

1 **Ashland Planning Board Meeting**
2 **November 3, 2016**
3 **Board of Selectmen Meeting Room, Second Floor of Town Hall**

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5 **Members in Attendance: Preston Crow, Michael Mokey, Dale Buchanan, Joseph**
6 **Rubertone, John Rossi**

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8 Mr. Crow called the meeting to order at 7:20PM

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10 **Interview with prospective hire for Planning Director**

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12 Mr. Crow started by asking the applicant to introduce themselves and describe why they want to
13 be the next Planning Director.

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15 Ms. Sheila Page explained that she was interested in the job due to the “outdoor feel” of
16 Ashland, and that it has “a good foundation.” She also mentioned that Ashland has a good
17 number of plans to build on.

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19 Mr. Crow gave a rundown of the hiring process up to the current state and how the process lead
20 to Ms. Page coming before the board, and explained what options the board has at the
21 conclusion of the meeting.

22
23 Ms. Page then spoke about her background, including education and professional experience.
24 Ms. Page holds a Masters’ degree from the Conway School in Landscape Design; worked at the
25 Berkshire Regional Planning Commission; worked at a stoneyard in Seattle, Washington;
26 worked for King’s County creating a new department; ran a garden service and design
27 company; then worked for the Town of Needham working with the Zoning Board of Appeals.

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29 Mr. Mokey asked to hear more about Ms. Page’s current role with the Needham ZBA.

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31 Ms. Page explained her responsibility with the Needham ZBA and the challenges with the
32 increase in 40B projects that have been working though the town. She also facilitates between
33 the ZBA, the town’s planning office, and the Planning Board.

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35 Mr. Rubertone asked how Ms. Page thought about managing innovatively in the community in
36 reference to the 40B projects.

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38 Ms. Page responded that the has had an contentious, but interesting, affordable housing
39 project, and how that informed later projects.

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41 Mr. Rubertone followed up with asking about the administrative aspects of affordable housing
42 projects and how familiar Ms. Page is with the process.

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44 Ms. Page responded that she is knowledgeable with the process and has help with the
45 Needham Housing Specialist, but she focuses on diligence and making sure things go the way
46 they are supposed to go.

47
48 Mr. Crow asked about increasing the commercial development in town without losing the
49 character of the town.

1 Ms. Page described the positives aspects of streetscaping and the infrastructure involved in
2 walkability, the balance between offices and cafes and/or bakeries and what draws people to
3 the street.

4 Mr. Rubertone asked if Ms. Page had a chance to interact with the Economic Development
5 Coordinator while in Needham.

6 Ms. Page responded that she had and that they worked on make sure that permits are not just
7 handed on to the next person who owns the property, but the permits are examined and to see
8 if the permit is right for the situation. She also mentioned that she worked on creating the
9 Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway while working at the BRPC.

10 Mr. Rubertone asked if there were any ideas that Ms. Page has for working with the Economic
11 Development Director with.

12 Ms. Page responded that Ashland has a vibrant downtown, as well as the state forest and the
13 parks that has a bit of a trail system that could be used for mountain biking and "feed on a
14 theme."

15 Mr. Crow asked what excites Ms. Page the most and also what scares her the most about being
16 part of a small staff.

17 Ms. Page responded that what scares her the most is the rigors of permitting, meeting statutory
18 requirements, and meeting the open meeting laws.

19 Mr. Robertone remarked that he like her familiarity with grants, to which Ms. Page agreed.

20 Mr. Mokey asked Ms. Page to describe what planning means to her.

21 Ms. Page responded that planning means placemaking, to capitalize what the community has to
22 make it a better place. Making sure the community is able to make connections outside, by
23 walking, biking, and in cars and to help facilitate the connections.

24 Mr. Mokey asked Ms. Page to explain her experience with a challenging project, what her
25 involvement was and what her approach was.

26 Ms. Page responded that she was working on the Mohawk Trail (Rt. 2) and working with towns
27 that have very limited staff. She said it was a lost opportunity where the lesson learned was to
28 build relationships early and being able to use those relationships.

29 Mr. Rubertone asked what tools she would have used and how she would have gotten her
30 message out there.

31 Ms. Page said she would have had face-to-face meetings so that the towns know the project
32 beforehand and to bring the communities down to the Jacob's Ladder Byway to show a project
33 that worked.

