

ATKINSON PLANNING BOARD  
Regular Meeting  
Atkinson, New Hampshire  
Wednesday, August 18, 2010

**Present:** Sue Killam, Chairman; Paul DiMaggio, Vice Chairman; Bill Bennett, Ex-Officio, Regular Members: Tim Dziechowski, Ted Stewart, John Wolters, Alternate Member: Mike Turell

**Others:** Julie La Branche, RPC; Alan Phair, Chairman, Kimball Library Trustees; Kay Galloway, Vice- Chairman, Kimball Library Trustees

Ms. Killam started the regular meeting with reading of correspondences at 7:30pm

**Correspondences:**

Incoming:

- 2 Letters of notifications from the Town of Haverhill; meeting on 9/7/2010; modification of a multi-family on Primrose Street; meeting passed on 7/10,2010 for the use of Parking Regulations

- note from resident regarding tonight's meeting - to be read later in meeting

Outgoing:

- decision letter to Dr. Perrault

Ms. Killam called the Public Hearing meeting to order at:7:50 pm

Sue stated that there were some letters of resignation and that John Wolters was an alternate member and was made a regular member and was sworn in.

Sue Killam started by explaining the process of the Public Hearing under RSA 674:54; which deals with Governmental land uses. The Library Trustees of the Kimball Library are proposing to erect an informational sign board that has LED lighting, which overall size is approximately 6' 7 3/4"x 7' 4". This is an airing of the facts and information and is non-binding, a memo may or may not be issued after the hearing by the Planning Board.

Madam Chairman called the Board of Library Trustees, Alan Phair, Chairman and Kay Galloway, Vice-Chairman to come before the Planning Board to present the information on the sign board. Mr. Phair, as well as, Ms. Galloway were on the sign committee.

The sign is:

- LED lit

- most modern and up to date

- sign is approximately 26 sq.ft.

- there are signs on Academy Avenue that are larger but not LED lit

- the proposed sign's illuminated portion would be visible for a driver heading

- easterly on Academy
- heading Westerly on Rt. 121 the sight line was minimal
  - sign is easy to read
  - sign is NOT similar to the "Mortgage Billboard"
  - energy efficient, subtly, easy read sign in Amber color
  - no scrolling, flashing unless an Amber Alert is issued, i.e. Police/Fire Emergency Alerts
  - messages will not be changed frequently
  - no reflections from the sign
  - the sign would not be on all night and it would be shut off by 10pm
  - some residents do not have cable/internet access to receive information
  - no monies from the Town of Atkinson are to be used. All monies have come from donations to the Friends of the Library
  - Trustees are elected officials and have the Town's interest in mind
  - sign is 14" thick, baked enamel aluminum, the letters are 1/4" Plexiglas
  - no plans for illuminating the non-LED portion of the sign
  - messages will be managed by wireless means unlike the Community Center, which is safer in extreme weather conditions
  - the library held 438 programs; the meeting room was used 204 times last year
  - the sign is 14 ft in from the road, sign is approximately 8ft wide and 16ft from the building
  - the lights are not visible from the sky/planes thus making it safer; no light pollution
  - both sides of the sign uses only 1.2 amps or 2.4 = 264 watts per draw using an average of hours per month x 365 days x 12 hours a day x \$.17k/wph = \$16.38 month, \$196.00 per year, roughly \$.54 per day to use equal to lighting in an average living room

**Paul DiMaggio** asked what the 32x96 matrix mean. 32 rows by 96 rows of LED lights per block

**John Wolters** inquired about the sign and the wind factor. Sign is well constructed.

**John Wolters** read a statement regarding as to the regulations such as the signs in the center as 5 sq. ft. signs and the library is 25 sq. ft. Town residents had spoken to him about the "Old" town appearance and in keeping with the "old" town feel.

**Tim D.** is impressed with sign and was originally opposed and has concerns with matte Plexiglas vs. gloss Plexiglas

**Bill B.** has no comments/questions at this time

**Mike Turell** likes the idea of having a sign and feels that as winter approaches and the days are getting darker and the lit sign is a good thing

**Paul D.** concerns of gloss Plexiglas, likes the idea of the sign, glad it's not like the Mortgage sign, why Blue trim - would look better in black; blue trim is on the Library. Have the Trustees looked into different colors for the sign background such as white board with black lettering; answer; easy read signs only comes in 3 color choices amber, red, green. Amber was chosen as the easiest on the eye and less obtrusive.

