

**Town of Sheffield Planning Board**  
MINUTES

**Public Hearing on Proposed Amendment to  
Sheffield Zoning Bylaw 6.2 Sign Bylaw**

Wednesday, March 28, 2012

The public hearing was opened at 7:30 PM.

Planning Board members present: David Smith Sr., Maria Nation, James Collingwood Jr. and Margaret Martin.

Members of the Sign Bylaw Committee present: Christopher Tomich.

Members of the Public present: Rene Wood, David West, John Wightman, Ted Pitman, Susan Butler, Robert Butler.

David Smith Sr., Planning Board Chair, explained that the purpose of the hearing was to obtain public input on the proposed warrant article to the May Town Meeting which proposes changes to town zoning bylaw 6.2 Sign Bylaw.

Margaret Martin, Secretary, read the notice of public hearing, published twice in the Berkshire Record.

David Smith Sr. read a letter from the Berkshire County Board of Realtors regarding Proposed Bylaw 6.2.6. In the letter the Realtors state that they understand the intent of the proposed change is to remove signs in a timely manner. Their concern is that proposed wording specifies the time the contract is signed, but homeowners continue to market their properties after the contract is signed. The Realtor request that the wording be changed to "Such signs shall be removed from the property 7 days after the property is sold or leased."

Chris Tomich described the reasons that the Committee was formed to re-write the sign bylaw and the difficulties businesses in Sheffield have with signs. He said that there will be a pamphlet in the town clerk's office making the new bylaw user friendly.

Rene Wood made suggestions, including the following, and submitted a letter (see attached) with complete comments on the proposed bylaw. Ms. Wood suggested that:

1. definitions be placed at the end of the bylaw and that the definitions would be grouped as "related to a sign" "sign types"
2. several items in the definitions are not listed in the bylaw
3. rather than a pamphlet there should be an application for any proposed sign to the building inspector
4. the definition of "lot" does not match the current definition of "lot" in section 10

David Smith Sr. explained that the proposed bylaw is not perfect, but it will allow the town businesses to function better than they can with the current bylaw. We can improve it each year. Many people worked hard on this, and will continue to improve it

Susan Butler asked how anyone would know that the Town Clerk has a handout regarding signs. Chris Tomich said it could be listed on the Town website and anyone doing a search would come up with information about Sheffield bylaws regarding signs. Susan Butler asked how people would know to come into the Town Hall. James Collingwood Jr. explained that this is standard procedure now and that the realtor would advise customers about what they have to do. Chris Tomich explained that there is a section of the bylaw that that enumerates what signs can be put up by right. He acknowledged that the “by right” section could be made clearer.

Margaret Martin complimented Rene Wood on her excellent suggestions but wondered if the Board would be able to make all those changes in time for the May Town Meeting.

David West asked if a word could be changed to “should.” Mr. West said you can’t regulate colors or design, but you can regulate materials, for example phosphorescence or luminescent paint. He is concerned about the proposed bylaw change allowing 25 square feet for signs in the Village Center. Chris Tomich agreed with him. This was also a concern of Rene Wood.

Chris Tomich stated that the definition of illumination of dark sky issues in the proposed bylaw should be clarified.

*James Collingwood made a motion to continue the Public Hearing to a date to be determined, seconded by Maria Nation. All Board members voted in favor of the motion.*

At 8:54 PM the public hearing was closed.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadia Milleron  
Secretary to the Planning Board