

MILFORD PLANNING BOARD MEETING
February 21, 2012 Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room, 6:30 PM

Members Present:

Janet Langdell, Chairperson
Kathy Bauer, BOS Representative
Chris Beer
Steve Duncanson
Judy Plant
Susan Robinson, Alternate member

Excused:

Tom Sloan, Vice Chairman
Paul Amato

Staff:

Sarah Marchant, Town Planner
Bill Parker, Director of Community Development
Shirley Wilson, Recording Secretary

SCENIC ROAD PUBLIC HEARING:

1. In accordance with NH RSA 231:158, the Milford Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing at 6:30pm in the Board of Selectmen's meeting room at the Town Hall for the following:
Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH) – Scenic Road Public Hearing for tree trimming and removal, as part of the annual maintenance program, on the following scenic roads: Emerson Rd, Federal Hill Rd, Foster Rd, Osgood Rd, Ponemah Hill Rd, Ruonala Rd, and Young Rd.

MINUTES:

2. Approval of minutes from the 1/17/11 meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS:

3. TIF and Commerce & Community District Presentation

Chairperson Langdell called the meeting to order at 6:34PM and introduced the Board members. This meeting was not televised or videotaped.

SCENIC ROAD HEARING:

Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH) – Scenic Road Public Hearing for tree trimming and removal, as part of the annual maintenance program, on the following scenic roads: Ball Hill, Emerson Rd, Federal Hill Rd, Foster Rd, Jennison Rd, Joslin Rd, Mason Rd, McGettigan Rd, Melendy Rd, Mile Slip Rd, Osgood Rd, Ponemah Hill Rd, Ruonala Rd, Savage Rd and Young Rd.

Chairperson Langdell read the notice into the record and recognized Brian Salas, regional arborist with Public Service of New Hampshire who described the annual maintenance program proposed for Milford. There was some confusion between the notice and PSNH's letter regarding the roads where the work will be done. B. Salas explained that they will be trimming all of Milford this year, including all scenic roads. S. Marchant noted that all the scenic roads are listed on the Staff Report dated 2/21/12 and all trees to be removed have been properly noticed and are noted by an X on the submitted map.

B. Salas said they are working on several power circuits in the area and the veins of all those circuits happen to meet in Milford. J. Langdell noted this was another example of Milford being a hub of the area. B. Salas stated that the letter explains all the specifications for trimming and all trees on the list are still subject to customer permission after Town permission. We try to work with the towns and we asked DPW if there were any other hazardous trees to be included in this scenic road hearing, but none were included. A brief discussion on how other communities and road agents handle the scenic road process followed. B. Salas added that Milford has a lot of scenic roads. J. Langdell said it is again a balancing act as we also have a lot of scenic vistas and our intent is to try to preserve the rural character along some of these roads and vistas. B. Salas said, as a certified arborist, he wants to keep as many trees as possible, but there is a difference between healthy and hazardous. J. Langdell noted that any stone walls would need to be put back in place during this process. B. Salas said they tend to not alter stone walls as that is more for transmissions and poles; our main goal for the maintenance program is to remove the brush and the stone walls become more visible and scenic. We will trim branches that interfere with the line within the 8/10/15 zone; located within eight (8) feet to the side of, ten (10) feet below or fifteen (15) feet above our lines and we are just trying to maintain that zone.

K. Bauer referenced the letter from PSNH dated 1/20/12 and asked if the landowners were notified when chips were dispersed into the woods in undeveloped locations. B. Salas answered that they no longer use that practice. It was too difficult to remove the chips if the owner didn't give permission. We don't chip in the winter because we don't know if there might be a culvert under the snow and we can't leave piles but the owner's permission is not always required. K. Bauer then inquired how the chips were dispersed. B. Salas said crews would broadcast the chips from the chipper at the roadway. With everything on private property, we would only do so if the customer asked us to. That statement should really be deleted from the letter.

S. Duncanson inquired about the 28" maple tree listed on Ponemah Hill Rd. The Board members didn't get the opportunity to look at the trees prior to the meeting and this is a very large tree, why is it scheduled to come down. B. Salas said if approved today, the Board can look at the tree and then rescind their vote afterwards and he would take the ribbon down and leave the tree alone. J. Langdell asked if there was a specific hazard or sight issues. B. Salas said he is not sure why it is on the list, but we don't remove healthy trees. He said maple trees have large cavities and can compartmentalize really well. The problem is, if you deny that tree tonight we would need another scenic road hearing to remove it. J. Langdell noted that the board could do a conditional approval this evening for all but the one tree in question and continue this hearing to our next meeting. This would allow PSNH to get the additional information to the board and not require re-notification that was a concern of B. Salas.

S. Robinson inquired about holding cavities. B. Salas explained that maple trees are a soft wood and compartmentalize their wounds so they can rot from the inside while putting fresh growth on the outside. The heartwood rots quickly in a maple and although they are a very beautiful tree, they don't age well. B. Salas reiterated that they do not want to remove any healthy maple tree.

B. Parker noted that Ponemah Hill Rd is fairly narrow and based on that one tree Public Works removed a few years ago, there could be a hazard with this one. B. Salas said there would have been some hazard in the tree itself, not necessarily a sight issue. He offered to take a photo of the tree and email it to the Board. B. Salas also clarified that they can remove trees on private property that are not in the Right of Ways.

J. Langdell opened the discussion to the public; there being none, the public portion of the meeting was closed. J. Langdell noted that the Board could do a conditional approval this evening for all but the one tree in question and continue this hearing to the next meeting. This would then allow PSNH to get the additional information to the Board not require re-notification that was a concern of B. Salas.

S. Duncanson made a motion to grant conditional approval for the removal of all the trees on the list presented, with the exception of the 28" maple tree on Ponemah Hill Rd and to table consideration of the remaining tree to the March 20, 2012 meeting to allow the applicant to present a reason why the 28" maple tree located at pole 523/30 is a hazard to the lines. K. Bauer seconded and all in favor.

MINUTES:

S. Duncanson made a motion to accept the January 17, 2012 minutes as presented. C. Beer seconded. J. Langdell abstained and all else in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The TIF and Commerce & Community District Presentation by Bill and Sarah will be recorded tomorrow in order to be televised on PEG Access.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55pm.

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 21, 2012 PLANNING BOARD MEETING APPROVED MARCH 20, 2012.