Paul feels that the sign is in keeping with other town signs even though the

library is a separate entity and his only suggestion would be blue on the sign and the rest be in black. Granite post is a nice look.

**Ted S.** says it is a logical idea and is hoping advertising Town business; to list Town elections.

**Alan P.** the sign's main purpose is to announce library functions with the exception of Town related Emergencies. A blurb can be added "don't forget to vote on such and such a day" but the Trustees vow to not having the sign continually changing. Suggestion to cut off Town events to only elections.

**Tim D.** concern of scrolling or change messages. Alan P. stated that the library would not do that.

**Paul D.** what happens to an LED when it goes out. the LED is changed individually

**Bill B.** the flood light is on the ground and concerns about that.- Kay G. stated that light is for the Seal on the side of the building and would not be used when the sign is in place.

### **Open Discussion - Resident**

**Mr. Ken Grant-** Related the Town sign ordinance, the Planning Board and the adaptation under the zoning ordinance for Atkinson (Sue read Town ordinance 470:4) Mr. Grant had them read the purpose paragraph 470:1 (rural beauty of the Town) Mr. Grant stated that the Town adopted, in their ordinance, municipalities in the list and the wishes of the people of such ordinance, the appropriateness of the signage in the ordinance.

**David Shikes-** loves the whole idea, this sign addresses a safety issue for employees to changing the letters. Also stated the fact of some childhood mischievousness in changing of the sign letters is a nuisance.

**Mr. Latham-** Is impressed in the amount of research done and is appreciative of the fact that sign will identify that the building is the library. The way the sign will be placed is unique. Mr. Latham read a letter, that was written to the Board of Selectman, in support, was given to Madam Killam for the file. Mr. Latham feels granite posts would be charming - the Town has been changed with the rebuilding of the fire station as well as the library and the sign is in keeping with these changes.

**Mr. Tom Kelly -** after hearing the facts is in support. The Library is a "gem" and this will help keep the patrons educated and informed.

**Barbara Snicer-** quoted from the Atkinson's Town Master Plan

1) "Whenever possible the visual analysis should be applied to in order to preserve scenic qualities in future developments of the community and avoid intrusions against these qualities."

2)"A nucleus for New England town Center and improved community facilities is established off Academy Avenue"

3)"Ways should be found without diluting the quaintness and efficiency that make Atkinson the Community it is today"

The Town went to great pains to make the Town Commons into a quaint New England park complete with gas lighting.

Concerns about power failures and only changeable/usable during those hours that someone in the Library is working. Does not feels it is should be placed in

the center of Town. Approximately 60% of Town's people use the road a good portion don't and would not get the information which is similar to the Cable issue where some don't have cable.

**Carol Grant-** strong supporter of the library but feels compelled to be opposed to the sign and wants to protect the rural character and the historical integrity of Atkinson, especially the Center.

- the Master Plan and what the Town's wants for the future of the town - a survey was conducted and the highest scoring total of 98.9% approval of the town's people was to "protect the rural character of the Town" - an ordinance was developed from this, by the Planning Board, was a sign ordinance; which limited size of signage and also forbid any internally lit signs was in the 1994 election; won by over 75%.

- Feels that the "ordinary citizens and local business" have to obey the law while the library trustees can be above the law.

- there is "unfair/discriminatory" loophole in the NH Law that allows Town officials who can break Town law and ordinances.

- There was a controversy when building the new Library, with the Board of Selectman and the Library Trustees - that the Trustees were "not " a part of Town government

- is there a "hardship" to the Library if there was not lit sign - no - the Library has gone over 100 years without one.

- every other group has posted their agendas without internally lit signs.

- drove around Salem, Hampstead and Atkinson's and has no problem reading signs non-internally lit signs and other town's have to no internally lit signs.

- while driving at 9:30 pm there was no one else around.

