

Alna Planning Board Minutes

Date: October 8, 2019

Call to Order: 6:30 pm

Present

Members: Peter Tischbein, Beth Whitney, Tom Albee, Jeff Spinney,

CEO: Tom McKenzie

Public: Tucker Neale (business permit), Charles Culbertson, Thomas Aldrich, Al Monaco, Susan & Kinne Stires, Jonathan Gold*, Christy Joyce*, Bailey Bolen, Carol Ervin, Donna Flynn, Dick Picard, Paul Tena*, Cathy Johnson, Bill Weary*, William Balch*, Joan Belcher, William Wilbur, Jeff Philbrick ([18 people for Spinney](#) dock permit) * indicates Newcastle residents

Press: none

Minutes: Minutes of September 3, 2019 meeting accepted as presented

Business:

1. Tucker Neale - Business Permit for tree service & portable sawmill - This is a sole proprietorship, one-man operation. All work is off-site except what he mills for himself. Noise? Not at odd hours Traffic? None Parking? NA Sign? possibly at some point. Moved & seconded to approve the permit. We took his check for the permit fee. Beth will get the check to Liz Brown and send Tucker a letter indicating the approval of his permit.

2. Jeff Spinney - Status of dock/ramp permit that we had site visited several years ago. Jeff stepped out of his position as Planning Board Chair since this is his project. Peter Tischbein chaired the rest of the meeting and began with an explanation of his role with the Army Corps of Engineers. He had recused himself from being in charge of this project because of his involvement in Alna but he has been following the project's progress.

Jeff was asked to layout his plans and where he is in the process. He said that he is in the public comment phase of the Natural Resource Protection Act process. A number of letters with comments have been submitted by the public and many of those concerned with this project were at tonight's meeting. The rest of the process also includes the Army Corps of Engineers and the DEP along with various resource agencies, such as IF&W, who provide information for the permitting process. All of that is in addition to and independent of the Town of Alna's permit for work in the Shoreland Zone.

The plan: A dock & float were previously permitted and [are have](#) already [been](#) in place. Jeff wants to replace the [current](#) wooden structure with aluminum to the float and place precast cement planks for vehicles to drive on to protect the shoreline when boats are

launched.

The structures are for his private use, which includes friends in an informal hunting club, estimated to be approximately 25 members. This does not mean that there would be 25 boats at one time.

Eighteen of Jeff's neighbors and fellow river dwellers (some of whom are Newcastle residents) were in attendance to voice their concerns about the project. Their concerns include: increased traffic on the river (traffic is allowed on a navigable waterway), increased noise from the increased number of boats (requested no jet skis), disruption of the natural resources and undesirable changes to the nature of the river.

One resident brought up that this shouldn't be done because the Sheepscot River is an AA classified river. That is the case but only the fresh water section, which extends just only as far south as Head Tide. The section in question is classified SA because it contains salt water. As these are water quality designations, the issue is not relevant to this discussion. [\(Note: After the meeting is came to light that Jeff's location is actually SB1.\)](#)

They were also very concerned that there be a public hearing on this permit. There probably will be but we are not to that stage yet. Jeff's application for the permit must be deemed "complete" before we will set that date.

It was ascertained that this will not be a marina. There will be no fuel station, no maintenance facility and no "commerce."

There was also concern that the cement planks for the boat launch would qualify as permanent structures, which are not permitted in the Shoreland Zone. Jeff has researched alternative, temporary designs such as roll out aluminum decking and removable concrete. It was the opinion of IF&W that the permanent structure would have a smaller impact and do less damage to the mud flat in the long run.

One resident was concerned about the rifle range on Jeff's property but that is unrelated to this permit application and, as such, is not relevant to this discussion.

Another resident asked: "Why are you really doing this?" and said she was trying to "read between the lines" because Jeff is going to an awful lot of trouble to put a couple of his buddy's boats in the water (paraphrase). She also asked: "What will this little thing turn into?" Why Jeff is doing is not relevant to our permitting process. It can't turn into something else easily because "change of use" turns this into a different animal and would require further scrutiny.

Due to a minor "records crisis," caused by a quick turnover of of Planning Board secretaries in the last few years and the recent move of the Town Office to its new

location, we have not yet located Jeff's original application for the permit to do this project (submitted several years ago) and the meeting minutes that would refer to the findings of our site visit. Three members in attendance tonight (Tom, Pete & Beth) do remember the site visit and that the project was in the process of being approved. We will continue to pursue the search for the pertinent records.

For the Alna Planning Board, Jeff will need to fill out a new local permit application and provide some drawings relating to his plans. We may or may not need to do another site visit as we have already been down there to see his river frontage.

Next Meeting: November 12, 2019 (The first Tuesday, 11/5, would conflict with Election Day.)

Adjourn: 8:18 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Whitney
Planning Board Secretary