

Amherst Bylaw Review Committee

Minutes of Committee Meeting of August 6, 2019

Meeting convened at 8:35am at Amherst Town Hall 1st floor meeting room. A quorum consisted of committee members Evan Ross, Alissa Brewer, Patricia DeAngelis, and Bob Ritchie.

Schedule - Bob will be unable to attend the committee meeting scheduled for September 16th, but it was felt that the meeting should take place notwithstanding. Upcoming meetings scheduled for August 13th, August 27th, September 5th (2:00pm), and September 16th.

Public Comment – No-one attended the meeting for the Public Comment period.

Minutes – The minutes of the committee’s meetings of June 9 and June 21 were approved with minor corrections.

Discussions – (references to bylaw sections are to proposed new framework)

- The committee briefly discussed the suggestion of the building commissioner to leave the language of the residential rental property bylaw [3.61] as currently written for now.
- The committee also discussed whether the somewhat confusing language of the historic district bylaw [3.60] should be left as currently written, and to defer any proposed revisions that are currently being reviewed by planning board and others. Provisions relating to signs [3.60 (J)(1)(f)] must be reconciled with the general and zoning bylaws regulating signs [3.41]. Bob will report back to the committee with recommendations for revision of the general sign bylaw to eliminate inconsistency with the zoning bylaw and court cases.
- Street names bylaw [3.1] was modified to conform to current planning board practice.
- The committee reviewed and discussed the Town Attorney’s comments on selected sections of the general bylaws. The Town Attorney was asked for guidance on the legality of these sections. The Town Attorney provided the committee with an annotated “track changes” version of those sections that included proposed additions and deletions. The committee felt that an explanation of the additions and deletions is needed for the committee to complete its work. The committee felt that it needs to know whether the sections that were left as drafted and without annotation should be interpreted as being legal in the opinion of the Town Attorney. Geoff was asked to communicate this to the Town Attorney with a request that we have a reply not later than August 26th.
- The committee discussed bylaw sections 3.24 and 3.25 relating to animals, and the desirability of combining and reorganizing their provisions, but felt that this should be done only with further inputs from the animal control officer. In the meantime, Geoff will review and report back to the committee.
- The crosswalk document is evolving into what the committee would like it to be, setting forth an audit trail connecting sections of the re-codified general bylaws with the corresponding sections of the current general bylaws. Final alphanumeric identifiers for the new framework is not yet complete, but the crosswalk document will be revised accordingly.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25am.