

**BRUNSWICK ZONING REWRITE COMMITTEE
NEW MEADOWS ZONING PUBLIC FORUM
SEPTEMBER 17, 2014**

MEMBERS PRESENT ZONING ORDINANCE REWRITE COMMITTEE: Charlie Frizzle, Margaret Wilson, Richard Visser, Anna Breinich, Jeremy Doxsee, and Dan Devereaux

The Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Committee held a New Meadows Public Zoning Forum on Thursday, September 17, 2014 at Southern New Hampshire University, Tibbetts Drive.

This forum focuses on the people living on the western shore of the New Meadows River; the most eastern part of the town of Brunswick. Significant changes are planned for this area, and the Committee would like to explain those changes and receive public feedback as they continue to draft the zoning ordinance. Mr. Frizzle emphasized the fact that this is the first draft and a working document.

Workshop

Ms. Breinich made a presentation on the zoning ordinance and the major changes proposed. She then invited Dan Devereaux, Marine Resource Officer, to explain the reasons the coastal shore land protection changes were being proposed. Steve Walker spoke about proposed changes. Comments from audience members, who did not identify themselves, included questions on where pollution initiated, draft language, dimensional standards, storm water runoff improvement, why Brunswick is the only coastal area to propose these changes, and their concerns for property owners' rights.

Richard Fisco, Lincoln Street, spoke at length about Agenda 21 and the eroding of property rights. He believed the people should initiate change, and the zoning process should slow down to incorporate more citizen input.

Dan Harris, 1 Mountain Ash Avenue, disputed Mr. Fisco's comments, but believed the challenge to zoning is when it encroaches onto personal property rights. He asks the committee to slow down and look for other ways, and believes outreach in the neighborhoods is lacking in this process.

Ms. Wilson and Mr. Breinich responded to comments by giving a timeline of the meetings, repeating that many more meetings with public input are scheduled, emails and letters are being received and added to the website, and the document is not a final document.

Jane Millett, 10 Franklin Street, District 6 Councilor, responded that many of the meetings had low attendance. She said that it will be a matter of balancing, and the more that attend meetings and speak out, the better the process will work.

Mark Holbrook asked for the reason for the zone changing, which he has not heard to date. He says a scientific reason has not been demonstrated to prove that the New Meadows River has eroded.

Another audience member is concerned about keeping basic constitutional rights for property, and what are new regulations needed for? There are more restrictive measures now than are called for.

Walter Reil, New Meadows Motel owner, complained about past zoning practices and changes, which had made it hard to sell his business, and has lost his faith in the Planning Board.

An audience member complained that the document was hard to read, and didn't like the fact that the process has a deadline just as the residents are getting more involved. He believed his property restrictions are related to creating a larger shellfish harvest.

An audience member complained about codes and regulations for building currently, that make it hard for people to use and build their property as they would like, and some of these regulations do not make a better product than was made in the past.

Mark Worthing, Mere Point, spoke about going through the change to the Coastal Protection Zone previously, and the changes from Farm and Forest 3 to Coastal Protection Zone 1 then were far greater a change than is proposed now. Although there was some uproar, some adjustments were made and it was accepted. After it was accepted there was no uproar or push to repeal, and he sees new houses being built, new businesses starting, timberlands harvested. It can be done, but it's worth talking about and finding the right compromise.

An audience member agreed with Mr. Worthing and remembered when Coastal Zoning was proposed there was much angst, but look what it has done. He doesn't understand why the entire coastline wasn't included then. Developments are following the rules and the bays are not being affected. The whole town has a stake in the New Meadows River.

Another audience member replied that the rest of the town is not asked to shoulder the same burden from runoff as the people living at New Meadows. He is not willing to accept these restrictions.

Town Planner Jeremy Doxsee explained that the town's existing zoning ordinance is very confusing and complicated. He thinks the draft ordinance is going to be a more approachable and user-friendly document, even though there may be provisions and chapters that need to be changed. He would like to continue to work together and collaborate to get a better product.

Richard Fisco, Lincoln Street, reiterated his feeling that the process is going too fast, the schedule of meetings too heavy, and early morning meetings or meetings that aren't publicized are not conducive to it being constructively participated in by citizens.

Dave Watson, Councilor District 1, came tonight to listen to those in District 1. He supports Mr. Doxsee's comments, and feels this is a step in the right direction. The process has been going on for a year and a half, and it is the citizen's opportunity to make input. This is an important step for District 1 and the town. He would like people to get involved and make their opinion known to Planning.

Mr. Frizzle responded to an audience member's observation that now that people are beginning to come to meetings, it is time to lengthen the process, by saying that their end date is a goal, not a limit, and they believe they will need to schedule more meetings. The committee will extend this process as long as they have to in order to make sure they have adequately listened to anyone who is interested in providing input and incorporate that into the final product.

Bruce Martinson commented on property he has which is overburdened by regulation by IF&W and would like the ordinance to address items like this. IF&W language is too restrictive should not be used in the town's zoning ordinance.

Jeremy Doxsee commented on the work Mr. Martinson had done in collaborating with other agencies, and expressed that through that collaboration better results for landowners would follow.

Jane Millett, 10 Franklin Street, District 6 Councilor, asked Ms. Breinich what she envisioned for the rest of this process, and how comments received would be able to affect any changes in the ordinance. Ms. Breinich responded that that would be a discussion item at the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Committee meeting on Tuesday, which is open to the public, televised, and held in Council Chambers at Town Hall. The project schedule will also be discussed. Ms. Wilson announced they would attempt to discuss and respond to every comment.

Dave Watson, Councilor District 1, asked the committee what process would people use if they disagreed with the committee. Mr. Frizzle answered that the entire document would have to be approved by the Planning Board and they would have to conduct public hearings. If they still choose to overrule specific public comments, it would go to the Town Council, who will also have to hold public hearings.

Richard Fisco, Lincoln Street, believes more communication, more interaction, and more sharing of viewpoints is needed before the process finishes, and finished his comments by reading the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution.

Donny Cobb, New Meadows Lake, took into consideration what everyone said, and reminded people that a lot of things that used to be used, like fertilizer, are no longer used. The septic systems have also been improved, so if there is a problem, he believes there could be state grants to help with this. He also questioned pollutants, not from homeowners, but from Brunswick Landing and the golf course, which leads to runoff.

Mr. Frizzle replied that he didn't know what regulations applied to the golf course, as he was not sure who owned it, but all the athletic fields owned by Bowdoin College and the Town are under extremely strict regulations, which don't even apply to individual homeowners.

Mark Holbrook cautioned that although he is not opposed to change, homogenization is not the best thing we can do with zoning. There are many things that are different about the New Meadows area. He still has not heard enough of a case to make this a good idea, and would like to hear more about the science behind the proposed changes.

Dave Watson, Councilor District 1, wants to see the same scientific reasons for the change, and asked people to get involved, especially if they wanted some aspect changed.

Attest

Debra Blum
Recording Secretary