

**SEEKONK PLANNING BOARD
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting
MINUTES
June 12, 2012**

Present: Ch. Abelson, R. Bennett, R. Horsman, M. Bourque, J. Ostendorf, L. Dunn (7:15)
J. Hansen, Town Planner
Absent: S. Foulkes: (with cause)

7:00 pm Ch. Abelson called the meeting to order.

Form A: 78 South Wheaton Ave.

Applicant: A. Yaghjian

A motion was made by R. Horsman and seconded by M. Bourque and it was unanimously

VOTED: To endorse the Form A: 78 South Wheaton Ave.

By: Ch. Abelson, R. Bennett, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, J. Ostendorf, M. Bourque

Form A: 524 Newman Ave

Applicant: Najas Realty

A motion was made by R. Horsman and seconded by M. Bourque and it was unanimously

VOTED: To endorse the Form A: 524 Newman Ave.

By: Ch. Abelson, R. Bennett, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, J. Ostendorf, M. Bourque

Discussion: Luther's Corners Parking/ Circulation

J. Hansen summarized that after the Village District bylaw was adopted in 2010 the next step was to look into parking and traffic, items 2 and 3 of the bylaw. He went on to say that DiPrete Engineering was hired to do the study and they hired out the transportation aspects to RAB Engineers.

While waiting for presentation to be set up Planning Board went over correspondence.

Correspondence

J. Hansen told the board that at Town Meeting June 11, 2012 the planning budget was approved so he was going to go ahead and put together the RFP for the update of the zoning bylaws.

J. Hansen apologized that he did not have the time to go before the board and tell them that he was going to apply for an *Economically Distressed Area Designation*, for the property that burned on Maple Ave. The deadline for the application was June 1, 2012. He went on to explain that the designation application only allows the Town to apply for State funding if the Town wanted to redevelop that area. The Board of Selectman endorsed it and he will be going to Boston on June 26, 2012 to discuss it.

J. Hansen told the board that Bill Rice had asked him to go on a Cable 9 show he was doing to talk about the Master Plan. The Board approved it.

J. Hansen told the board that he would be out of the office for vacation from July 2 – 6, 2012.

Discussion: Luther's Corners Parking/ Circulation

Presentation by Jason Clough from DiPrete Engineering and Paul Bannon of RAB Professional Engineers, Inc.

J. Clough described the Luther's Corner Village. He noted that the Master Plan recognizes the importance of the village and section seven of the zoning bylaws provides requirements which support mixed use and pedestrian ability in the village area. He went to say that based on the study the Gulf Gas Station, Dunkin Donuts and LaBonte's Driving School were key parking generators as well as the Seekonk Congregational Church, on Sunday mornings, when the Church parking lot is almost full. He went on to say based on their study the parking in that area seemed adequate. Their recommendations would be better signage to direct patrons to available parking or possibly creating a community parking area. He noted a lot on the corner of Fall River Ave. could be redeveloped into a parking lot.

J. Ostendorf commented on the traffic back up at the light and asked what could be done about that.

P. Bannon of RAB Engineer's introduced himself and went on to describe their observations of the traffic patterns in the area. He said Luther's Corner is serviced by two roadways that provide high traffic through that area. Fall River Ave. a north/south major route to the interstate and County St. east/west local road to southern section of town. He went on to say that the primary use (Fall River Ave.) conflicts with its secondary function of providing immediate access to properties in the village area. Problem times were late afternoon and mid Saturday.

P. Bannon went on to describe the problems with the traffic. Some suggestions were to improve safety and capacity provided in pocket lanes for north and south bound. He noted the intersection is problematic in how it operates. (Showing board members on a computer graphic program) He commented that they were looking at formalizing the left turn, restriping for a left turn south bound and creating a pocket lane. (see recommended improvements page 30 in traffic study)

J. Ostendorf asked if there was a way to separate out the actions of going straight through County and turning left from County on to 114A.

P. Bannon commented that this is where it becomes a balancing act; either you have a higher right volume or a higher left volume.

J. Ostendorf asked if they had the information on how many take a left turn versus how many take a right turn there.

P. Bannon said in the morning there is a count of 250 total on that approach, 115 going left and 55 going through and 80 going right, in the afternoon there are over 600 cars.

Ch. Abelson commented on J. Ostendorf's observation and asked if there was a way to make the right hand turn or stay straight only.

P. Bannon said they could look into putting in a 15 second advance, but commented that you only have a single lane and only so much time so you take away from one. He also said it isn't bad in the afternoon; it is 27 seconds, so if they took 15 seconds to allow the advance it becomes a balancing issue.

J. Ostendorf said it is unfortunate that you can't really do anything there.

Ch. Abelson commented he felt the property on the corner of Fall River Ave and County St. is pivotal in making the village center work.

J. Hansen commented according to table 2 in the parking analysis that when comparing existing parking space use, whether it is a week day or a Saturday, it is virtually the same. He said it seems there are approximately 200 spots that could be utilized for cross usage.

R. Horsman suggested metered parking.

J. Hansen asked what effect would there be to the traffic if a light was put in front of the old showcase and Greenbrier condos.

P. Bannon said that he felt a traffic light would be best at the intersection at Colfall Street. Signals are close enough that they could be coordinated. He also commented there are wide shoulders in that area and they could extend all the way up to the light.

