

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD MEETING OF APRIL 7, 2008
SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m., Jeffrey Partington, Chairman, presiding.

Members Present: Jeffrey Partington, Rick Lemek, Leo Felice, Bruce Ferreira, Michael Lupis, Jim Libby, Christopher Desjardins, Jeffrey Presbrey and Marc Tremblay.

Others Present: Norman Mainville, Town Council Liaison, Joseph Raymond, Building Office, Thomas Kravitz, Town Planner and Christine Langlois, Deputy Planner.

II. ATTENDANCE REVIEW:

The Chairman acknowledged that all members were present.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the Planning Board meeting of March 3, 2008 were read. *A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. Desjardins and carried unanimously by the Board.*

IV. CORRESPONDENCE:

- Correspondence from Town Council President regarding a workshop with the Town Council and Senior Center Feasibility Task Force scheduled for Monday, April 28, 2008

V. NEW BUSINESS:

Minor Land Development:

Ronald Davis, Gig Road, Nasonville, Map 131, Lot 13: *Request for the Release of Bond/Recommendation for Acceptance of Gig Road Extension:* The Board reviewed a request from the developer, Richard Ray, for the release of the cash bond the Town is holding for the road improvements he conducted to a portion of Gig Road, as evidenced by Richard Bernardo's memo to the Board dated 03/20/2008, and a request that that portion of Gig Road be accepted by the Town Council into the Town's highway system. *A motion to release the bond for the Gig Road extension by Ronald Davis and to forward a favorable recommendation to the Town Council on the acceptance of this extension into the Town's highway system was made by Mr. Ferreira. The motion received a second from Mr. Lemek and carried unanimously by the Board.*

VI. OTHER BUSINESS:

Report from Administrative Officer:

Mr. Kravitz noted that during the month of March, a Certificate of Completeness was issued for **Edward J. Pienkos, Camp Dixie Road, Pascoag** (Final Minor Subdivision – 2 lots). There were no plans rejected as incomplete. The plan for **Edward J. Pienkos, Camp Dixie Road, Pascoag** (Final Minor Subdivision – 2 lots) was endorsed.

Planning Board Discussions:

Presentation by the Blackstone River Coalition: Mr. Peter Coffin, Coordinator, was in attendance and conducted a brief presentation of the Blackstone River Coalition's campaign for a "Fishable/Swimmable Blackstone River by 2015" and how Burrillville can contribute towards this goal. Mr. Coffin stressed the importance of public education. Several board members suggested placing information on the Town's website for public access. Mr. Kravitz asked Mr. Coffin to provide him with this information so that he could place it on the Town's website or provide a link to the Coalition's website. The Board thanked Mr. Coffin for a very informative presentation.

Update on the Senior Center from the Senior Task Force Liaison for Discussion, Consideration & Action: Mr. Partington began the discussion by stating that during the December 2007 meeting it was pointed out that the Town was planning a senior center and that the Planning Board had not been made aware of, or reviewed anything on the proposal. The Board, at that time, directed the Planner to forward a memo to the Town Council requesting that a member of the Board be appointed to serve as a representative on the Senior Center Feasibility Task Force. Several meetings went by with still no member assigned to the Task Force. Finally, in March, the Council assigned Mr. Ferreira to the Task Force as a Planning Board liaison. He made note that Mr. Ferreira has since attended three of the Task Force meetings, and that he was going to present a report on the meetings. Mr. Partington made note that Mr. Mainville, the Board's Town Council liaison, was in attendance this evening as well as several elderly members with a vested interest in the project. He then turned the meeting over to Mr. Ferreira.

