committee to meet once per month on the first Monday of each month.

Anna Scheck provided the Committee members a copy of the Zoning Administrator's report for their review.

### **6. Date for Next Meeting**

May 1, 2017 – 6:00PM @ Town Hall

### **9. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Bill Mills to adjourn the meeting at 6:40PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant  
Recording Secretary