- there is only one internally lit sign in Atkinson, which is the Village Store, and was grandfathered in because it was in place before the new law was enacted

- would love to see this issue go to a Town vote

**Linda Fredrickson-** has lived in Atkinson's center for 27 years and licensed Real Estate agent

- Atkinson's property values are defined by its character, Atkinson has tried to maintain its high level

- is okay with the top portion of the sign and the bottom not in keeping with the rural character of the town

- in talking with Town officials a comment was made about the community Center Sign was a nightmare to read and that was an issue the Trustees was trying to avoid and to get more information out to more people.

- Could the Library and the Community Center "share" a sign which could be located at the Community Center (the zone would allow it)

- the traffic count on Main Street is 3 times that on Academy Avenue

- this would help all Town activities, there are 52 homes in the town center, 26 are over 100 years in age and that is the reasoning for keeping it in character of the Town

**David Shikes-** you cannot make everyone happy within keeping of the historic value

- things change and progress is inevitable

**Wendy Dowdy-** wants the town to be logical

**Ted Stewart** - was wondering, if in fact, the Community Center, which has

multiple ownership could erect a sign without permission.

Sue read two letters via email

**Dan Strathos-** was addressed to the Zoning Board- regarding the electronic sign should not be allowed

- there are laws and rules; and that all should abide by
- and holding a hearing in which the outcome makes no difference is a waste of time
- put an article on the next ballot

via Bill Bennett and forwarded to Sue Killam

**Linda Jetty-** initially was appalled but after reviewing the plans and facts see the practicality

- while the town center historical feeling has deteriorate by the building of the fire station and the library the sign would not make a difference
- hopes that the best decision is made for all

**Christian Diamond-** direct abutter- letter sent to the Board of Selectman written on 7/8/2010

- sees it as a positive addition to the town

**Tim D.** asked if the RPC has any feelings and if any other towns have this type of issue. Julie stated no.

Sue went over the government entities and then queried the Local Government Center, which is a group of municipal experts on legal issues, and asked about the Library being a governmental entity and their response was that it is a governmental entity.

**Heddy Shikes-** can't grasp why a sign with LED is not accepted but a sign with removable letters and a flood light is considered accepted as historical.

Kay Galloway showed pictures of other municipalities that use LED signs; Derry Fire Department and the Ellis School in Freemont

Bill Bennett asked if the audience could do a show of hands of in favor/opposed

Paul would like to see if the Trustees could wait erecting a sign and be put it to the voters in the next election.

**Wendy-** worked on the Town Center Committee - nothing works to make everyone happy and to wait on an election is to drag out the issue doesn't make sense

**Margaret Finn-** is a new resident but has been coming to Atkinson since 1964 as her sister has lived here

- is an alternate trustee and has worked in libraries
- the town has a new fire station and library they are improvements and the aim is to improve but being tasteful

**Linda Fredrickson**- wondered if a vote was put to the town center people only

Sue asked - does the Board want to write out an opinion - Sue read passage about conformity/non-conformity - opinion to be written within 30 days. John Wolters would like to have an opinion written - the sign is changing the way the town is.

**Paul made the motion to close the hearing, Mike seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to close the hearing.**

Bill Bennett was considering the idea of putting the sign to a Town vote but in re-thinking it - the Town's people would not have all the information that was presented here tonight. So Mr. Bennett is against a town vote.

Paul stated that the Trustees are elected officials and as such are entitled to make a decision based on the discussion of the hearing.

Alan Phair thanked the Board for their time and the opportunity to discuss this issue.

Sue had Julie, RPC come and discuss the CTAP monies. Tim asked about round 3 and the walking path.

Open discussion on the grant; RSA 674:54

Julie enjoyed the meeting and made note that the Board may have set a precedent by holding this meeting.

**Approval of July Minutes:**

**John Wolters made a motion to accept the minutes of July 20, 2010 as amended. Mike Turell seconded the motion. Board voted unanimously in favor of accepting the minutes as amended**

**Bill Bennett made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Paul and the Board voted unanimously to adjourn. The Planning Board meeting was adjourned at 9:48 p.m.**

respectfully submitted by Patty Power