Mr. Ferreira told the Board that he attended the first meeting as only a concerned citizen as the Town Council had not yet appointed him. He then attended the next two meetings (March 19th and April 2nd). His first impression at these meetings was that the Task Force was not functioning as a feasibility committee but as a building committee, noting that the original intent of the Council's authorization of the committee was to investigate the feasibility of a senior center and its location. He noted that he had drafted a memo to the committee regarding his concerns and presented it to them at their second meeting (March 19th), but did not expect any discussions from the committee until the following meeting (April 2nd). He noted several items of concern from the second meeting. The first was the committee's misinterpretation of the Council's action regarding the Oakland location – in that they believed this site had been designated for the senior center placement. Both the Council President and the Town Manager were in attendance at the meeting and responded that the particular site had not been designated by the Council. He then noted the second area of concern being the committee's misunderstanding of the review process (that the committee has been working on this project for over four years) and the required compliance with the Town's Comprehensive Plan, which he tried to briefly explain and to emphasize the importance of compliance with the Comprehensive Plan as this document guides the growth of the Town. He added that wherever a senior center is proposed, a special use permit would be required from the Zoning Board. He said that he had inquired as to other sites that may have been investigated by the committee and was told that there are no other sites in Town that have five acres of land

available. He, in turn, was asked if he knew of other available properties, and he said that he would check with the Planning Department for a listing. He noted that the Town Manager's main concern regarding the Senior Center is the establishment of a construction amount, which would allow the Town to put forth a bond request on the November 2008 ballot. This amount does not tie into a specific location in Town. He said that he explained to the committee that in order for the Board to vote approval of a project, it must be in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. He pointed out that after the meeting, he was told that he didn't speak for the entire Planning Board, but he felt that he spoke directly to the process, not for the Board. He asked if the Board was in support of the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Partington thanked Mr. Ferreira for his report and then proceeded to state that the Comprehensive Plan differs from the contemplated location for the Senior Center. Construction costs can be ascertained from the foundation and up; site costs would be the only difference. He noted that he had just discovered today that the Town Manager was looking to place the construction costs as a bond referendum in the upcoming election. He added that the Town Council had granted the seniors funding to conduct a feasibility study but he pointed out that the Planning Board has not seen any plans to date so it is very difficult for the Board to make a determination. Mr. Ferreira has brought the question to the Board, "is this the best location based upon the Comprehensive Plan?" and "what are the issues if we do not approve it based upon its face that it does comply with the Plan?" He then asked Mr. Mainville to offer his comments.

Mr. Mainville began by offering a definition of a "liaison". He noted that he has an extreme respect for the Planning Board; however, he said he had a problem with the timing of the Board's request for input on the senior center. Approximately a year ago in January, the seniors appeared before the Town Council and inquired as to what the Town was proposing as a use for the land adjacent to the Police Station in Oakland. Having no consideration in mind, the Council placed the area on hold for the seniors to conduct an investigation as to the feasibility of the siting a senior center on the property. He pointed out that the seniors also investigated other sites, which included the Knights of Columbus property on Roosevelt Avenue in Pascoag; the former mobile station site, opposite Bradford Court, on North Main Street in Pascoag; and several other sites in Harrisville, including the Stillwater Mill Complex. In April 2007 the Council granted the seniors funds to put together a plan and in August, after checking out these sites, the seniors made a presentation to the Council. He noted that one question he had was whether it was feasible to place the senior center on this site. After much consideration, he said that he felt the Oakland site is the best site based upon the plans presented to the Council by the seniors, that fact that this facility should not be placed directly across from Bradford Court or Ashton Court as these places already have their own facilities, you don't want to have the seniors walking to the senior center and they would have the ability to expand if they chose to. The rural setting allows the seniors to view something other than buildings.

He further told the Board that he was under the impression that the Planning Board became involved in the process approximately in June or July 2007, adding that he

thought Mr. Ferreira became liaison at that time. He suggested the Board request the seniors provide the Planning Board with the presentation they gave to the Town Council at the next meeting. He added that he felt it was very important that everyone was in agreement.