J. Hansen had a question concerning going through district 5 and the official process.

P. Bannon commented that the State Agency would want proof of local support before they consider it.

L. Dunn asked what they should call it.

P. Bannon recommended calling it *safety improvements* or an *enhancement project* where you are putting in trees, benches, ornamental lighting, and high visibility or stamped cross walks. He noted that if the board wanted to take the next step they would have to define those elements they want and RAB would provide a cost estimate. He also noted it's not roadway reconstruction but

the signals would have to be upgraded. He didn't think it would be a big number if you separated out the different things.

M. Bourque commented when it comes down to it we will need support from our State Representative and local residents.

J. Hansen commented that right now the proper thing to do would be to endorse the study and then get started on recommendations.

J. Ostendorf commented that he would endorse the project if there was any way to get the left hand turn/straight movement separated, even though it seemed impossible.

J. Clough said what the board had in front of them was a draft document and after they got the board's input they would go back and incorporate the board's thoughts and concerns for a final draft. He told J. Ostendorf they would look at that issue and make recommendations in the final document.

P. Bannon said he did not know what the local process was.

Ch. Abelson said he would like to give this to the Town Engineer and have him look at it.

A motion was made by L. Dunn and seconded by M. Bourque and it was unanimously

VOTED: To endorse the draft Luther's Corners Village Parking & Traffic Circulation Study

By: Ch. Abelson, R. Bennett, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, J. Ostendorf, M. Bourque

Discussion: Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw

J. Hansen reminded the board that a year ago they received free technical assistance from SRPEDD for anything having to do with priority protection areas or priority development areas. The area the board chose to have studied was affordable housing specifically an inclusionary/incentive bylaw which means it is a bylaw that looks at or encourages affordable housing on residential projects. He went on to say that SRPEDD came up with four possible mechanisms to do this *By Right Mandatory, By Right Voluntary, Special Permit Mandatory, Special Permit Voluntary*. He asked the board which option they would like to see put into a draft zoning bylaw.

He went on to note that the average starting point was an 8 unit subdivision. Mandatory would be for every 8 units at least one or more would be affordable. He also said that speaking with other Town's *Voluntary* did not work. He noted that is what they have to choose from, a voluntary or mandatory approach. Once decided, if the board picked voluntary, they would have to decide if they wanted to make it attractive with density bonuses.

L. Dunn asked what a density bonus was.

J. Hansen explained if you have an 8 unit subdivision the Town would require the developer to build one affordable unit. The density bonus would allow the developer to build a market rate unit on top of that. It would fall under a cluster subdivision regulation.

Ch. Abelson commented that he felt *Voluntary with special permit bonus* would be the way to go.

J. Ostendorf, R. Bennett and R. Horsman agreed.

A motion was made by R. Bennett and seconded by M. Bourque and it was unanimously

**VOTED: To endorse Voluntary Special Permit with Density Bonus Option
By: Ch. Abelson, R. Bennett, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, J. Ostendorf, M. Bourque**

Discussion: Possible rezone of Plat12, lots 10-17 Morris Street from R-1 to HB

J. Hansen summarized that the property on Morris street was a business in a residential zone for many years however since the passing of the owner it was not maintained as a business for over two years and subsequently lost its grandfathered right to remain a business in a residential zone. He went on to say the property has been up for sale and people want to buy it and use it as a commercial business but in order to do that it has to go through a rezone of the property.

J. Hansen noted that he did not consider it spot zoning because it abuts commercial land to the west and north. He also said given the type of town government Seekonk has it will not be an easy or quick process but the owner still wanted to go forward and asked the Planning Board for their endorsement of this rezone.

L. Dunn asked why is it was not spot zoning and what would be the process.

J. Hansen noted it is not spot zoning because it is next to commercial property not entirely in a residential area. He said the process is to submit to the BOS, they refer it back to the Planning Board for a public hearing, the Planning Board holds a public hearing and then it goes to town meeting.

J. Ostendorf said that he is ok with it.

J. Hansen said if the board endorses this we will be taking on this cause because Mrs. Pine is elderly and housebound.

J. Ostendorf commented that the board was not endorsing something drastic, something that had never been there before it had been a business for many years.

R. Horsman commented that he is in favor of assisting the property owner.

A motion was made by J. Ostendorf and seconded by R. Horsman and it was unanimously

VOTED: To endorse the rezone of Plat 12, lots 10-17 Morris Street from R-1 to HB and further the process along.

By: Ch. Abelson, R. Bennett, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, J. Ostendorf, M. Bourque

2012 Master Plan Implementation

J. Hansen summarized that the Master Plan was adopted in April and the Planning office just received the printed copies which he handed out to the members. He went on to ask in the implementation section (bound copy volume 3) what the board would like to start on first.

R. Horsman brought up looking into Land Use (page 2) LU 4 Identify streets with high speeds (specifically Anthony Street) and make safer for neighborhoods.

L. Dunn brought up and will look into Land Use (page 1) LU 1 Identify sites in residential areas that could serve as community gardens. (maybe Hope St.)

Ch. Abelson brought up looking into Land Use (page 1) LU-1 Inventory zoning “non-conformities” and assess whether zoning should be changed or remain intact relative to existing uses. J. Hansen commented that this would be done as part of the comprehensive zoning bylaw re-write

J. Hansen noted the board will review again at next meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by R. Horsman and seconded by J. Ostendorf and it was unanimously

**VOTED by: Ch. Abelson, R. Bennett, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, M. Bourque, J. Ostendorf
To accept the 5/8/12 minutes**

A motion was made by R. Horsman and seconded by J. Ostendorf and it was unanimously

**VOTED by: Ch. Abelson, R. Bennett, L. Dunn, R. Horsman, M. Bourque, J. Ostendorf
To adjourn the meeting at 9:10 PM**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Florice Craig