

Cooper Public Hearing Re: Planning Board: Proposed Subdivision Review Ordinance

October 20, 2014

Held at the Cathance Grange Hall/Cooper Community Center

Attending: Doug Pelletier, Scott Jamieson, Brenda Gove, Karen Holmes, Sandy Lyon, Joyce Mykleby, Dan Ackley, Lynn Brown, Daniel Ackley

Starting time: 6:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 1: Dan, as planning board chair, spoke about the two years the Planning Board has been working on this. They wanted to do what is best for the Town, thinking of how to keep access to the lake, not have "spaghetti" lots. He gave an example of a spaghetti lot. They also wanted to be sure that if a road was ever turned over to the Town, the road would already be properly constructed so that the Town wouldn't have an expense from it. They also addressed fire protection; they don't want any subdivision to be a burden for the Town. Dan also spoke about Lakeview shores – they agreed to put in a dry hydrant. They maintain the hydrant, but Town has the use of the hydrant. There are two streams in Lakeview Shores properties that are listed as significant habitat. Lakeview shores have agreed to a larger setback than usual.

Then the economy slowed everything down, so the Comprehensive plan was worked on first. The Planning Board looked at other ordinances, pulled out what worked best for Cooper. Ours is actually smaller than others. Specific to note is that high priced lots will likely be bought by seasonal people, so it would not burden the Schools. They don't want to cram septic in small spaces; they want to do it the best way. Lakeview shores are in agreement with this plan. They had a plan which would have 15 acres set aside for public use; it will be a conservation easement. Residents can go down there to use it, it has a parking lot.

When you look at it, Cooper doesn't even have a significant amount of land that this will apply to. It is for three or more lots. It will be inspected as usual, just like any lot. This is just for new developments only. Existing lots are not affected. Joyce said they tried to make it simple enough to work for smaller groups. Already, in some places on the lake, lots are really close together. Doug asked if this would affect him, if he ever wanted to put up a place for his little fella. Joyce said no.

Dan talked about what has happened on Vining lake, the unreasonable amount that was asked by the new landowner for the state to stock the lake. Greg Burr said it was not possible for the state to pay for stocking. Karen said that in some of the places the state dumped by plane: was Vining lake? Someone thought it was.

Dan said subdivisions can mean quite a bit of taxable income for the Town. Brenda said that Lakeview shores are taking a parcel out of Tree growth, over \$87,000 in penalty. Dan as a Select Board member recommends that some money out of the \$87,000 be spent and the rest be put into town coffers. Dan asked Sandy about the auditor's recommendation of an amount to keep in our accounts. Sandy explained; it is now lower than it should be, according to the auditors.

Dan and Joyce both said they felt that Lakeview shores are happy with this. Dan said they are willing to work with the Town; they aren't really interested in cutting up any smaller anyway.

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Sandy explained why we would not be able to have a paper ballot vote on Nov. 4: this meeting would have been early enough and a paper ballot prepared so that all absentee voters could have had a vote too. Monday Nov. 17th at 7:00 pm we will have a Special Town meeting to vote on the proposed subdivision plan.

Questions from the floor: Doug: Can they divide 13 lots now and then another 13 in 5 years? Dan said they could present a plan for 20, but they are not. They would have to pay the penalty. Lakeview Shores sold the Island, which was over 5 years ago, they were lucky to sell it when they did. They have put the power in; they have fixed the washouts in the road.

Vining Lake was sold as one piece; it worked out great for John. The new owner will allow snowmobilers, but not 4-wheelers because someone tore it up the first year.

It was suggested that we publicize better for the Special Town meeting. Sandy said she can also have posters up at the State Election on Nov. 4, 2014. The Special Town Meeting will be on Monday Nov. 17th at 7:00 p.m. Sandy asked Karen to put in Quoddy Tides, and Sandy will ask Arline to put in the Calais Advertiser.

Question: If the planning board has an appeal, we would usually go the Select Board, but then to the Washington County Commissioners. What do we do since Dan is on both? Sandy thinks we go straight to the County Commissioners. Brenda wasn't sure. We will find out if there is a need.

Lynn said that MMA lawyers did go over this with the Planning Board, they were very helpful.

Doug asked about a Tax meeting that was held, but he didn't know about until after? Dan said it was informal; some summer residents just wanted to see what could be done about keeping the taxes down. Sandy said they should check the 2009 amount that the State gave us for education costs – it was over \$139,000. We will be receiving less than \$4,000 for 2014. Town Taxes make up the difference.

Doug asked about the cost of Washington Academy? Karen said they are not allowed to charge over the State guidelines for Maine students, so it is not what you might think. Dan said he believes it is important to have you kids at the school that is closer to where you work. Dan spoke about the rumors that just are not true – we do not pay ever \$5,000 extra for any of these students. Karen said less than that, there is not a big difference in the school tuition.

The Meeting Adjourned at 6:37 p.m.