



Minutes

NORTH HAMPTON PLANNING BOARD Public Hearing and Work Session Monday, May 19, 2003

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These minutes were prepared as a reasonable summary of the essential content of this meeting, not as a transcription. An audio recording of the meeting is available in the Town Office. In the event that a question arises about verbatim comments, it can be answered by listening to the recording.

Attendance

Present: (1) Phil Wilson, Chair; (2) Ron Todd, Vice Chair; (3) Joseph Arena; (4) Judy Day; (5) Shep Kroner; (6) Beth Church, Alternate, seated for Don Gould; Krystina Deren Arrain, Recording Secretary

Absent: (1) Don Gould; (2) Allen Hines, Selectmen; (3) Richard Place, Alternate

Visitors: Michael Iafolla, Rick Fucci and Laurel Pohl

Mr. Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Items Considered

Minutes from prior meetings

Minutes of the April 21, 2003 Work Session Meeting

Dr. Arena moved and Ms. Church seconded the motion to accept the minutes as amended. The vote was 5-0 with Mr. Kroner abstaining.

Minutes of the May 6, 2003 Regular Meeting

Dr. Arena moved and Mr. Kroner seconded the motion to accept the minutes as amended. The vote was unanimous (6-0).

Continued Organization of Board Committees for 2003-2004

Ms. Day agreed to continue leading the Long-Range Planning Committee. She contacted the North Hampton Business Association to elicit volunteers. Paul McGinnis agreed to volunteer on a limited basis and Laurel Pohl indicated her interest in serving on the committee as well.

Ms. Day questioned whether there is a legal requirement to post meeting notices for sub-committee meetings. She also questioned whether meetings could be conducted through e-mails, a sort of "electronic meeting." Mr. Wilson indicated he would contact the NHMA regarding (1) legal posting requirements for working committees of sub-committees and/or sub-committees and (2) legality of e-mail exchanges as "virtual meetings." Ms. Day commented that she was

under the impression that all sub-committee meetings required meeting legal posting requirements.

Mr. Todd suggested the Board appoint Long-Range Planning and Rules and Regulations subcommittees. Mr. Wilson noted that he would conduct a review of the Zoning Ordinance for clarity and consistency and work with John Krebs/RPC on John's review conducted in October 2002. Ms. Day added that she would work on an (1) update of Master Plan, (2) update of the CIP, (3) Signage, (4) Agriculture Resources, (5) Water Protection, (6) Overlay District and (7) Access Management. Mr. Kroner commented that the RPC is interested in addressing Town of North Hampton issues/concerns and asked for inputs from the Town.

Ms. Day noted that she had received some inputs for the Master Plan update but added the process failed because resources for completing the update were not defined. She commented that she provided Mike Pardue, Town Administrator, the CIP/Master Plan information and he indicated that he might have resources available for the update. Mr. Wilson indicated that the update process would be in place next year.

Mr. Todd observed that there are areas of the zoning ordinance that need clarification or updating. Ms. Day added that all Board members' input to this process was encouraged and appreciated. Mr. Todd, Dr. Arena and Mr. Wilson volunteered for the Rules and Regulation Subcommittee.

Planning Board Representative to Route 1 Study Committee

Mr. Wilson asked for a volunteer from the Board. He stated that RPC Commissioners would participate in the study, meeting monthly during the two-year study phase. Ms. Church suggested appointing Mr. Charles Gordon as a Planning Board representative. Mr. Wilson stated the Board would act on this issue at the regular meeting on June 3, 2003 at which time their suggestions would be welcome.

Continued Public Hearing [Convened at 8:27 PM]

[Addressing Proposed Site Plan Review Regulation Amendment for Architectural Standards] Note: Copy attached at end of this segment.

Mr. Wilson opened the first public hearing on the proposed architectural standard amendment. Upon review of the electronic copy displayed on the projection screen, Mr. Wilson determined that he did not have the current version. As a result the Board decided to open the meeting to the public and elicited their inputs and comments. Mr. Todd inquired whether the Town Engineer's comments were incorporated into the current version. Mr. Wilson indicated he was unsure if Mr. Kelly's comments were incorporated.

