

Planning Board Minutes
Meeting – August 4, 2014

Present: John Waite, Paul Allis, John Baronas, Roger Sadoski, Kip Komosa, Rachel Blain
Absent: Max Antes

The meeting was called to order by John Waite at 6:00 pm with a reading of the agenda.

Minutes:

Public Comment: none

Old Business:

Housing Production Plan: Present- Pat Smith (FRCOG), Alyssa Larose (FRCOG), MJ Adams(FCRHRA), Elizabeth Turner (Senior Citizen), Dick Calisewski (Zoning Officer)

Grant opportunity - Ms. Larose presented information about a potential grant (PATH) of up to \$25,000 that could be directed to a Housing project. In addition CPA funds could be sought as a local match. She said Franklin County does not have a Chapter 40R district yet.

Oxford - A potential site for a housing project is the Oxford property. Some zoning changes would be needed in this expedited permitting district to promote mixed use with affordable and senior housing. Ms. Adams reminded that the Town had received no response to an earlier RFP for the Oxford site because many questions remained about what the Town really wants to do with the property.

Affordable/ low income - An opinion expressed is that people do not want to provide housing for low income people. Comment was made about the onerous hoops and hurdles to be navigated to create affordable housing as per state regulations. Mr. Allis thought the developer of a project in Greenfield should be invited to explain his choice not to certify it as affordable when it likely met the criteria. Ms. Smith said most Towns didn't have the expertise to meet the requirements; however, CPA funds could be used to hire someone to resolve that issue. Questions were asked about strings that would be attached to accepting the PATH grant.

Senior housing - Mr. Baronas said people are interested in senior housing, but nobody wants to talk about it. Mr. Waite thought that the focus of this committee should be on using the Oxford property to develop senior housing as it would get support. Mr. Komosa outlined the steps for doing this: 1) hold a public meeting to decide on the type of housing to be built; 2) make the necessary zoning changes; 3) market the property by putting it in the hands of a realtor. He thought the Board should be working on zoning changes that would permit that use for that property. Pat Smith said that is what she had come prepared to discuss.

Zoning – Ms. Smith and Ms. Larose presented carefully researched suggestions of changes intended to increase the density of housing in some areas by removing some restrictions on accessory apartments, allowing two and multi-family homes in more areas within Deerfield, and increasing mixed-use of commercial buildings to permit addition of residential space.

A lively discussion was held which brought to light differing opinions about what affordable housing is and its role in Deerfield. Mr. Allis thought as existing apartment that meets the affordable regulations should be counted as affordable housing. However, as he understands it, this is totally different from the state's affordable housing program. Mr. Sadoski and Mr. Baronas spoke in support of Mr. Allis view. Ms. Turner said persons she knows at the Senior Center prefer to live on their own, and not be a burden to their children. Many of them would like to

be able to make an apartment in their home that was not restricted as an accessory apartment to do this some zoning changes would need to be made. In the end Ms. Smith said by making a few zoning changes the Board will be laying the foundation for others to build upon. She passed out updated zoning pages, noting as she did so that the General Code company that prepares these pages for the Town doesn't do a very good job. She pointed out some issues and said she will notify the Town Clerk.

At the next housing meeting inclusionary zoning will be discussed. It was thought a press release should be issued.

Signage - Mr. Komosa reported on his research into the management of signs in other towns. He found that Northampton was the only town that seemed to have a successful program for managing fines for signs found in violation. A ticket is issued with a fine of \$100.00. Nonpayment is handled in small claims court; most people pay the fine. In Granby there is a fine of \$35.00, but nobody pays it. In Deerfield, enforcement may be an issue. The general feeling of the Board is that the issue which brought this forward was a one-time situation and most were comfortable leaving things as they are.

New Business:

DEDIC: Present – Paul Olszewski, Richard Andriole, Dick Calisewski

Mr. Olszewski began by stating that 40 plus years ago the industrial park was created to make a place for Millers Falls Tool and preserve 800 jobs. Times have changed necessitating some changes to revitalize the park. Currently one parcel has been foreclosed on and others have been for sale for some time. DEDIC proposes to broaden the possible uses permitted by adding commercial use to the current planned industrial only designation. This could be done by Special Permit. It is not known whether the proposed change would be prohibited. It is thought that the majority of any covenants on park properties have likely expired. The Board was amenable to the idea and requested that DEDIC research this further and return with a proposal that could be acted upon.

ANR: 51 Steam Mill Road – Randi Billings

The Plan presented, prepared by Mary Ann R. Milewski, for Randi L. Billings, dated July 29, 2014 was approved in a motion made by John Baronas and seconded by Paul Allis. Note was made that the plan did not show the line that was being removed to combine the lots.

Rail Bridge Reconstruction Project : The Board briefly discussed plans for the replacement of a bridge over the railroad tracks at McClelland Farm Road on a road that leads to Montague. The Board appreciated the opportunity to comment, but had nothing specific to contribute.

Subcommittee Reports:

Regional Planning Committee: Mr. Baronas reported a meeting at which the proposed pipeline was discussed. Questions to be answered by Kinder-Morgan were drafted. Responses will be posted on the FRCOG web site.

Next Meeting: Since the first Monday in September is Labor Day, the board set September 3, 2014 as the date for its next meeting.

A motion was made by Roger Sadoski, seconded by John Baronas, and voted, to adjourn at 9:21 pm. (5,0,1)

Respectfully submitted,

