

**MINUTES  
CHARLESTOWN PLANNING BOARD  
JANUARY 18, 2011**

Members Present: Robert Frizzell (Chair); Steve Neill (Ex-Officio); Andy Jellie, Roger Thibodeau

Alternates Present: James Jenkins

Staff Present: David Edkins – Planning & Zoning Administrator

**CALL TO ORDER & SEATING OF ALTERNATES:** Mr. Frizzell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He noted the absence of regular members Sharon Francis, Pat Royce and Eric Lutz. He called upon alternate member James Jenkins to sit on the Board for Sharon Francis.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 21, 2010:**

There was a consensus of the Board to defer action on the December 21, 2010 minutes until the next meeting.

**CHARLES CLOUGHERTY – Establish Auction House in Existing Commercial Building – 3607 Claremont Road – Map 205, Lot 64 – Zone E (Mixed Use):** Charles Clougherty addressed the Board and explained his proposal to open an auction house in a portion of the building owned by Phil Methot immediately to the south of Frank's Bargain Center. The business will occupy approximately 2700 square feet. Mr. Frizzell commented that this space had previously been used as an auction house a number of years ago.

Mr. Clougherty explained that auctions would take place approximately once or twice per month, mostly on Saturday mornings with an occasional evening event. They would have a total duration of approximately 5 hours, including a preview period, the actual auction followed by checkout. There is ample parking on the site. He expects attendance to run between 35-100 persons depending on the nature of the auction.

Mr. Thibodeau asked if there would be any outside storage of merchandise. Mr. Clougherty replied that in most cases there would not except in rare cases like a motor vehicle, ATV or other item with fuel in the tank which could not be stored indoors. This would be rare. In most cases merchandise consigned for auction will be stored indoors to protect it from the elements. It was noted that Kristy's auto sales also operates a used car business on the site which includes trailers, golf carts etc.

Mr. Neill asked if the property had been inspected by the Building Inspector or Fire Chief for code compliance concerning occupancy, egress, fire safety etc. as this would be a place of public assembly. Mr. Edkins replied that it had not but that this could certainly be made a condition of approval.

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Mr. Thibodeau asked if food would be served at the auctions. Mr. Clougherty answered that the auctions would be catered; with all food being prepared off the premises and brought to the site in steam/warming trays or other equipment. There will be no kitchen facilities on the site.

Mr. Thibodeau also asked about exterior lighting. Mr. Clougherty replied that there is ample exterior lighting on the site and no additional lighting is planned. It was noted that there are no nearby residences that would be disturbed by the existing lighting. As previously noted most auctions would be on Saturday mornings when lighting is not necessary; during the occasional evening auction exterior lighting would be turned off after the event.

**Mr. Neill moved that the application be accepted and approved as an amendment to the previously approved site plan subject to inspection and approval by the Building Inspector and/or Fire Chief for code compliance with regard to occupancy, adequacy of egress, fire safety etc. Mr. Thibodeau seconded the motion and offered a friendly amendment that there be no outdoor storage of merchandise. Mr. Neill agreed to the friendly amendment.**

Mr. Jenkins expressed concern that the Board not be too restrictive with regard to outdoor storage, noting that the applicant had stated that there would be occasional items such as ATV's, trailers, etc. that could not be stored indoors. Mr. Clougherty explained that security dictates that the vast majority of auction merchandise would be stored indoors but that there might be occasional items that could not. He assured the Board that neither he nor his landlord is willing to tolerate an unsightly situation. He does not accept junk for auction.

**After further discussion it was agreed that the motion be amended to state that there shall be no outside storage of merchandise except on the day of an active auction. This restriction shall not apply to short term storage of motor vehicles, trailers, boats and other large items to be auctioned provided they do not constitute a visual nuisance. Mr. Frizzell then called for a vote on the motion and with all in favor the motion passed.**

**SIGN PERMIT** – Board members reviewed the sign permit for Abacus Auctions. Mr. Thibodeau noted that the hand drawn sketch would seem to indicate that the some of the lettering would be as little as three inches tall if the drawing were to scale. He questioned whether this would be adequate along a 50 mile per hour highway. The Board expressed appreciation for the simple uncluttered nature of the sign. Mr. Clougherty stated that he may add a phone number to the sign and that he was currently working with a couple of sign makers on a final design. There was a consensus of the Board to table the Sign Permit until the next meeting on February 1 when a final design could be made available.

The Board and Mr. Clougherty briefly discussed the other aspect of his auction business which involves the on-site auctioning of rent-delinquent storage unit contents.

**PLANNING & POLICY ISSUES**

**Subdivision Regulations** – Mr. Edkins noted that this agenda item has been deferred to the next meeting given the inclement weather, noting that he had contacted several community members who have expressed interest in this topic to inform them that this discussion would be postponed due to the weather.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no other business, Mr. Neill moved for adjournment. Mr. Jellie seconded the motion and, with all in favor, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Edkins, Planning & Zoning Administrator

Minutes Filed: 1-21-11

(**Note:** These are unapproved minutes. Correction, if necessary, will be found in the minutes of the February 1, 2011, Planning Board meeting.)