

**HARVARD PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 20, 2014  
APPROVED: NOVEMBER 3, 2014**

Chairwoman Kara McGuire Minar opened the meeting at 7:11pm in the Town Hall Meeting Room under M.G.L. Chapter 40A and the Code of the Town of Harvard Chapter 125

**Members Present:** Kara McGuire Minar, Erin McBee, Joe Hutchinson and Don Graham

**Others Present:** Liz Allard (LUB Admin.), Bill Scanlan (Town Planner), Maren Caulfield (Harvard Press), Bruce Ringwall (GPR, Inc.), Phil Cunningham and Jon Bishop (Nashoba Publishing)

**Planner Report**

Scanlan reported the survey status under the District Local Technical Assistance grant being completed by Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC), currently has a 20% return rate. The survey will close this week. A notice had been put in the local paper reminding business and property owners of the survey. The responses were accepted by mail or survey monkey; most have sent back hard copies. Scanlan requested the Board's input in conducting a meeting with MRPC in regards to the results. The members agreed the best date would be November 17<sup>th</sup>. McGuire Minar asked if there is a number that would make the response statistically valid. Scanlan stated you may not get a good response, but you will get useful information about the commercial district. McGuire Minar asked if there has been any thought of getting the word out on Nextdoor Harvard. Scanlan stated they would want to be certain the survey was being filled out by the proper recipient. McBee suggested not including the link to the survey in the notice on Nextdoor Harvard. McGuire Minar requested Graham inform the Economic Development Committee that the results of the survey will be discussed at the November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Planning Board.

Scanlan met with Scott Hayward, the owner of the General Store, in regards to the use of the bike shop in the basement of the building. As a change from a pre-existing non-conforming use to another non-conforming use, Scanlan has recommended obtaining a Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Another option would be a zoning change, but that might be considered spot zoning, although he could request the change for additional properties in the area. With the time it takes to process and get final approvals on a zoning change, Scanlan suggested the best option was to obtain the Special Permit.

**Board Member Reports**

Graham stated the Economic Development Committee (EDC) met last week and discussed the September 22<sup>nd</sup> public forum. The overall feeling was since the chair and the vice chair are not in favor of moving forward with amending the existing bylaw, that the EDC would be moving on to other topics to be addressed in the commercial district. However, with an EDC member absent last week the EDC decided to table the discussion until their next meeting. Graham reported the EDC liked the idea of the Planning Board's effort on the design guidelines for the commercial district. At this point the EDC is still planning on attending the November 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Planning Board.

Hutchinson stated there is no news from the Master Plan Steering Committee. The Committee will be meeting with Judi Barrett on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

McBee stated the Hildreth House Improvement Committee is meeting this Thursday.

Hutchinson stated he would like to discuss with the Planning Board at the next available meeting the funding of a long-term project through Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds with an annual commitment of funds, which in turn would have an effect on the funds available for other projects on an annual basis; for example the improvements to the Hildreth House. Scanlan asked how the project at the Hildreth House relates to CPA. Hutchinson believes it to be historic preservation. Hutchinson will not be in attendance at the November 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting; it was suggested to discuss the matter on November 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Discuss Members for the Commercial Design Guidelines Committee**

McGuire Minar stated she still needs to do some work on getting the committee members, which she should have completed by the November 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Scanlan has sent to McGuire Minar a draft of the role and responsibilities of the committee. McGuire Minar asked the document be shared with the members of the Planning Board as well.

Phil Cunningham, an abutter to the commercial district, asked that the Planning Board consider including a representative from north Harvard on the committee. McGuire Minar explained the make up of the committee would be that of individuals with technical experience such as a civil engineer, an architect, and a realtor, but that the meetings will be public and would encourage public input.

### **Approve Invoice**

The following invoices have been received for payment on the next bill warrant:

- William Scanlan - \$2160.00 (Town Planner)
- RKG – \$14670.00

McBee made a motion to approve the invoice for William Scanlan. Hutchinson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Hutchison made a motion to approve the invoice for RKG. McBee seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **Approve & Sign Decision for Global Signal, 47 Poor Farm Road**

Scanlan had previously drafted the decision for Global Signal, which was distributed to the members. In review of the previous permit Scanlan noted the requirement of a bond for the removal of the equipment should the cell tower be abandoned. At this point no one is able to locate the bond or prove its existence. Scanlan has been in touch with the applicant's representative and has requested a bond be provided. Scanlan recommended the decision not be signed until said bond is received.