Public Comments

Michael Iafolla, 114 Woodland Road, addressed "Item B—Factors for evaluation." He noted that the eight (8) items could be construed as subjective and suggested the Board establish

definable criteria that is specific. Mr. Iafolla added that without specifics and details it would be difficult to adhere to standards. He noted that Board membership changes over time and future interpretations may deviate from the vision that the Board intended. Dr. Arena noted that the proposed standard is a further expansion of aesthetics and functionality. Mr. Iafolla responded that aesthetics are difficult to define.

Mr. Rick Fucci, 160 Lafayette Road, presented an example of his current location. He noted that, according to the proposed standard, the structure would not be acceptable. He commented that with imagination, some flexibility and appropriate landscaping, a compromise could be reached in which all parties would be satisfied. Mr. Fucci noted that Drake Hill Commons is probably the best example of an appropriate architectural site, but he added, it is very expensive to construct such a building. He emphasized that along with the aesthetic goal of this standard, he encouraged the Board to incorporate the need for practicality and affordability.

Mr. Wilson listed the following sites as having captured some of the flavor of the architectural character of the area without an existing architectural standard. These include Seacoast Harley, Blake Chevrolet/Mitsubishi, Regal Limousine and Nature's Outpost. Mr. Todd commented that the location of a building could dictate the type of building construction. He added that a building could be screened by appropriate landscaping and thus away from public view. Mr. Iafolla commented that some buildings are strictly functional and by their very nature, unattractive. He further added that with detailed standards, the business community could make appropriate business decisions and proceed with full awareness of their financial investment for a construction/remodeling project. Mr. Kroner commented that depending upon the clientele, whether retail or manufacturing, the standards should reflect the requirements that are to be met.

Mr. Fucci commented that the architectural standard should be clearly defined and fair. Mr. Wilson stated that it is not the intent of the Board to increase the cost of building construction, but rather they want to establish a return to the architecture characteristic of New England. Mr. Todd added that he wanted to protect the investment of other businesses that had borne the expense and made the investment in more attractive buildings. Ms. Church stated that the architectural standard was intended to be a guide rather than hard and fast rules. Ms. Day commented that Mr. Krebs/RPC informed her that the Greenland Planning Board had recently approved a functional building. Through negotiations with the Board and the builder, a mutually satisfactory agreement on the construction details was reached.

Mr. Iafolla suggested that the architectural standards should be "minimal" and more "user-friendly." Mr. Todd commented that the Board heard the message voiced today, but struggles with how to reach a balance between hard, inflexible standards and those less structured. Mr. Iafolla agreed that the optimal solution is to find that appropriate balance. He further added that the proposed standard is so open-ended, that he is very concerned about how businesses could adhere to those rules. Mr. Fucci suggested a possible linear designation. For example, retail buildings would be located closer to a street/road and industrial/manufacturing buildings located further away from a street/road and screened from public view. He also questioned abandoning corrugated steel buildings when they are the de facto standard. Mr. Fucci added that an upgraded false front/veneer could be acceptable.

Ms. Day commented that the Board is following the directives established in the Master Plan not the Board members personal preferences. She further added that the Board's intent is to guide architectural standards with discretion and flexibility rather than dictate firm standards.

Responding to Mr. Fucci's suggestion about establishing linear designation/setbacks, Ms. Day asked if Board members would support the suggestion. Dr. Arena and Mr. Todd expressed their interest asking what would be an appropriate distance. Mr. Fucci answered that a 200-foot setback from a street/road for industrial/manufacturing buildings would be an adequate distance.

