



Planning Board Meeting Minutes Monday, July 31, 2023, at 1:00 pm – Remote Participation

Members Present: Diab Jerius, Chair
I-Ching Scott
Keri Layton
Sally Dale, Vice Chair/Clerk
Nicholas Rossettos

Also Present: WinCam
Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary

Others Attending: Ellen Spencer John Suhrbier Richard Rohan

A quorum being in attendance, Chair Jerius calls the Winchester Planning Board (PB) meeting to order at 1:00 pm noting that the meeting is being recorded via Zoom and WinCam. Roll call of PB members: Rossettos, Scott, Dale, Layton, Jerius in attendance.

1. Town Planner Selection Discussion:

Chair Jerius: The two candidates were interviewed (Jenny deGranda and Taylor Herman). Board discussed at the last meeting and concurred that Jenny DeGrande is not a good fit for the Town Planner position. Concerns were raised regarding Taylor Herman. Chair presented an email he received from Taylor indicating his interest in the Temporary Town Planner position with a maximum of 3 days/week for 3 months; could continue for another 3 months; there would be an understanding that this did not give him an advantage over other candidates for the Town Planner position. There was also a meeting (Chair Jerius and Ms. Dale) with Town Manager, Beth Rudolph, and Assistant Town Manager, Mark Twogood. Discussed how to handle the Temporary position, including funding. They noted Temporary cannot exceed 19.5 hours/week and is usually not a recurring position. Chair will check with the Comptroller. Chair outlined options:

- Option 1: reopen the search and hire Taylor as a Temporary TP.
- Option 2: reopen the search and do not hire anyone for a Temporary TP.
- Option 3: hire Taylor as a full time TP with specific probationary period.

PB Discussion:

- Competitive labor market for Town Planners; the demand is greater than the supply.
- A Temporary would provide cover until the TP position is filled.
- Ms. Spencer: (screening committee member) Asked why Taylor was not selected? Chair Jerius: At the last PB meeting, there was a concern that he did not have formal planning experience and training to meet the minimum requirements of the job posting.
- Suggestion to remove Option 3 as Taylor did not meet the minimum requirement of 3-5 years of experience.

Discussion of Option 1:

- Provides immediate help; Taylor has the skill set to meet many needs.
- Concern with transition from Temporary to TP; there is a risk of disruption and continuity at any time; there is no commitment with the Temporary role.
- TP needs the depth of experience in the law and to be able to address Town Meeting. Support reopening the search.
- If the PB provides support, this will give Taylor an opportunity to gain experience.
- Taylor should be given any TP work, not just what he excels at, like community outreach.

- There is a risk. Could the Board select Option 1, and if Taylor proves he can do the job in 6 months, then offer it to him if we don't find anyone else?
- Board concurred Option 2 is not acceptable.
- The issues facing the TP are technical, not administrative.
- Should there be an Option 4 where we hire Taylor as a Temporary TP and do not open the search?
- With Option 3, in 8 months the TP will have been involved with a Town Meeting.
- What would be the probation period? 6 months, 8 months? Would have to check with Human Resources (HR). Would need to have clear goals/objectives and criteria.
- Employee wants stability and the Board wants flexibility. Need input from HR on how to accomplish.
- Chair Jerius: Noted that Taylor agreed to get accreditation as a planner.

Discussion of Option 3:

- Full time is better, demonstrating an investment in Winchester.
- Concern with Spring Town Meeting; the Board will be very busy, very intense time from January to end of TM; suggest moving probationary period to after TM.
- Prefer to continue exploring getting someone with experience.
- Can the Board transition Taylor to Assistant Town Planner when the position is funded?
- This would feel like a demotion. If he is hired as Full Time TP, then we are stating he is qualified for the job. Could create a higher level position, like a Director, where the TP would report to that person.
- Option 3 gives continuity, and someone committed to the position.
- Concern that the Board is not getting any interest for this level of position; most applicants lack experience and do not meet the qualifications. This position does not offer staff to support the workload.
- Should we have an Option 5 where we hire Taylor for Temporary TP and move him to Assistant in June?
- Board concurred to remove Option 2, 4 and 5.
- Concern that the whole Board would need to support Taylor if move forward with Option 3. Board members concurred they would support Taylor if this was the selected direction.

Ms. Dale made a motion to offer Taylor Herman the position of Town Planner with a 6-month probation period and a review after one year, and a commitment from the Board for supporting the goals, objectives, orientation and training. Ms. Scott second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Scott, Layton, Jerius in favor; Rossettos against. Motion passes 4-1-0.

2. Adjourn:

Ms. Dale moved to adjourn the PB meeting of July 31, 2023. Ms. Scott second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Layton, Rossettos, Scott, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 5-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 2:28 pm.

Sally Dale, Clerk

Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary