

Commercial Design Standards Task Force

Tuesday, January 6, 2015 @ 7:00 pm
Center on the Common, 7 Fairbank Street, Harvard MA

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Erin McBee (Chair), Bill Scanian (PB Planner), Suzanne Dutkewych, Rich Maiore (EDC Chair), Jim Lee, Rochelle Greayer, Wendy Cote-Magan

Absent: Kara Minar (PB Chair), Al Combs

Approval of December 8, 2014 Minutes.

Review of Design Standards for Commercial Development in the Zoning Bylaws

(pages 6-10 of last meeting's handout)

- Discussed creating a "design committee" to guide new owners/developers through the process and make recommendations to the planning board and zoning board
- Landscape section can be improved by providing more detail, specifically parking lots
- Currently no noise ordinance, discussed adding this at some point (would not be ready for town meeting)
- Section on screening is good, will review in more detail

Review of Development Constraints and Potential in the C District Using GIS Statistics

- Bill pointed out the distance needed to connect water and sewer lines to Devens, it would increase development potential but would be costly
- Terrain is conducive to development (only 0.03% is very steep)
- Not a lot of historic properties
- Not a lot of wetlands (only 4.8%), Suzanne pointed out lots with wetlands also deal with buffers, septic, well and parking lots with not a lot of land left to build
- Not a lot of vacant lots
- Some of the residential lots could change to commercial
- Property near rte 2 has prime lots, set standards now for dealing with traffic and backup to rte 2
- Rochelle talked about lots that have "two fronts" and how guides might be in place to encourage development of both fronts
- Most agreed it would be good to have sidewalks, they would not have to run parallel to the road but could meander and connect businesses
- Discussed front setbacks that bring buildings closer to the road and discourage front parking

Discussion of Design Aspects of Parking, Landscaping and Buffering

- Minimize storm water runoff and deter large parking lots, breakdown into smaller lots
- Encourage shared parking lots
- Would be good to have tighter guidelines for exterior lighting

Next meeting date: January 20, 2015 @ 7:00 pm

Adjourned: 8:30 PM