



TOWN OF SWAMPSCOTT

PLANNING BOARD

ELIHU THOMSON ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
22 MONUMENT AVENUE, SWAMPSCOTT, MA 01907

MEMBERS
ANGELA IPPOLITO, CHAIR
GEORGE POTTS, VICE CHAIR
BETH ISLER
BILL QUINN
JR YOUNG

STAFF
S. PETER KANE, DIR. OF COMM. DEV.
ANDREW LEVIN, ASSISTANT TOWN PLANNER

JANUARY 9, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Time: 7:00pm – 8:30 pm
Location: Swampscott High School, Room B129, 200 Essex Street
Members Present: B. Quinn, B. Isler, G. Potts, A. Ippolito
Members Absent: J.R. Young
Others Present: Pete Kane (Dir. of Community Development), Andrew Drew (Assistant Town Planner), Jim Olivetti (Resident)

Chairwoman of the Board, A. Ippolito called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

MEETING MINUTES

A. Ippolito moves to the first item on the agenda, which is the review the previous meeting minutes from the December 12th meeting. It was noted that there was one typo on page 7 of “30-unit” which should read “3-unit.”

MOTION : by B. Quinn, seconded by G. Potts, the meeting minutes were approved pending a minor correction.

AGENDA ITEMS

WHITE COURT UPDATE

A. Ippolito moved to the next item on the agenda which was an update on the current situation involving the property at 35 Little’s Point Road, also known as “White Court”. Director of Community Development, Peter Kane, explained that Father Andrew Bushell, the representative working towards purchasing the property, canceled the “Purchase and Sales” agreement he had with the property owners, the Sisters of Mercy. P. Kane explained that the Sisters of Mercy and their representatives have received a letter of interest from an entity interested in purchasing the property. P. Kane mentioned to the Board that the director of real estate for the Sisters would be meeting with the Sisters Board of Trustees and discussing their current situation, and at this moment P. Kane is waiting on his contact with the Sisters for any more information.

The Board inquired with P. Kane about the possibility of the Town purchasing the property. P. Kane explained the certain issues that arise with the Town pursuing that option, including timing and budget issues. P. Kane continued to explain the current situation involving the property at the moment now that the previous purchase and sales agreement on the property had been canceled.

P. Kane then explained to the Board the possible different options and routes the Town could use to possibly purchase the property. B. Isler asked if the letter of interest that the Sisters had received mentioned the proposed use of the property. P. Kane explained that there was no description of the proposed use, but that the letter did mention the use would be taxable. G. Potts asked how many housing units can be built on the property. P. Kane explained that if the housing units are not age restricted, then they can build only one, but if the housing would be for ages 55 and up, then multiple units would be allowed. A. Ippolito and G. Potts then discussed scenarios which involved subdividing the property.

A. Ippolito stated that she believes it important that the Planning Board discuss and put together recommendations and thoughts for the Selectmen that would encourage a decision on the property being used for a positive use, for the Town and community. P. Kane explained that the Board Of Selectmen are open to the possibility of purchasing the property, but that it is ultimately a decision made at Town Meeting. A. Ippolito stated that if the Town was to purchase the property then there would need to be a plausible and concrete plan presented to the Town Meeting members.

Jim Olivetti, a member of the Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee, was present at the time in the audience. A. Ippolito mentions to the Board and Mr. Olivetti that it is important to preserve the property, and how the open space of that property is so important. A. Ippolito explained some different opportunities and stories of the past regarding the property, and its importance to the community. A. Ippolito continued to state that the property is not only part of the Town's history, but our national history as well (President Calvin Coolidge summered at the property).

A. Ippolito then reverted back to the idea that the Town and the different Boards and Committees of the Town must work together to come up with plausible plans for the property if the Town was to purchase it. The Board mentioned some "perfect world" scenarios for the property, and A. Ippolito reiterated the idea that if the prospect of the Town purchasing the property was to succeed, then the whole Town must work together. A. Ippolito mentioned some of the ideas for the property that she had heard. P. Kane and the Board then discussed different possibilities of how the Town or an interested party could purchase the property. The idea of a single or group of angel investors was discussed, as well as how the ownership of the property would be structured if the Town possibly bought the property. The Board brainstormed what the structure and how the uses on the property would be facilitated. A. Ippolito mentioned that in a "perfect world" the property could be used for something commercial, but simultaneously preserves the land. The Board and P. Kane discussed other possible uses of the land, as well as what kinds of issues and problems could arise from each. A. Ippolito and P. Kane both agreed on the statement that there needs to be a plausible plan ready and presented at the Town Meeting if the town wishes to move forward with purchasing the property. A. Ippolito reiterated the idea that the Town must work together (residents, committees and boards) to package up ideas and create a use proposal that would be favorable for the Town. A. Ippolito mentioned that certain changes in Zoning Bylaws could help make a proposal easier to create. P. Kane mentioned that the plan must be well thought out and fit into the current zoning for that property if they want to move quickly. P. Kane also stated that the proposal must have evidence showing it has been done before, successfully in other communities. P. Kane also mentioned that the proposal should be one that creates the ability for the Town to collect income from the use, because the ability to collect taxes would be null.

