

Sugar Hill Planning Board

September 6, 2023

Members: Arthur Chase, David Thurston, Amy Venezia, Mike Valentine, Jim Keefe, Rob Hayward, Margo Connors, Steve Monsein

Guests: Tara Bamford (via Zoom), Kayla Traveras, Nick De Mayo, Hugh Hawkins, Leon Arazny, Alice Arazny, Larry Sawyer, Ed Hanslik

Chairman Rob Hayward called the meeting to order at 5:30PM on Wednesday, September 6, 2023. On a motion made by David Thurston, seconded by Jim Keefe the minutes of the August meeting were approved and accepted. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Nick De Mayo moved the flag from the back of the room to the front of the room behind the Board and asked that the Board begin the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Hayward stated that the Board does not usually start the meetings with the Pledge of Allegiance and would not set a precedent tonight to something that is not normally done.

Master Plan Discussion

Kayla, from the Planning Commission Regional Office has been working with Tara on the HOP grant for the Town and was present to discuss the 2 questions on the survey regarding housing. Question #5 on the survey asked which types of homes would be supported in Sugar Hill making it easier to build by making the zoning less restrictive. Choices included small or moderate size, two-family homes, accessory dwellings, manufactured homes and multi-family dwellings. Small or moderate size homes and accessory dwellings saw the most support by all respondents and voter respondents.

Kayla led an active discussion on accessory dwellings. There was strong support to change the current requirement that owner must occupy the main house should be changed. Conversation kept coming around to short term rentals and the need to define what a short term rental is. The Board was in favor of a non-conforming lot being able to have an accessory dwelling unit as long as the footprint is not changed; i.e. making an apartment above an already existing garage.

Concerns about taxing the town's resources with these changes was mentioned and noted.

Cluster development was discussed. Currently in our regulations the setbacks are larger at 35' vs. 25' for single homes and requires 5 or more lots for a cluster. Kayla and Tara led a discussion on changing the setbacks to be consistent at 25' and adding a buffer between the cluster developments and abutting properties. Steve stated that the buffer would really depend on the topography of the land and should be up to the Planning Board to review on a case by case basis during a Site Plan Review. Board was in agreement to that. Board was open

to further discussion to have 3 lots instead of 5 for cluster developments but were not in favor of implementing a density bonus at this time.

Kayla passed out a marked up version of our current Zoning Ordinance to all Board members to review before the October meeting. Tara asked Board members to bring their calendars to the October meeting so that an additional work meeting could be set to keep us on target.

Planning Board's email address was shared with public audience members in case they wanted to share further thoughts or ask any questions of the Board.

Questions from the audience were asked and clarification on the Master Plan process, who Tara was and her role in meeting with the Board. Concerns about housing in our communities and welcoming transients was stated. Concerns also about the town's resources were mentioned as well. Larry Sawyer explained the Conservation Commissions role in Sugar Hill and with the Master Plan development. Chairman Hayward noted that the State of NH requires 20% of the town's population to be low income and stated that he felt Sugar Hill was meeting that currently.

With no more business the meeting was adjourned at 7:50PM.

Submitted by:

Amy Venezia

Secretary