

## Report of the Planning Board

### MEET YOUR 2023 PLANNING BOARD

The Fremont Planning Board is an all-volunteer group which is appointed by the Select Board. It operates under the auspices of NH RSA 673 to review plans for residential and commercial land use. The Board consists of 7 members and can have up to 5 alternate members. One member is a Select Board representative, and the other members are registered voting residents. Below are the names and roles of Fremont Planning Board members:

Paul Powers, Chair

Roger Barham, Select Board Ex-Officio

John (Jack) Karcz, Member

Leanne Miner, Alternate Member

Andrew Kohlhofer, Vice Chair

Ashley Irwin, Member

Brett Hunter, Member

Planning Board members from left to right and front to back: Paul Powers, Chair; Andy Kohlhofer, Vice Chair; Leane Miner, Alternate Member and Land



Use Administrative Assistant; Roger Barham, Select Board Ex-Officio; Ashley Irwin, Member; John (Jack) Karcz, Member. Not included in this photo is Brett Hunter, Member.

In July 2023, the Board mourned the loss of a good friend and active community member, Timothy Lavelle. Tim was an active member of the Planning Board from 2017 to 2023, contributing much of his knowledge and experience as a professional surveyor and land use professional.

The Board welcomed Ashley Irwin as a new voting member in May. Ms. Irwin grew up in Fremont and is a Real Estate professional. As of the writing of this report there is 1 voting member position open and 4 alternate member positions open. We encourage interested residents to attend meetings and consider an alternate position while they get to know Town Zoning and Land Use Regulations. As an Alternate, members are encouraged to participate fully except for actual voting. Alternate members may also be appointed to a voting position if a full Board is not present.



Some light moments during a 2022 Board meeting discussing the need to modify the word “Elderly” in our Zoning Ordinance to “Age-Restricted” as several Board members near the age of 55. The Board proposed this change in a Warrant Article for adoption in 2024. Above: Chair Paul Powers and Vice Chair Andy Kohlhofer.

Below: Members Jack Karcz and Tim Lavelle.



## 2023 ACTIVITIES OF THE PLANNING BOARD

### Applications

As a regulatory Board, members review plans and applications under the requirements and standards set forth in Town Zoning Ordinances, Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations, and input from Town residents through the public hearing process. In 2023 the Board met twice monthly with few exceptions to review the various aspects of 6 applications. The Board approved all applications, with conditions as appropriate, in accordance with Town Regulations and with the professional input from the Town’s Consulting Engineer, Keach Nordstrom Associates, the Rockingham County Planning Commission (RPC), Town Departments and Committees, and Town Legal Counsel. Highlights of applications reviewed by this Board include:

- Fremont Land LLC submitted 3 subdivision applications to further subdivide their commercial land at Iron Horse Commercial Park. The Board reviewed various reports, discussed current and future access scenarios, reviewed plans for a new easement for a dry hydrant to be installed at the pond in an adjacent parcel, and granted approvals that resulted on one new lot with frontage on Main Street and 4 new lots with frontage on the recently accepted public roadway into the commercial development, Iron Horse Drive.
- Shortly after the approval of the most recent 3 new lots along Iron Horse Drive, the Planning Board reviewed a Site Plan application for a new Play, Laugh n Grow Childcare & Preschool facility. Just before the year's end, the Board received another Site Plan application for a multi-use commercial warehouse and office facility at another lot in the Iron Horse Commercial Park.
- Cornerstone Survey, on behalf of Curley Q LLC, submitted a lot merger application for two lots off of Susan's Way to provide access into a larger parcel where they are planning an age-restricted development. This lot merger was approved in April. Shortly thereafter, the same Applicant met with the Board for Preliminary Design Review for 16, 4-unit buildings. The Board did not receive an application as of the end of the year, but the Applicant has been conducting test pits that the Town's Building Inspector was present to observe.
- Fred LeClair and Sons submitted a subdivision application for a new lot on Red Brook Road where the Christmas Tree farm currently stands. This application was conditionally approved January 17, 2024.

