



Town of Swampscott

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING BOARD

22 Monument Avenue, Swampscott, MA 01907

Planning Board Members

Patrick Jones, Chair

Sylvia Belkin

Jeffrey Blonder

Angela Ippolito

George Potts

Planning Board Secretary

Helen Kennedy

May 11, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Time: 7:15 – 8:35 pm

Location: Swampscott Senior Center

Members Present: P. Jones, J. Blonder, S. Belkin, G. Potts

Newly appointed member to the Planning Board, Mr. Potts was asked about his interest. He said he wants to see buildings in appropriate settings. Doesn't know what challenges the Board faces.

Chairman Jones gave a brief overview of the bylaws which was an effort to clean up ambiguity. Planning Board is now responsible for site plan reviews and sub-divisions. The 2009 amendment established that variance and dimensional special permits would go to ZBA. Prior to 2009, Planning Board did not have site plan approval authority. Planning Board can make recommendations to ZBA which were not necessarily adopted. Planning Board will review anything that comes up under site plan review. ZBA will take Planning Board recommendations into consideration. Planning Board heard Cap'n Jacks for site plan and made recommendations but did not recommend approval. Board now concentrates primarily on what comes under site plan review.

Planning Board tries to schedule meetings within the two weeks prior to ZBA meetings. Petitioners should be told that their petitions will be on the Planning Board agenda even though it is not mandatory that they attend. Trying to get back to Master Plan. We are picking up where prior groups left off, starting with Humphrey St. Planning Board trying to come up with a working plan, sub committees may have to be set up.

G. Potts: What is the goal for Humphrey St.? Sylvia Belkin: we don't know exactly what people want. She was on the prior Humphrey St. Committee but they never came up with any kind of a resolution. We need to be proactive as a Board. We don't have a position; it is wonderful that we have time to think about what we want to do.

P. Jones told Mr. Potts that former Town Planner Andrew Schreier attended every meeting however he relocated and left the position. His successor worked briefly for the Town before the position was eliminated. He will discuss with Town Administrator Andrew Maylor: We need a Planner to prepare for periods of high activity. The Town voted and Swampscott became a Green Community. This would be a portion of Planner's position. There was some opposition to the Town Planner from the building community. The position of Town Planner was approved at Town Meeting. S. Belkin expressed concern that the funding for planner will be shared between Town and State subsidy. She called Town Administrator to ask how much input Planning Board will have on selection of Town Planner. Chairman Jones wrote to him as well. Board agreed it would be helpful if someone from the Planning Board is appointed to the selection committee. He provided Mr. Potts with a copy of A. Ippolito's chart outlining areas of responsibility and suggested adding a column for "deliverables." The focus should be from commuter rail station down Humphrey St. to the sports fields (past the Bertram House.) He also said the parking lot behind the football fields could be developed. There should be Planning Board and community involvement and feedback. The Town purchased the temple property, thinking the land could be used for municipal activities (which it was during renovation of Town Hall) but now it is a ball and chain. S. Belkin: Doesn't understand because it was said it was to be site of new police station. P. Jones, the current 5,200 sf Police Station should be condemned; it is a liability waiting to happen. Looking forward, it would be prudent for Town and others to get involved in identifying properties to buy.

G. Potts: Turning Hadley School into commercial building and parking. It is a much more desirable property because it is adjacent to the commercial property. Zoning presents a problem. P. Jones: area needs to be rezoned to deal with mixed use. When people come to Planning Board, they can make a verbal agreement to put in a fence etc. and that approval should be made part of the approval. We have to come up with a plan; we have to concentrate on one or two small areas, with downtown being obvious starting place. The football field is falling apart. G. Potts: That would be a place where you'd really get people involved. Someone did that right on the fields behind the middle school resulting in three baseball fields. P. Jones: Stands at the football field are a liability waiting to happen. G. Potts: parking lot is in horrible shape. Planning Board could be the liaison between the different sub-committees. S. Belkin: Ask Richard Smith, Chair of Humphrey St. Planning group; invite him to come to Planning Board meeting.

P. Jones has been a big resource. Challenge is to identify areas to work on, what are the goals, what is the action to be taken. Planning Board duty is to develop the Master Plan. E.g. Greenwood. Need to have someone to manage the plans. Timing was very poor due to economy. If we can come up with a better plan, we could have much better suited to the Town and create parking. There is an overlay of Greenwood site, what is the use, it is not single family.

S. Belkin: To what extent is there a design review committee? We have some input. P. Jones: It is what fits in terms of scale and size as well as setbacks. He will work on getting a copy of Humphrey St. revitalization book of August 2007. Re Police Station: \$450,000 is from start to opening the door.

For Planning Board agenda, hone in on one or two areas, so that someone on the Planning Board can be involved with the subcommittee. Problem is so few people show up even with lots of advertising.

April minutes will be approved next meeting.

Motion to adjourn made and seconded, meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Next Planning Board meeting will be June 13; ZBA meeting is 6/22.