



# TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH PLANNING BOARD

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Approved April 11, 2017

**Planning Board  
Meeting Minutes  
February 16, 2017**

**Members Present:** Theresa Capobianco, Amy Poretsky, George Pember, Leslie Harrison, Michelle Gillespie (arrived at 7:15)

**Others Present:** Fred Litchfield, Town Engineer

Chairman Capobianco opened the meeting at 7pm.

**Mosquito Control Project @ 111 Otis Street**

Ms. Poretsky had some questions regarding this project, which includes adding office space in the front of the building and adding storage space in the rear of the building. In particular, she asked about the gated area and parking in front of the building.

Mr. Litchfield explained Mosquito Control has been located on the site since 1985, and is a pre-existing, nonconforming use. The zoning bylaw allows expansion of the use as long as the Groundwater Advisory Committee finds the change is no more detrimental to the groundwater. The plan includes adding drainage and curbing and there will be no additions to the chemicals they use for mosquito control. The parking area will be expanded, with some of the spaces located in front of the building; and a proposed infiltration system will handle all stormwater runoff. In its current condition, there is no drainage system on the site, and runoff from the parking area and building roof flows over land to wetlands. The quantity of materials used by the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project will not change. They will be stored and contained in a secure area, in their own chemical storage room that is temperature-controlled and sectioned off from the rest of the garage space in the event of a spill. The gate is proposed because Mosquito Control has had issues with vandals, and that is the outside area where vehicles and equipment are located. The proposed thirty-nine parking spaces meet the requirements of the bylaw, but 10 of them are proposed in the front of the building. Mr. Litchfield noted there wouldn't be space to move the 10 spaces back because they would be in the area of the drainage system. Ms. Poretsky suggested they ask the ZBA to require the Applicant to plant some evergreens in the front of the property. Mr. Litchfield will check with Ms. Joubert about it and will discuss it with the Applicant, also. He reiterated that the parking area is close to the drainage system already and they have to remove trees for the drainage.

Ms. Capobianco and Ms. Poretsky noted off-street parking regulations are in Section 7-09-030C(2)(a) of the bylaw and a Special Permit is needed to allow 25% of the required off-street parking spaces to be located in front of the principle structure.

Ms. Capobianco agreed with planting trees in the front of the site. Mr. Litchfield will talk with Mr. Atchue and Ms. Joubert regarding that section of the zoning bylaw. Ms. Poretsky reiterated that she would like to see trees planted in the front of the property. A letter from the Planning Board will be sent to the ZBA regarding the trees.

## **Updates and Old/New Business**

### **Green Communities Article**

Mr. Litchfield presented a revised definition of “research and development” for the proposed amendment regarding the Green Communities Act, which has been reviewed by Town Counsel and Kelly Brown, representative from Green Communities. He noted Ms. Joubert provided the revised language in order to meet one of the five Green Communities criteria.

The members reviewed the new version and agreed with the revised language.

Ms. Harrison motioned to approve the proposed changes to the existing Section 7-05-020, Classification of Uses, I. Industrial Uses, (2) Research and Development of the Northborough Zoning Bylaw, to accommodate green communities as presented. Ms. Poretsky seconded the motion and the four members in attendance voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **Master Plan Committee Change**

Ms. Harrison motioned to change the number of members on the Master Plan Committee, voted on at their last meeting, from 16 to 15 members in order to have an odd number for voting purposes. Ms. Poretsky seconded the motion and the four members in attendance voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **Article re: Vehicles Sales and Service**

Ms. Poretsky had a question regarding the definition of commercial parking. Mr. Litchfield referred to the zoning bylaw, Section 7-05-020G(6)(e) classification of uses, business uses, vehicle sales and service, which defines commercial parking as a parking lot or parking garage open to the public for automobiles and similar light motor vehicles. The board thought the use of commercial parking is not in the right place in the bylaw. Mr. Litchfield will ask Ms. Joubert and Mr. Atchue as to what commercial parking is as defined in 7-05-030 and why it isn't allowed in the Downtown Business District. The members also suggested to change either the heading of the table to “Vehicle Sales and Service, and Commercial Parking” or remove “Commercial Parking” from that table and put it somewhere more appropriate. Also, the board wanted auto repair shop in the Business South District to change from N back to BA.

### **Ms. Gillespie arrived.**

### **Mosquito Control Project @ 111 Otis Street, continued**

Ms. Gillespie noted the Design Review Committee has reviewed the plans for the Mosquito Control project. She stated it was a small project, they didn't present much about lighting, and

signage did not change. Ms. Poretsky mentioned the trees she requested to be planted in the front of the site.