Mr. Partington said that he felt the Board was coming in late to the process, that there was some miscommunication earlier on; that reading about it in the newspaper prior to seeing any plan clearly indicates a communication problem. He then asked if the members had any questions. Mr. Lemek questioned the need for a five-acre parcel. Mr. Mainville said he couldn't figure out why. He said the Oakland site does not contain any wetlands, sewer lines are in the area and as far as he was concerned, the senior center could be tied into the Police Department's well for water. The biggest problem is getting both uses to work together. Mr. Ferreira questioned whether zoning relief would be required with two different uses on the same lot; would a lot line be required to separate the two uses? Mr. Mainville said he would check with the Town Solicitor on any legal questions the Board may have. Mr. Tremblay stated that he was the person who had originally questioned the senior center being located in Oakland at the end of the December 3, 2007 meeting when he noted that he had read it in the newspaper. From a planning perspective, he said that it didn't make sense to locate it in Oakland – citing that the Chepachet Senior Center is located in the center of the downtown Chepachet village. He further added that he felt Mr. Ferreira represented the Planning Board to a point, to communicate between the two committees, but not the ability to vote on the Board's behalf outside of the Board's meetings. The Board will have to review some plan in the future. If it doesn't meet the guidelines of the Comprehensive Plan, the Board will be in a position to recommend to the Town Council that it does not coincide. Mr. Ferreira agreed, stating that the best route to follow is the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Partington made reference to notice, received from the Town Council President, that a workshop of the Town Council, Planning Board, and Senior Center Feasibility Task Force has been scheduled for Monday, April 28, 2008. Mr. Tremblay suggested the seniors could do their presentation at that workshop.

Mr. Mainville also told the Board that the Oakland area was picked for the Police Station in earlier years because that area is the center of Town as far as the population. It would also serve the lower villages of Glendale and Nasonville. He asked that the Board keep an open mind when viewing their presentation.

Mr. Partington said that the Board does, always looking for as many alternatives, but one problem is that the Comprehensive Plan is fairly specific as to locating such facilities within the village centers. He added that he has a difference of opinion with Mr. Mainville, perhaps because he hasn't seen their presentation, but that the Board has to stay within the established guidelines – looking to develop the village centers because the Comp Plan calls for it. The new library is located within the center of Harrisville because it makes sense for a number of different purposes. Mr. Libby questioned whether there was someone on the Senior Center Feasibility Task Force determining whether any of the sites were in conformance with the Comp Plan; what is the site selection being dictated

by? Grants availability? Mr. Mainville responded grant availability and accessibility. Mr. Libby added that the Board did not want to be in an uncomfortable situation by making everyone look bad, injecting something that the Board does not feel complies. He noted that the process has a 4-6 month timeframe, if it gets done fast. The Board has put a lot of developers on the spot and they feel responsible for the same thing here – to go through all the effort and then reject it would make everyone look bad. Meetings like this make it easier to work together. Mr. Partington added that the bottom line is that the Board may agree to disagree, so there are no illusions; we make determinations on plans. It is difficult for the Board to approve anything that is against the Comprehensive Plan. There would have to be some extenuating circumstances as to why the center could not go on alternative sites that would help in the Board's decision. Mr. Libby said that he personally felt a civil engineer was required or at least someone who can analyze the site in more detail. Both Mr. Libby and Mr. Presbrey offered their services on a minimal basis. Mr. Partington cautioned them to avoid any conflict of interest, being members of the reviewing board. Mr. Felice stated that he felt no one could disagree that the Town is working to find the best location. It would be a gross oversight if a site is selected and later a civil engineer discovers problems with the site. It is important to be diligent in doing the homework so that the proper site is located. Mr. Partington added that funding opportunities are increased when locating within the denser areas vs. the outlying areas of Town.

As there were no further questions, the Board thanked Mr. Mainville for his participation in the discussion this evening.

Mr. Tremblay then informed the Board of the Conservation Commission's meeting tomorrow night in which they would be discussing how they can play a more active role in the dedication of open space when the Planning Board is reviewing developments. He said they have also scheduled a site walk of the Cabral property.

As there was nothing further to discuss, *a motion to adjourn was then made at 9:00 p.m. by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. Desjardins and carried unanimously by the Board.*