

Town of Bolton
Economic Development Committee (EDC)
Minutes to EDC Meeting
Monday March 20, 2012
Slater's Bolton, MA

Attendees: Helene Demmer, Steve George, Heather Hughes, John Karlon, Dina Mazzola, Lysa Miller, Bharat Nair, Chris Nelson, Erik Neyland, Bruce Slater

Members not in attendance: Jennifer Atwood Burney, Eileen Schomp

Non members: over a dozen of concerned citizens

Next meeting: EDC meeting possibly @7pm before April 2 Education Forum at Florence Sawyer School.

Presentation: Doug Deschenes: representing The Kane family, along with Jim & Roger Kane

Kane Family owns the property at intersection Rt 495 & Rt 117: goal to develop the property commercially, however given the current zoning laws they are limited to what they can build at this time.

Current situation, split lot: multiple lots, with 2 different zoning. Business & residential

Warrant article to rezone the current residential property to commercial. By doing this, they can meet the 8% lot coverage, along with attracting businesses.

Concern of the property of the intersection of Rt 85 & rt 117 – currently zoned residential. **Now: withdrawing the original petition** (specifically addressing the 4acre parcel) which provides a good residential buffer. Kanes can meet their goal with the rezoning. Current lot containing the Mobil gas station is grandfathered as a non-conforming, which is sized under the current required zoning for commercial lots – the new will make it a conforming 2 acre lot.

13 acres of commercial would increase by 12 acres, for a total of 25, based on that acreage a maximum allowed is 85k sq ft : 78-79k sq ft taking out the gas station. About 9 not built on: utility easement, well – most likely limited to 3 building per 3 conforming commercial lots.

Questions from committee:

- Any idea of what grocery store is interested? no idea on which grocery store or pharmacy – must pass mustard with planning board, design review board – must conform with character of Bolton – Kane's want to use a reputable, well design, high quality stores; use by-laws to make something unique –
- Will there be a second entrance? Only one entrance by MASS highway – part of light intersection
- junction of 117 & 495 – any changes? May have to do a traffic study. The state will decide if there are any changes/requirements necessary
- Can the Kane's get any revenue projections on tax impact? Help to get these numbers - # of jobs created, etc.

Comments from public:

Now taken out the chunk of residential, 1 building per lot under current zoning- current gas station lot will convert to 2 acres – what could go there? Currently has ~6.5k sq ft footprint on gas station - gas station has its own well

Concern for ground contamination, potential reduction of housing values,

Kanes: Common treatment plant (package treatment plant) 10'X10' house – other properties in Bolton have something similar: The International, Future Electronics, Nashoba Regional HS, Florence Sawyer School

Neighbors abutting the property are deeply opposed to the Kane Property Development and Craig Macrae, 392 main street, presented a prepared statement:

1. town already proposing the mixed use overlay – why won't the Kane's utilize the overlay warrant for their existing commercial acres?
2. Feels that the proposed development will unlikely reduce citizens property owners tax bill and will most likely increase expenses for the town.
3. Feels that a shopping center will not be convenient for Bolton residents, adding more traffic and congestion

4. Feels that the revenues will not stay in Bolton, since it is not locally owned and feels that low paying/poor working conditions often come with national chain stores
5. Put in jeopardy the historic authenticity and aesthetics of abutting neighborhood
6. Competition put small locally-run businesses out of business
7. National chains do not have a good track record of keeping the quality of life and high property values - feels that Bridgewater,MA was ruined by Walgreens
8. Feel this is unfair to the rural character many people chose to move to Bolton for
9. Feel that there is no guarantee for filling this space and one built we take the risk of it sitting empty.
10. Risky that the names of the companies have not been revealed – want to ensure full transparency on these issues, to ensure these are quality tenants.

Other comments

- Curious: 7 minutes drive to Lowes & BJ – put in no-man’s land, why do the Kanes need to put this development in a neighborhood – commercial establishment – why do we need it?

Responses: We need some revenue diversification - limited amount of space to put businesses in Bolton – something needs to happen.
Every dollar paid by a business is one less needed from a resident

Martha Remington pointed out that the local neighbors have coexisted with Kanes and feels this is a good opportunity for development. Concern regarding the residential property on Rte 85 & 117 - pre-existing non-conforming – Would like to see chunk of land of 3.81 acres increased – provides a great natural buffer – Martha communicated the specific borders.

Kane’s lawyer communicated: under current zoning laws they could put in 45k sq ft strip mall today if no rezoning happens (and no-village overlay approval) – vs. 3 building design structure. Kane family will take into consideration Martha Remington’s concern in regards to expanding the 3.81acre rt85/117 residential lot – planning on submitting a new warrant Thursday.

Question from audience: Does this really preserve quality of life? – Fear that this will be too large for Bolton.

Response, if done appropriately, it will provide services, jobs, revenue diversifications – the original 2010 EDC survey suggested moving commercial business towards 495.

Discussion regarding Country Cupboard – not owned by the Kane's and currently has a larger lot coverage than is allowed under today's by-laws

Concern from Mr. Tremblay: As a committee the EDC needs to be careful for being a lobby group. Would like to understand what Mr Riley means by the Kane development being widely supported, would like to understand the numbers, how many people actually support this – Concern that the EDC is swaying people's votes. Does not feel this is widely communicated.

Kanes: have tried to make presentations at planning board, BOS, economic development committee, town administrator, etc. This is not : Martin Riley and the Kane's have talk to a lot of people, and it is their interpretation that they have support. They realize that not everyone is going to be please, but are trying to do their best to do something nice for the town.

Open meeting laws: people suggested the EDC supported the Kane property before a vote was actually taken

54 days before town meeting: Would like to see mutual benefit for the town and property owners – this has been a very thoughtful and deliberate process

Kanes: have owned land for 50 years – not speculators

Audience seems to be suggesting illegal activity?? Negative activity related to big chain –

VOTE: Looking like EDC to defer vote on Kane property – moot issue until the Kane's resubmit their warrant: Interested in seeing if Martha Remington's comments get taken into consideration, along with any other comments from audience

Mixed use overlay- historic commission –

Fast food issue:

Draft overlay: if you want to support, could advisory make the statement – maybe suggest the planning board address this a couple of years down the road.

Motion to vote on mixed use overlay as it stands: all voted yes

Go on record with reservations which will hope will be addressed in the future.

FAQ's – approved the FAQ's as they stand

Article(s):

- Heather read a draft of mixed use village overlay article to appear in Bolton common – feedback
 - Put in column form and take out bullets to read better
 - Do not communicate voting “yes” for the Kane property, leave the vote issue out
- Need to divide out the rest of the articles for the next few weeks

Overall agenda for April 2 Forum:

- Summary of EDC and analysis of key points of business development: Presentation by Chris Nelson, Chair
- Summary of Village Overlay warrant and what it means for Bolton: Presentation by John Karlon, Vice Chair
- Review Kane proposal and EDC to vote on supporting proposed Kane warrant article (possible get the Kane Family)
- Question & Answer

Potentially- vote on the Kane property, if a new warrant is presented this week. If so, meet 15 minutes before - post 48 hours before April 2-

Note: All member of the EDC are entitled to their opinions and should be hesitate voicing these concerns in and out of the meetings.