

**Town of Parsonsfield  
Public Hearing  
Tuesday, August 18, 2015 (draft version 2)**

**Planning Board Members in Attendance:**

Tiffany Brendt  
Donna Dulude  
Thelma LaVoie

**CEO David Bower in Attendance**

**Also in attendance:**

Patricia O'Day-Senior, Cathy King, Edith Smith, Joan Medland, James Steuwe, Gilbert Gonsalves, Jeff Wright

Meeting called to order at 6:35 by Tiffany Brendt

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**Removal of 15,000 square foot building limit**

There were concerns regarding this zoning change from the attendees as well as the Planning Board members. The consensus is to achieve a balance between encouraging businesses while retaining the agricultural character of the town.

Board Member Dulude suggested that the 15,000 limit be removed for only agricultural buildings, which would allow for businesses requiring large barns (e.g. equestrian facilities.) As a horse owner, Ms. Dulude clarified to Mr. Wright that her participation on the Planning Board is not for her personal gain, and he apologized for implying as such.

Board Member Brendt said that changing the limit to only agriculture would discourage a light commercial business such as a call center.

**Water Extraction:** Ms. O'Day-Senior referred to the film "Tapped", which documents the ecological damages done by the bottling industry. Mr. Bower stated that any business that large would need Planning Board approval, and cited the ordinance which limits businesses to water extraction of 10,000 gallons per day. Mr. Bower **looked for** the mining/water extraction ordinance. Board Member Brendt cautioned that Nestle has a history of being litigious, so letting them into the area would put the town at risk of high legal costs in the future.

**Comprehensive Plan for Parsonsfield:** Regarding the future plans for Parsonsfield, Mr. Steuwe brought up the subject of the vision of the community. He mentioned how big box stores (e.g. WalMart) employ locals. Board Member Brendt cited ***Westerly, Rhode Island as an example of a community where WalMart came in, enticed people away from Ma/Pa type businesses with the promise of a much better wage. The Ma/Pa businesses could no longer find decent help; they folded, and then WalMart laid off hundreds of people, only bringing some back – and at***

***a much lower wage. With nowhere else to go as the Ma/Pas were then closed, the recently laid-off WalMart employees reluctantly took the wage being offered – which is even lower than the wage they earned at the Ma/Pa businesses. Mr. Wright mentioned that WalMart will also abandon buildings when they re-locate to a larger location.***

Mr. Bower said there was a comprehensive plan put together in 1990, but due to a lack of community involvement, there has been little organized effort to promote the town. ***Mr. Bower provided copies of the 1990 Comprehensive plan.*** Ms. Medland recalled when Kezar Falls was a thriving village, and stated we need to market the area and apply for grants. Board Member Brendt stressed the important need of community involvement, referring to Cornish as an example. *Ms. O'Day-Senior* suggested promoting organic farms as a good fit.

Ms. Medland proposed that the zoning be changed in “baby steps”.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:20.