### **Discussion re: Proposed Zoning Amendments for 2017 ATM**

Mr. Pember reviewed dimensional regulations for two-family homes that he proposed. Mr. Litchfield read staff's proposed changes dated January 3, 2017, as follows:

#### **General Residential District**

The lot area changed from 15,000 square feet to 22,500 square feet; the frontage changed from 100 feet to 150 feet; the front setback changed from 30 feet to 40 feet; the side setbacks changed from 15 feet to 20 feet; and the rear setback of 25 feet did not change.

#### **Residential C District**

The lot area changed from 20,000 square feet to 30,000 square feet; the frontage changed from 100 feet to 150 feet; the front setback changed from 30 feet to 40 feet; the side setbacks changed from 15 feet to 20 feet; and the rear setback of 25 feet did not change.

Mr. Pember stated his concern is the proposed increase in lot area and frontage; and he is fine with the proposed setbacks.

Ms. Gillespie stated she has heard that residents are not opposed to multifamily use and buildings, but are concerned with overly-developed sites. She stated the height at 45 feet is too high and will be overbearing to the houses behind them. Ms. Harrison and Mr. Pember stated the height is the same as a two-story home.

Ms. Poretsky presented information she gathered from a number of surrounding towns regarding multi-family and two-family zoning. She noted some of the towns define two-family homes as a single-family to two-family conversion, and new two-family dwellings fall under multifamily. She noted Shrewsbury defines a two-family dwelling as the conversion of a one-family dwelling, existing at the time of the bylaw, to a two-family dwelling, provided the exterior appearance is not altered.

Ms. Poretsky's suggested the General Residential, Main Street Residential, and Downtown Neighborhood districts should only allow one-family to two-family conversions, no tear downs, same exterior walls and same footprint, as these are older homes in and around the town center. She stated she does not think new-construction duplexes should be allowed in the Residential C District. If the town is going to allow duplexes in residential districts they should be on bigger lots, like Residential A; or the lots should be double the size. Residential zoning should be one house per lot and these would be two houses crammed onto one lot. She stated most surrounding towns don't allow multifamily and duplexes in their general residential district; only conversions or by multifamily overlays that have many conditions. She also noted one town she reviewed zones by bedrooms per acre; the builder decides the type of housing by acreage.

Ms. Poretsky stated she would like to have a moratorium on single-family teardowns and two-family constructions. The members agreed, as they have new information that will require a lot

more discussion on the topic and would not be able to make changes to the bylaw in time for this year's Town Meeting.

The Board agreed to place an article on the warrant requesting a one year temporary moratorium on duplexes and that the regulation of duplexes should be studied as part of the Master Plan Update.

Mr. Litchfield reviewed the articles discussed with the board.

**7-05-030, Table of Uses, Table B.** Commercial and Industrial Districts by changing "auto repair shop" from a use allowed by special permit to a use not allowed in BE, BW, and BS districts and changing "auto body shop" from a use allowed by special permit to a use not allowed in the BW district.

**7-05-030, Table of Uses, Footnote 9, and Section 7-06-030 Supplemental Regulations,** density and dimensional regulations for certain use classes by changing the number of multifamily units allowed by Special Permit in the DB and BW districts to 8 units and changing the lot size formula. The members wanted to change the number of units from 8 to 6; and Ms. Poretsky thought the Downtown Neighborhood should be included in this amendment. Ms. Capobianco stated going from 8 units to 6 units would not affect the Downtown Neighborhood District because only 4 units are allowed without a special permit.

**7-06-030, Supplemental Regulations,** density and dimensional regulations for certain use classes by deleting partial text in (c) and adding (d) relating to Business South District. Ms. Poretsky noted the Business South District should be removed from this amendment because multifamily dwellings are not allowed in that district. In addition, she and Ms. Gillespie would like the rear setback to be 50 feet in General Residential and Residential C districts. Mr. Pember stated he is opposed to the changes proposed for lot area and frontage; but is fine with the proposed change in setbacks.

Mr. Litchfield reminded the board of the following:

**Annual Town Meeting:** Town Meeting will start on Monday, April 24, 2017.

**Next Planning Board Meetings:** The next Planning Board meetings will be held on March 7, 2017; and March 21, 2017, which will include a public hearing for consideration of the proposed zoning amendments.

**Next ZBA Meetings:** The next ZBA meetings will be held on February 28, 2017 and March 28, 2017.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Grampietro  
Administrative Assistant  
Planning/ZBA/Conservation