In summary, Mr. Wilson listed the following inputs provided during the public hearing:

1. Make the guidelines more specific
2. Follow best management practices
3. Review the overlap in other site plan review regulations and zoning ordinance
4. Consider the form and function of the different building types
5. Consider the financial viability of the standard
6. Incorporate effective screening possibilities
7. Consider linear setback requirements for function-specific buildings
8. Incorporate minimal architectural standards
9. Become more user-friendly, such as instituting general guidelines that provide clarity
10. Differentiate building types on the Route 1 corridor
11. Define the purpose of the amendment as it relates to the focus of the Planning Board meeting the mandates established by the Master Plan.

Mr. Iafolla commented that the appearance of a building is something to be considered depending upon its purpose. He further added that the issue of "intercom" use should be handled by the ZBA as a special exception. Mr. Todd commented that with current technological improvements, a blaring intercom is unnecessary and offensive. Ms. Day noted that she believed the proposed amendment is sufficiently specific and she was open to hearing public opinions on the matter.

Mr. Todd noted that all four-sides of a building should receive the same consideration, but not that all four sides have to be identical. Mr. Wilson stated that the Board would review all the comments received. He agreed with Ms. Day that the proposed amendment does contain many specifics. Yet with the comments received this evening, Mr. Wilson noted that the Board would consider and review the information presented before it proceeds further in the adoption process. Mr. Wilson, Mr. Todd and Ms. Day agreed to meet and discuss the public hearing comments.

The public meeting was closed at 9:21 PM.

Dr. Arena commented that he objects to the Board's restricted access to NHMA services. He noted that the Board of Selectmen should be informed that they are shackling the Board. Ms. Day fully agreed. Mr. Todd suggested that the Board send a letter to the Board of Selectmen citing suggestions or a solution to the restricted access imposed on the Board. Dr. Arena questioned what was the purpose of the restricted access. Ms. Day indicated she thought it might

be financial. Mr. Wilson suggested that discussion on this issue should be continued and placed on the June 3, 2003 agenda.

Text of Proposed Amendment:

ARCHITECTURE /APPEARANCE

No permit shall be granted for a commercial, industrial or multi-family building unless an architectural plan drawn to scale meets all of the requirements of the Planning Board. Specifications shall have been filed with and approved by the Planning Board.

The Architectural Plans shall, at a minimum, indicate the following:

- (a) Floor plan(s);*
- (b) Building Elevations (all four sides)*
- (c) The type of windows and doors to be installed on the building.*
- (d) The type and color of building material to be used on the exterior of the building.*
- (e) The Board may request details, and other plans (axonometric, details, etc.) should they believe that it is in the best interests of the community in the review of the project.*

GENERAL APPEARANCE CRITERIA

- A. *In order to "... provide for the harmonious and aesthetically pleasing development of the municipality and its environs..." (NHRSA 674:44,II(b)), the Planning Board will use the following criteria in its review of the architectural design of proposed commercial structures.*

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide design standards to assist with the development, renovations and restorations of commercial properties to complement the overall New England-style ambiance of the community. The guidelines are directed towards, but not limited to, assisting corporate franchises and commercial developments in the design of structures, and related properties, which reflect the small town, rural, and agricultural atmosphere that is unique to North Hampton.

The objective of these regulations is not intended to restrict imagination, innovation or variety in the new construction, restoration and renovation of commercial buildings and related property, but rather to enhance the visual appearance of the community, conserve property values, and to further encourage continued economic development. These regulations ARE intended to discourage routine franchise architecture, strip mall vistas and urban blight.

These are not likely to foresee all possible proposed building situations. The Planning Board will make decisions concerning unforeseen situations with the spirit of these regulations in mind.

- B. *Factors for evaluation.*

The evaluation of the following appearance factors will govern the Planning Board's decisions on whether the proposed site and building designs are acceptable.

