

DATE: February 10, 2011
TIME: 6:00 P.M.
PLACE: Fire Station
FOR: Regular Meeting
PRESENT: Donald Goranson, Chairman; Jonathan Hankin; Suzanne Fowle Schroeder;
Richard Dohoney
Ethan Culleton, Associate Member
Chris Rembold, Town Planner

Mr. Goranson called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M. Ms. Schroeder had not yet arrived.

FORM A'S:

There were no Form A's presented.

MINUTES:

Mr. Hankin made a motion to approve as amended the minutes of January 21, 2011, Mr. Dohoney seconded, all in favor

Mr. Hankin made a motion to approve as amended the minutes of January 27, 2011, Mr. Dohoney seconded, all in favor.

ZONING ISSUES:

The Board members set the public hearing date for the zoning issues for the Annual Town Meeting for Thursday, March 10, 2011 at 6:15 at the Town Hall.

Ms. Schroeder arrived.

MAIN STREET RECONSTRUCTION:

Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, Sean Stanton, was present to discuss the Main Street Reconstruction. Mr. Stanton went through the project beginning at St. James Place to Bridge. The right turn lane on St. James Place will be eliminated. This is a controversial issue but DOT will not approve the turning lane as it is too short and too narrow. The crosswalk from the Chamber of Commerce across Main Street would be moved to the traffic light and would be signaled and the crosswalk on St. James Place would be moved to the front of the traffic and would also be signaled. The area in front of the Hong Kong Buffet would be more defined with curbing and a sidewalk.

Mr. Hankin said the definition of Main Street would be moving south.

Mr. Stanton said the Main Street/Bridge Street/Castle Street intersection would be improved by adding bump outs at both Bridge and Castle Streets. This allows for handicap accessibility at the crosswalks. The traffic lights would be better synchronized. Different materials would be used in the sidewalks to define where the elevation is different, especially on the west side of Main Street. Stamped concrete would be used in

a couple of different locations of the sidewalks to offer some variations and further definition.

The area of Main Street from Railroad Street to Elm Street would also have bump outs at the crosswalks. A new traffic light would be installed at Elm Street. The crosswalk at Rotary Way is planned to remain in the same location. A crosswalk at the new light at Elm Street has been discussed but at this time is not planned.

The area of Main Street from Elm Street to Rosseter Street will have the road made more narrow in the location of the post office and the library. There are two crosswalks in this stretch that would remain in approximately the same locations. Bump outs at the crosswalks would be added.

The area of Main Street from Rosseter Street to Cottage Street would add bump outs at the crosswalk that could be moved north slightly. The light at Cottage Street will serve the Taylor Rental driveway but will not serve High Street. The added bump outs will reduce the parking by several spaces. It has not been decided what species of trees will be planted.

Mr. Hankin commented that there were many good thoughts and comments made at the special town meeting on February 9. He said there many people with idea that could be helpful during the process.

Mr. Stanton agreed. He said it is his goal to try to make this process more open and get comments to help the project along.

Mr. Goranson asked what the Planning Board can do to help. Do you want a statement of support from us?

Mr. Stanton said it would be great to have a letter from the Planning Board. A letter with specific comments would be great but a general letter would be okay too.

The Board thanked Mr. Stanton for attending the meeting and allowing them the comment to on the project and participate in the process.

TOWN PLANNER REPORT:

Mr. Rembold said the Board might consider thinking about zoning for the redevelopment for the Monument Mills in Housatonic. There was some conversation last year prior to town meeting about making it a B-3 zone but that didn't go forward as there had not been enough time to consider what might go into the mills and how that zone could affect the area. With potential developers for the site zoning will be necessary to make

redevelopment possible. If the Board can be proactive in their approach it could be helpful to getting the mills revitalize.

Mr. Hankin noted that Mr. Rembold had provided a sample bylaw from another community that had mill redevelopment. He said it is a good place to start. He said it

might be beneficial to find out what a developer proposes and craft a bylaw to accommodate their requirements. He said flexibility will be important to accomplish the goals of redevelopment of that area.

Mr. Rembold agreed. He said this area is different than anything in Great Barrington so the zoning will need more thought.

Mr. Dohoney said he didn't think the Board should be apprehensive about letting the zoning be developer driven.

Ms. Schroeder said she thought this would be a good project for the Project Housatonic group. They are working to get an article on the warrant for an economic opportunity area in Housatonic.

The Board will have a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen on Monday, February 14, 2011 to hear a possible proposal for redevelopment of the Housatonic mills.

MASSACHUSETTS ZONING REFORM:

Mr. Rembold said the last two decades have seen efforts to reform the Zoning Act. BRPC had created a committee to review the legislation. The Zoning Act is in need of reform. Many towns will require technical assistance to bring their zoning into compliance. Mr. Rembold said it has been a long time in coming and it may pass this year.

Mr. Rembold advised the Board that AT&T had filed a special permit with the ZBA for a use variance for cellular antennae at Fairview Hospital. A public hearing will be set for sometime in March. The Board will make a recommendation.

Having concluded their business, Mr. Hankin made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Schroeder seconded, all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly L. Shaw
Planning Board Secretary