34 Mr. Rubertone asked what she would have differently in 2016 and the different set of tools.

1 Ms. Page said she would have done the project backwards to learn what the communities are
2 looking for to frame the project better to what the towns are looking for. She also mentioned the
3 importance of building relationships with the surrounding towns in her work in Needham.

4 Mr Buchanan asked in Ms. Page if she was involved with changing bylaws in the town.

5 Ms. Page said that she was not involved in the bylaw creation process but she heard about all
6 the different bylaws in her work with the Needham ZBA. Ms. Page also mentioned that she
7 wrote the telecommunications tower bylaw while working for the BRPC and made sure the
8 pieces would work with the towns.

9 Mr. Rossi inquired how Ms. Page would go about getting grant money for streetscaping. To
10 which Ms. Page mentioned the Complete Streets project from MassDOT, as well as grants for
11 alternate modes of transit that can be used for improving the streetscape.

12 Mr. Crow mentioned the different jobs Ms. Page has had and her background, which Ms. Page
13 thought it allowed her to relate to a wider range of people.

14 Mr. Crow thanked Ms. Page for coming in. Ms. Page left.

15 Mr. Crow asked what the board thought of the candidate, to which the board agreed she was a
16 strong candidate. Mr. Mokey mentioned that he was uneasy with the lack of candidates that had
17 made it to the interview stage. The board discussed this point along with Ms. Page's relevant
18 experience, as well as the whole of the hiring and interview process.

19 Mr. Rubertone suggested Mr. Mokey present the two other resumes he was considering to the
20 board. The decision was made to adjourn while the board individually examines the two
21 additional resumes identified by Mr. Mokey as potential candidates.

22 Before the board looked at the resumes, Mr. Buchanan, asked Mr. Chase his opinions of the
23 candidate. Mr. Chase responded that he thought she was a strong candidate, but he agreed
24 with the concern that Ms. Page does not have a planning education, but she has planning
25 experience. Mr. Chase thought that Ms. Page had enough experience that she would know her
26 strengths and weaknesses. Mr. Chase mentioned that some of Ms. Page's ideas for the town
27 are ideas he has had, and he also called out the ideas Ms. Page had about Ashland's rural
28 character as a positive. He also mentioned that he thought that the areas where she might be
29 not as strong, he was, so they may complement each other. He expressed that he did not have
30 any major reservations.

31 The board continued to discuss Ms. Page's qualifications, and decided to examine the resumes
32 of the two other potential candidates, after discussing possible "outing" of potential candidates
33 that may not have told their employer as of yet.

34 The board had a short recess to examine the resumes.

35 After the recess, the board decided to move forward with the recommendation to the town
36 manager to hire Ms. Page as the Planning Director. Mr. Buchanan put the motion forward, with
37 Mr. Rubertone seconding. The motion passed 5-0.

1 The board discussed the possible starting date of the incoming Planning Director.

2 **Green St. rock wall – possible historic implications**

3 Mr. Chase explained the situation of the question of if a particular rock wall is or is not historic,
4 and therefore subject to the Scenic Roads bylaws. Mr. Chase stated that he could not find any
5 evidence that would say that the rock wall would qualify as historic.

6 Mr. Crow explained to the rest of the committee that he and Mr. Chase thought that the rocks
7 came from a sewer project, and are therefore not historic.

8 Mr. Chase stated that there was a rock pile, and not a rock wall.

9 The board discussed how the determination should be made, and the board decided that this is
10 left up to a staff decision, with the applicant providing proof that the wall is not historic.

11 **Scheduling Future Planning Board Meetings**

12 The board discussed the legal ads not being run by the newspaper for the discussion of the
13 warrant articles, possible future dates for the meetings, and whether or not the board wanted to
14 split the two meetings up. The board decided that they would keep the meeting on November
15 the 17th, but would have the warrant articles discussion meeting on November 21st.

16 **General Announcements**

17 Mr. Crow announced that November 4th was the last day for early voting.

18 Mr. Buchanan moved that the meeting be adjourned, to which Mr. Mokey seconded. The motion
19 passed 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM.