

**SEEKONK PLANNING BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING**

**MINUTES  
September 28, 2010**

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Present: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn, W. Rice

J. Hansen, Town Planner

Absent: T. Clancy (with cause)

7:04 pm Ch. Abelson called the meeting to order.

**Public Hearing**

**General Bylaw Amendment: Scenic Roads Bylaw – Prospect Street Continued from 8/24**

J. Hansen Changes on bottom of page define legal right of way. These changes came about from members of the public who were at the first public hearing. I expanded description of the legal right of way on page 2. I ask this board to send a positive recommendation for the revised Scenic Roads bylaw to town meeting.

Ch. Abelson Questions from the audience? None.

**B. Rice made a motion to close Public Hearing M. Bourque seconded and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, W. Rice, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn  
VOTE (6-0) Approved**

**L. Dunn made a motion to accept the amended changes to the Scenic Roads Bylaw and send to fall town meeting W. Rice seconded and so voted by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, W. Rice, R. Bennett, L. Dunn**

**VOTE: (5-1) Approved**

**S. Foulkes Vote (1) Nay**

S. Foulkes minority report for the record: Felt the Scenic Roads Bylaw left too much in the air and the homeowner would be subject to too many rules and the DPW would be over burdened.

**Public Hearing**

**Zoning Bylaw Amendment: Drive-thru facilities – Continued from 8/24**

J. Hansen In the winter of 2010 we discussed the Building Official's request that we amend the bylaw because there was no mention of drive-thru facilities in it, but as you

know there are drive-thru facilities around town. It was the Building Inspector's as well as the Town's legal counsel interpretation if not stated in the bylaw it should be prohibited. So we put in an additional zoning district called General Business where they would be allowed as well as in the Highway district. The local business districts that would be converted into General Business where they would be allowed by right would be four areas in town: Benny's Plaza on Central Ave., Bakers Corner, RT 44, Monroe Corner near Anthony St. and Fall River Ave. I ask that the board send a positive recommendation to fall town meeting.

**B. Rice made a motion to close the Public Hearing L. Dunn seconded and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, W. Rice, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn**

**VOTE (6-0) Approved**

**R. Bennett made a motion to put forth a positive recommendation for the Zoning Bylaw Amendment: Drive-thru facilities and send to fall town meeting. B. Rice seconded and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, W. Rice, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn**

**VOTE (6-0) Approved**

### **Public Hearing**

#### **Zoning Bylaw Amendment: Neighborhood-Style Retail – Continued from 8/24**

J. Hansen To recap we are trying to establish the Mom & Pop neighborhood store again as they did exist in the past. (Read the standards for what a neighborhood retail establishment is). The bylaw gives the ability to let the owner occupied building put an establishment on the first floor of an existing dwelling. I ask that the board send a positive recommendation to town meeting.

S. Foulkes Asked about dumpster regulations and noise factor.

J. Hansen Not in Planning Board's purview to make the regulations any stricter. That is within the Board of Health's purview.

L. Dunn Why no parking?

J. Hansen Parking for customers is prohibited in the bylaw. Parking doesn't blend in a residential neighborhood and it doesn't promote walkable neighborhoods.

**B. Rice made a motion to close the Public Hearing S. Foulkes seconded and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, W. Rice, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn**

**VOTE (6-0) Approved**

**B. Rice made a motion to put forth a positive recommendation to send the Neighborhood Retail Style Bylaw to fall town meeting. L. Dunn seconded and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, W. Rice, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn**

**VOTE (6-0) Approved**

**Discussion: Housing Production Plan**

J. Hansen      This Board applied for funding and received the assistance from SRPEDD. I worked with K. Rondeau and S. Conaty for the past 6 months on this and the plan is broken into 2 sections. I would like to point out several things in the Housing Needs Assessment. On page 4 it says that the elderly population is increasing and the young families are declining. Seekonk has limited rental units and housing is 89% owner occupied. There are two ways to look at affordable housing one is subsidized housing and the second is general affordable housing. Based on our zoning we have average lot sizes of 50,000 sq ft. at average prices of \$134,000. It is expensive to buy land in Seekonk.

To determine what is affordable to a household making \$59,000 the typical rule of thumb is that you would spend no more than 30% of your income and that is what the State uses to determine what should be subsidized or not. Seekonk does not have a lot of affordable housing which again is different than subsidized housing yet we have the need. About 1/3 of the households in town would qualify. Seekonk has a significant amount of households making below the median income. It is well documented the numbers speak for themselves.

What are we going to do about it is where the Strategy Section comes in to place and this starts on page 42. Most of these suggestions have been tried in other towns and SRPEDD has done a lot of these plans and I have done a lot of research and these are great bylaws the town could pass that could really help our affordable housing program.

We had a chance this year through South Coast Rail project to obtain funding to get these two bylaws drafted by SRPEDD but unfortunately the BOS didn't think these bylaws were necessary they thought it was going to change the character of the town and I don't think anything could be further from the truth. We talk about preserving the town's character it is also preserving what we have grown up with and that is our children and parents and if we want them to stay here this is what we need to do we need to put in affordable Inclusionary housing and Accessory apartments bylaws on the books.

There was confusion at the selectmen meeting and with the upcoming election with the possible repeal of 40B these bylaws are to supplement 40B we want to get our subsidized housing stock up to 10% so we don't want to worry about 40B because 40B isn't always a "friendly development". If we want to combat that we

need the affordable housing in place because that will shut the doors to the 40B developments. If it is repealed in this election any developer can come forward under the Civil Rights Act of 1968 and say this town is not providing fair housing and then sue the town. If it is repealed we need these bylaws in place to combat that.

C. Bragg 44 Hope St. One thing I would like to suggest is that you ask Seekonk Human Services to partner with you on it. (Further discussion on updated statistics)

J. Hansen In conclusion this board is responsible for the approval of this then BOS and then the State. It creates a plan for us as an addendum to the Master Plan Housing section.

**B. Rice made a motion to adopt the Housing Production Plan Draft subject to minor changes and that the Planning Board authorize the Town Planner to go ahead and continue with his research seconded by L. Dunn so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, W. Rice, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn**

**VOTE (6-0) Approved**

**Discussion: Meeting Rooms**

J. Hansen In the summer we said we would discuss this in 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in Sept.

After discussion John Hansen to contact Mitch Vieira on the Cable 9 Board about getting Cable 9 to work on getting the video camera in the planning meeting room working in order to broadcast meetings live and until such time regular meetings and Public Hearings to be held in BOS meeting room.

**M. Bourque made a motion to have Planning Board meetings in the BOS room until such time the Planning room can broadcast live seconded by W. Rice so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, W. Rice, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn**

**VOTE (6-0) Approved**

R. Bennett discussion about getting special municipal status.

**B. Rice made a motion to have Town Planner send a letter to Town Administrator on how Planning Board members can achieve municipal employee status and would like an answer from Town Administrator by the next Planning Board meeting on October 12, 2010. Seconded by M. Bourque and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, W. Rice, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn**

**VOTE (6-0) Approved**

**Adjournment**

**M. Bourque made a motion to adjourn, seconded by S. Foulkes and so voted unanimously by: Ch. Abelson, M. Bourque, R. Bennett, S. Foulkes, L. Dunn, W. Rice**

**Vote: (6-0) approved**

The meeting adjourned at 9:04PM

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Florice Craig, Secretary