### **Site Plan Approval – Samantha Realty Trust, 188 Ayer Road**

Bruce Ringwall, of GPR, Inc., was present to represent Samantha Realty LLC. The applicant is seeking to increase the number of available parking spots at 188 Ayer Road (a.k.a. Dunkin Donuts) as the lot is very congested on the weekends. The site does not contain a lot of options due to setbacks to property lines and the building envelope. The proposed plan calls for the removal of three existing spaces to create an additional parking area of twelve spaces, allowing for the gain of nine spaces to the location. The proposed area is lower than Ayer Road, will require a 6% slope, and the relocation of existing stormwater structures. There will be an increase of 0.3 cubic feet of stormwater with the additional pavement for the lot. All existing stormwater basins have been upgraded as required over time since 2001. The site was developed with the requirement of a minimum of 50% open space; this development will reduce the open space from 1.1 acres to 1.08 acres and still be over 50%. The site will remain to

have two handicapped parking spaces, as parking areas under 50 spaces requires two spaces and the total number of spaces will be forty-eight.

Scanlan asked if Ringwall had considered other locations on the lot for the additional parking spaces; such as expanding the spaces on the side of the building. Ringwall stated he had, but with the steep slopes in that location that is really not an option.

McGuire Minar asked about traffic flow and cars exiting the proposed lot; should traffic be directed to go out and around the building rather than being allowed to go left and into two-way traffic in front of the building. Ringwall saw no reason to change the current pattern. McGuire Minar asked what the berm of the lot would be constructed of closest to Ayer Road. Ringwall stated bituminous concrete. McGuire Minar stated the lot seems like a steep incline to Ayer Road. Ringwall corrected himself in terms of the berm; it would be constructed of sloped granite. Hutchinson thinks the idea of one way flow is a good idea. Ringwall was agreeable with the Board wanting the traffic to be directed in one direction

Scanlan asked if there will be any additional landscaping done on the property. Ringwall stated none is proposed; however the applicant may be adding some and/or moving some existing trees that will need to be removed for the new lot.

McGuire Minar asked if the Board feels the plan should have additional review by a consulting engineer. Ringwall argued the point. McGuire Minar stated it is within the Board's purview to have the plan reviewed by an engineer. It was McGuire Minar's recommendation that the plan be reviewed by a consulting engineer. Hutchinson would like to have someone else look at it, as long as it does not take longer than the November 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Graham does not think two weeks will put it out as an undoable process. McBee still has the question about the proper number of handicapped spaces. It was agreed that the two handicapped spots are meeting current compliance codes.

The discussion was tabled until the November 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting at 7:20pm to allow for the review of the plan by a consulting engineer.

### **Review Revisions to Chapter 133**

Scanlan explained he had sent out the new Policies & Procedures prior to the revisions to Chapter 133 because Chapter 133 contains similar information in regards to the procedures of the Board; which can be relocated to the new Policies and Procedures and removed from Chapter 133. Hutchinson, who has worked on the Policies & Procedures with Scanlan, stated his thought was to separate out the Board's responsibilities from the responsibilities of an applicant. In addition, there is the implementation of the Master Plan and keeping that document alive under the Policies & Procedures. He also believes the implementation of the Master Plan will require a full-time planner. Hutchinson stated he used the Board of Selectmen's (BOS) Policies & Procedures and inserted Town Planner in the place of the Town Administrator.

Allard asked why the Hutchinson used the BOS Policies & Procedures and not another town's Planning Board's Policies & Procedures. Hutchinson stated he has looked at others, but thought these were comprehensive enough. McBee asked if there is currently a Planning Department. Hutchinson explained his conversations with other Town Planners and how they function; ideally he wants there to be a Planning Department and has begun creating a warrant article with a job description for the Annual Town Meeting. Graham stated Hutchinson has done a good job preparing the Policies & Procedure and would like the ability to review the document in sections over the next few meetings. Members agreed; with Hutchinson being absent for the next meeting, the item was scheduled for November 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjournment**

McBee made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:54pm. Hutchinson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Liz Allard, Clerk

**EXHIBITS & OTHER DOCUMENTS****Site Plan Approval – Samantha Realty Trust, 188 Ayer Road**

- Site Improvements Permit Plan Set, Parking Modification, 188 Ayer Road, Harvard, MA 01451, prepared by GPR, Inc., JOB 141047, dated September 2014