- 1. Conformance to this section - General Appearance Criteria;*
- 2. Architectural character;*
- 3. Building materials and subdued color considerations;*
- 4. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation and parking;*
- 5. Harmony and compatibility of project compared to existing site and neighborhood;*
- 6. Lighting design;*
- 7. Integration of landscaping and buffer areas; and*
- 8. Retention, alteration, or removal of existing structures and site features.*

C. Site Development

The development of the site must address various elements in providing a total design plan for the proposed construction. The building's orientation, setback, alignment with the street, and relative spacing with respect to other structures will be considered in the overall design. Long, strip-mall type development should be avoided. "U-shaped", "L-shaped", etc., structures are encouraged. The reuse of existing structures and landscape features is encouraged. The overall architectural theme for the site development will create a positive image for the project.

D. Site Organization

All existing natural and man-made features of the site should be carefully considered for integration into the overall site design. It is important to cluster buildings within a development wherever feasible to encourage open space. A compact building arrangement provides savings in grading, paving, utilities and other costs and conserves natural site features and open space. Separation of vehicular and pedestrian pathways is important to the overall safety of the site.

E. Architectural Requirements

- 1. Roofs. Monotony of design or warehouse style structures shall be avoided. Variation in detail, form and sitting shall be used to provide visual interest. In order to prevent the construction of warehouse style buildings (i.e. long horizontal roof lines), all new buildings, canopies (e.g. covering fuel pumps) and additions shall be pitched roofs of 3:12 or greater, or gabled roofs, where practical. Shed, gambrel and barn style roofs are also acceptable. Dormers are encouraged. Roofs must have appropriate overhangs.*

In large commercial structures over 200 feet in length where pitched roofs are not practical, the use of false building fronts shall be used to imitate pitched roofs to vary the horizontal lines along portions of the facade to create the appearance of multiple attached buildings. Additionally,

changes in building elevations may be used in conjunction with pitched roofs to give the appearance of multiple attached buildings.

All sides of a structure shall receive design consideration. A facade unrelated to the rest of the building is not acceptable.

2. *Building materials. Exterior surfaces of building shall be covered with traditional materials or products that simulate natural materials, including but not limited to clapboards, shingles, stone, brick, or architectural CMU's. Exposed plain cinder block, corrugated steel, sheet plastic or sheet fiberglass are not acceptable. Pitched roofs shall be constructed of shingles, metal roofing or other materials traditionally used in this region.*
3. *Awnings. Brightly colored or illuminated franchise type awnings are not acceptable. Awnings may be made of transparent materials (glass or clear Plexiglas type products). Awning covers designed for shade should be made of fabric or simulated fabric-like material.*
4. *Architectural details. Balconies, decks, covered porches, decorative shingles, bracketed eaves, columns, balustrades, skylights and arches are among the details to be considered and encouraged. All features and details should be in proportions with the building, and in keeping with our New England Character.*
5. *Windows and doors. Windows shall comprise no less than 5% of the exterior wall surface of the portions of the building facing a public right-of-way, parking area, or a developed area - on or off site. Windows may be used for either interior illumination or for display purposes. All windows and doorways shall be encased with trim; decorative trim is preferred.*

This guideline can be waived if it is shown that the windows will serve no useful function and will interfere with an otherwise acceptable architectural design.
6. *Fencing. Fences made of traditional New England materials are encouraged. (i.e. picket, split rail, wrought iron, brick, stone). Chain link security fences may be allowed where appropriate, but their use is generally discouraged.*
7. *Lighting. Site lighting must conform to the specifications in these Regulations, with no light spilling or reflecting onto adjacent properties.*
8. *Intercoms. Use of amplified PA or drive-thru type intercoms is prohibited.*

9. *Color. Exterior colors of buildings and accessories are encouraged to be muted. Bright, franchise colors are not acceptable.*
10. *Mechanical Equipment. All rooftop mechanical units shall be located so as not to be visible from the street level or from other public areas on the ground level. Wall or ground mounted equipment shall be screened from public view with fences or vegetation.*

Mr. Wilson entertained a motion to adjourn.

Dr. Arena moved and Ms. Church seconded the motion to adjourn.
The vote was unanimous (6-0).

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Krystina Deren Arrain
Recording Secretary