### **Zoning Amendments**

In December the Board held public hearings for 3 Zoning Ordinance Amendments. Full language for the proposed amendments are available on the Planning Board webpage and in the Town Report. The 2024 proposed amendments are as follows:

- Proposal 1 and 2: To change all references to "elderly" housing throughout the Elderly Open Space regulation to "age-restricted". Currently the ordinance restricts this type of housing development to "residents aged 55 years and older". In the same regulation, the Board proposes some administrative updates and to clarify how to calculate the number of bedrooms allowed if the development is located partially within the Aquifer Protection District. Note that the total number of units in an Elderly Open Space development is 3 bedrooms per acre are permitted except in the Aquifer Protection District where the total units allowed is limited to 2 bedrooms per acre.
- Proposal 3: To add definitions in for Self-Storage Facility and Warehouse; and to amend the Table of Uses to include the newly defined uses of Self-Storage Facility and Warehouse, and to indicate in which districts they are allowed, under what conditions they are allowed, and in which districts they are prohibited.
- Proposal 4: To add a new Solar Ordinance which will include definitions, a table of uses for multiple types of solar structures or arrays. The new ordinance will also indicate in which districts they are allowed, under what conditions they are allowed, and in which districts they are prohibited.

## **Master Plan**

An important responsibility of Board members include development and maintaining the Town's Master Plan. The Master Plan guides the overall character, appearance, growth, and development of a community and provides important guidance relevant to decision making and planning by local officials. In 2023, the Planning Board, members from the Conservation Commission, and Road Agent updated the Transportation and Housing chapters. This work was done with professional planning support by the RPC. Updates to the Housing Chapter was well timed to benefit from the recent release of the 2023 Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Fair Housing Equity Assessment which provides current, regional, and local data on housing needs to meet state law, requirements of the American Rescue Plan funding, and to fulfill the recommendation of the Council on Housing Stability 2021-2024 Strategic Plan. All chapters of the Town's Master Plan are available on the Planning Board's web page. The Board is already at work on the 2023 Master Plan updates which will include key updates to Community Facilities, Historic Resources, and Public Utilities Chapters.

## **Source Water Protections Plan**

In January the RPC was awarded 100% funding to work with Fremont to prepare a source Water Protection Plan. A source water protection plan identifies all the public water systems (PWS) within a community, identifies contaminating land uses and risks to those systems, and provides strategies for managing and preventing threats to the community's drinking water supply. The committee included members from the Planning Board (Andy Kohlhofer), Conservation Commission (Rich Cooper and Leanne Miner), Open Space Advisory (Sam Harris), and Emergency Management and Regional Conservation Advisory (John Roderick). Two workshops were held, open to the public, where there was productive discussion and development of strategies and recommendations for source water protection in Town.

## **Capital Improvement Plan**

The Planning Board is also responsible for developing and maintaining a Capital Improvement Program (CIP). This is done in Committee by Planning Board and Budget Committee members. The purpose and effect of the CIP is to aid the Budget Committee in their consideration of the annual budget. A CIP also creates a bridge between fiscal realities of improving and expanding community facilities based on the Town's vision, actions and goals set forth in the Master Plan. The CIP Committee did not meet as a group in 2023, however the program was updated by the Land Use Administrative Assistant with updated information from Town Committees and Department Heads and shared with the Budget Committee for their review and use. The CIP Committee includes the following members:

### *Planning Board Members*

Roger Barham  
Andy Kohlhofer  
Leanne Miner

### *Budget Committee Members*

Jon Benson  
Steve Bonacorsi

The Planning Board relies on various regulations, procedures, and input from professionals to guide them in their review of applications, however, they have significant input on the outcome of the way a project looks and fits into the Town's vision. There are vacancies on the Planning



Board if you are interested in getting involved and making decisions that shape our community. Consider attending meetings and joining as an alternate member. Please contact Leanne Miner to learn more or submit a very simple application to volunteer on the Board.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Fremont Planning Board,

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Fremont Garden Club Events at the Fremont Public Library



Photos courtesy of Leanne Miner,  
Michelle Gallant & FCTV