

**Leicester Planning Board Meeting Minutes  
October 3, 2023**

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LEICESTER, MASS.

**Location:** Leicester Town Hall, Meeting Room 3

**Member Present:** Joshua Campbell, James Reinke, Sharon Nist, Anthony Escobar, Lee Dykas

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Kristen Jacobsen, Town Planner, Lisa Westwell, Administrative Assistant

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**Call to Order:** Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

**1. Approval of 9/19/2023 Minutes**

**Motion:** Ms. Nist moved to accept the 9/19/23 minutes

**Second:** Mr. Reinke

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** Five – yes. Motion carried unanimously

**Town Planner Report**

Ms. Jacobsen went through the drafts of the permitting forms for Planning and Zoning. Mr. Reinke asked if they could get copies of the old forms and if a lot of information was culled. Ms. Jacobsen said she would provide the original forms and that the information was the same in a new format. Mr. Reinke asked how close Town is to getting an online permitting portal. Ms. Jacobsen said it is still quite ways out and then it is probably six months to implement. She explanation that paper forms will still need to be available as will full size plan sets, and the Town Clerk and Assessors need paper copies. She also stated that she is working on getting the office a plotter. There was brief discussion about what information will be available in the new online permitting database.

**Review of Town Zoning-Bylaws**

Ms. Jacobsen describes the first set of changes to the Zoning Bylaw including editing the definition section and editing the use table . Mr. Reinke asked if she was doing a red-line document for Board review and she stated yes. The current fee schedule was discussed in general and particularly with regard to the Special Permit fee being high and legal ad fees being paid for directly by the applicant.

Mr. Reinke spoke about a recent EDC meeting he attended and the benefit of considering technical review prior to Planning submittals. Ideas included setting a specific day and time for tech review meetings and giving applicants feedback before they submit their plan. Ms. Jacobsen stated that all Staff comments from tech review meetings should be submitted in writing to the Town Planner. Mr. Reinke suggested a deadline for comments.

Ms. Nist asked if Valley Mart had complied with Planning Board orders for parking and removal of extra cars. Mr. Reinke suggested having a conversation with Harold Leaming, the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer to assist with follow-ups. There was discussion about what

types projects would be inspected by the Planning Board, Kevin Quinn, PE with Quinn Engineering, or the Building Inspector.

Mr. Dykas said he wants to look at the CB zone because current zoning has no business use allowed by right, but only be Special Permit or not allowed at all. Mr. Campbell said the Agricultural uses should be less restrictive and that zoning in general is too restrictive.

Ms. Jacobsen mentioned that Auburn has a tiny house bylaw and other towns have battery energy storage bylaws and Leicester might want to consider these. She also said that she began re-formatting the bylaws and will provide the Board with copies of the zoning map. Mr. Reinke would like to discuss getting a battery storage zoning article on the 2024 Annual Town Meeting warrant and look at the HB-1 zone for mixed use apartments and small retail. Ms. Nist said that Chapel St. will have MBTA service. Mr. Reinke asked Ms. Jacobsen to have reformatted bylaws, red-lined and zoning maps for the next meeting.

Ms. Jacobsen informed the Board that the Town received funding to update the Master Plan.

### **General Discussion**

Mr. Reinke said he sent Ms. Jacobsen the information he had on 190 Main St. Ms. Jacobsen asked who was inspecting and Mr. Reinke said Planning Board members had been out twice and the applicant was making progress on the issues. He thinks the milestones the Board set have passed and the applicant should attend the next meeting. Discussion of next meeting dates: November 21<sup>st</sup>, December 5<sup>th</sup> and December 19<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Reinke asked about the status of Joe's Auto and who is checking on compliance. Ms. Jacobsen said the office has not received anything yet, there are cars parked all over, and there may be future plans for someone to buy the property. Mr. Campbell said a 100 car permit was requested. Mr. Dykas said Joe wants to square off his property. Ms. Jacobsen said she would reach out to Joe at Joe's Auto.

Mr. Campbell asked if there were any committee updates.

Ms. Nist said Capital Improvement met today and ranked department requests totally \$559,453 and sent recommendations to the Town Administrator. Requests included:

- Fire Dept – new fire truck
- Library – 14 computers
- DPW – new dump truck, mower, and F450
- Police Dept – new floor and expanded detective work area
- High School and Middle School – boiler replacement
- Town Hall – backup generator

Mr. Reinke said the EDC met and are looking for ideas to generate revenue and bring in new business.

**Motion: Mr. Reinke made a motion to adjourn**

**Second:** Ms. Nist

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** Five – yes. Motion carried unanimously

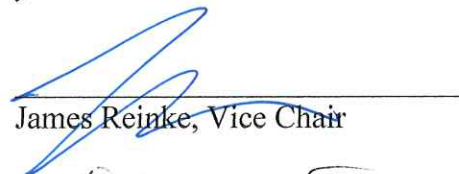
Meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Lisa Westwell, Administrative Assistant  
to the Planning Department

**Date Approved:** 12/5/23

**Planning Board Signatures**

  
Joshua Campbell, Chair

  
James Reinke, Vice Chair

  
Sharon Nist

  
Anthony Escobar

  
Lee Dykas