

PLANNING BOARD MEETING OF MARCH 13, 2007

PLACE: TOWN HALL BANQUET ROOM

Meeting called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairman Fleurent

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. Quorum/Attendance

Members Not Present – None

Planning Director William Roth was also in attendance.

B. Acceptance of Minutes

Marinus Vander Pol motioned to accept the minutes to the February 27, 2007 meeting. Gary Staffon seconded. The vote was unanimous. The motion passed.

C. Planning Board Bills –

1.) Southcoast Media - \$80.50 – Office Supplies

Gary Staffon motioned to pay this bill. Timothy Cox seconded. The vote was unanimous. The motion passed.

D. Receipt of Plans –

1) Special Permit – Lighthouse Bed & Biscuit – Northern Property at Terminus of Narragansett Blvd. (PH – 4/24/07)

William Roth – I recommend scheduling the public hearing for the April 24, 2007.

Marinus Vander Pol motioned to set the Public Hearing for April 24, 2007. James Holmes seconded. The vote was unanimous. The motion passed.

E. Approval of Plans: None

F. Other - None

II. PUBLIC HEARING

1.) Text Amendment – Proposed Article for § 198-18 Mixed-Use

William Roth – This was to increase the building and lot coverage and reduce the set back. I spoke with the Fire Chief about the height issue and he said he could go well over five stories with the ladder truck. So, raising it to 50 feet was not an issue. Other Town Departments had no comment other than the Building Commissioner, who felt it was too dense, making it more urban. But the intent is to make it denser. He and I agree to disagree on this.

Chairman Fleurent – We knew the situation on this a while ago. This has been in the makings for a couple of years. I think we're on the right track. It provides for more flexibility.

Wayne Hayward – It's mostly residential, business and a little bit of recreation. If we were to bump the ceiling height on zoning, this would be where to do it. We will have more growth there. I'm kind of neutral on this. My main focus would be the Fire Chief. If he had a problem, I would too. But he doesn't.

Gary Staffon - When I read that the Building Commissioner wasn't for it, I tried to figure out why. If we allow this, it will affect parking. Where will people park their cars?

William Roth – You can convert an existing building into whatever use as long as you don't change the footprint. Parking is not an issue. This affects the redevelopment of an underutilized development like Park Motors or the Holiday Inn Express. You may see something with a higher unit and parking space underneath.

Gary Staffon – Why don't they just go to the Board of Appeals?

William Roth – It's an unnecessary step. There is not a parking issue. This gives any potential development some flexibility.

Gary Staffon – A lot of this isn't going to trigger parking. I'm talking about something pre-existing.

William Roth – If you increase building coverage, you automatically trigger parking regulations. This is for re-development, to allow more intensive development.

Marinus Vander Pol – I would support this to encourage the redevelopment of an area that is in need of it.

Chairman Fleurent – We're being a little more lenient here.

Marinus Vander Pol motioned to approve the proposed Text Amendment to Town Meeting. Timothy Cox seconded. The vote was unanimous. The motion passed.

2) Text Amendment – Proposed Article for § 198-29.5 -Wind Energy Facilities

William Roth – I was asked to look at the residential section regarding set backs and review authority. I have outlined what the variation is. The Building Commissioner submitted a letter regarding this issue. This proposed amendment would revise the special permit authority to the Board of Appeals for strictly residential zones. This also would eliminate a group of properties that would never be able to meet the set back requirement. I have mentioned that there are options to look at and I have outlined them in my report.

Wayne Hayward – I don't think we should allow anything in the 35-foot range. Anything under that won't work and no one will sink money into that. Also, our regulations don't address the guide wire. There won't be anything under 75 feet. I'm not in favor of any of the options. I'm just in favor of the original amendment.

James Holmes - I agree. There are too many safety issues. This is all new technology. We have to protect the neighbors as well.

Chairman Fleurent – How many people are going to spend \$50,000.00 to \$75,000.00 to do this?

Gary Staffon – The expert that I spoke with said they should all be 100 feet. He said the set back should be to the closest inhabitable house.

Wayne Hayward – The classical towers are commercial ones. They don't fall. They collapse into themselves. We're saying the minimum threshold is 75 feet. There's a danger when people tilt them down. That's where the danger is.

Discussion ensued regarding the types of towers and the dangers and problems that they pose.

Wayne Hayward – We have to plan for the future of these things. It's the wave of the future.

Marinus Vander Pol – Option three doesn't make any sense if I'm reading this right. This whole thing will be revisited. It is not done in my opinion.

Gary Staffon – We need to work on the quality of the towers we're going to allow.

Timothy Cox – We can't tell someone how to spend his or her money.

Wayne Hayward – All you have to do is meet the set back and get a special permit from the Board of Appeals and you can put the tower in that you want. Most other communities are preventing this stuff, by the way. We're trying to encourage it.

James Holmes – We're talking about residential use only here.

Timothy Cox motioned to approve the proposed Text Amendment and recommend it to Town Meeting. James Holmes seconded. The vote was unanimous. The motion passed.

3) Subdivision Rules and Regulations – Proposed rewrite

Chairman Fleurent – A subcommittee was set up about a year ago on subdivision regulations; Wayne Hayward, Jim Holmes and Jeff Lucas. The Town Planner was involved as well.

William Roth – I am going to show you a number of technical formatting edits on the screen.

Wayne Hayward – Please let me go first. As far as I know, only stormwater regulations have been amended. As far as the rest, they are about 50 years old. In 1999, we started with Chapter 322 subdivision regulations. We started to put together a draft. It wasn't long after that that we started a committee. We have gone through many copies and drafts with countless revisions. This has been going on so long that we've met with different department heads that come and go and the opinions change as they do. We have different departments holding different versions of our subdivision regulations. That needs to be cleaned up first and foremost. This is our main document. We are doing things today that aren't in our code. We added eight signature lines to the plans. We're just trying to get up to date.

Chairman Fleurent – We are on the way.

William Roth – I'll make this brief. The code that I sell to people is the one recorded at the Registry of Deeds and that's the one that's on the web site.

Mr. Roth gave a power point presentation on the technical formatting edits given by Code Publishing and there was a general discussion regarding same.

William Roth – There were no substantive changes. It was all grammatical.

Wayne Hayward – We received input from all of the department heads on this. We have a better feel for it now. We just need to put it in writing.

Discussion ensued regarding additional possible rewrites and appendixes.

James Holmes- Can we notify large tract landowners of this?

Chairman Fleurent – They're available to anyone who wants them. This is a good document and it's a lot better than what we had. It's overdue. It will be this board that will approve it.

Marinus Vander Pol motioned to continue the Public Hearing to March 27, 2007. James Holmes seconded. The vote was unanimous. The motion passed.

Marinus Vander Pol motioned to adjourn. James Holmes seconded. The vote was unanimous. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James Pelland, Secretary to the Planning Board