B. Quinn acknowledges that there is no official voting at the meeting, and voiced that if there had been a vote, his vote would NOT be in favor of this proposal for several reasons. He then cited two specific reasons for that. First, that the Town has not had historically stellar performance with town owned property. Specific examples mentioned were the former Temple site, Machon, and Greenwood among others. Secondly that budgets are being scrutinized to the point where basic services may soon be impacted. Specifically, the school budgets are stripped to the bone, and there are many impending budgetary needs on the horizon like the water mains and sewer problems among others that are not yet accounted for. He felt that we would have a long way to go to convince people (and town meeting) that spending

several million dollars on a potential municipally owned and operated wedding venue is appropriate in light of these other fiscal priorities.

P. Kane asked the Board how they will determine what use of the property should be. A. Ippolito mentioned some of the different plans she has heard, but also mentioned that first the Board must focus on uses if the Town was to purchase before brainstorming on ideas if it was privately bought. The Board and P. Kane discussed other properties similar to White Court that are owned by a municipality. The Board then continued to discuss and brainstorm on different opportunities that could arise if the Town was to purchase the property, as well as the current financial situation involved with the property.

P. Kane explained to the Board that it will be up to Town Meeting to decide if funds will be appropriated for the purchase of the property or not. A. Ippolito reiterated the point that if the Town was to purchase the property then for Town Meeting a plausible and solid plan must be worked out, and worked on by members of the community and members of the different boards and committees. G. Potts mentioned that for the Town to get behind an idea, then the financials and profitability of the plan needs to be solid and plausible. A. Ippolito and B. Isler both mentioned that a business plan is needed, and that community engagement with that document would be needed. B. Quinn stated that there are many different issues and problems that could arise from asking Town Meeting for funds. B. Isler stated that there are many different possibilities of the route the business plan could take. G. Potts mentioned that the business plan should be on how to market the property so that an interested party could purchase the land, if not the Town. P. Kane and the Board discussed the financial possibilities and abilities of if the Town was to purchase the property. G. Potts mentioned to the group that a person or group that is willing to buy the property and have a positive use for property and Town, that this is the best idea. G. Potts continued to explain that the historic value of the property could be used to attract buyers. B. Isler mentioned that she agreed with the idea of using the historic value of the home to attract buyers.

A. Ippolito mentioned that she would be willing to talk with other estates that are currently owned by municipalities in the area and inquire into how they are run and operate. G. Potts stated that a business plan should be drawn up, and explained an idea of having an MBA (Masters of Business Administration) work on it as a graduate school project or internship. A. Ippolito also mentioned that the Planning Board should talk with other towns and cities that own estates and to gather information on their structure and situations and to present this to the Board of Selectmen. A. Ippolito further explained that this information the Planning Board gathers can be used possibly in the proposed business plan.

P. Kane clarified that the Planning Board can explain to the Board of Selectmen that they find the property to be very important and want to preserve the property, and then can have the Board of Selectmen try and find a possible funding source for a business plan intern. The Board along with Mr. Olivetti discussed the possible next steps that could be taken. The Board agreed that the next step should be to gather information first. G. Potts mentioned that the situation and possibilities of White Court are substantial enough to have an intern or employee dedicated to working on White Court. P. Kane explained to the Board that if they feel this way then they should act now rather than wait. A. Ippolito then asked Board members to gather information on a municipally-owned estate and report back to the Board at the next meeting.

ZONING ENFORCEMENT CONCERN

PETITION 13-3 (223 PURITAN ROAD)

A. Ippolito then moved onto the next item on the agenda. Board member J.R. Young (absent from the meeting) had requested that the Board look at a zoning enforcement request previously sent to the Building Inspector who did not respond. P. Kane explained that J.R. Young wanted to ask if the Board would want to ask the new Building Inspector (different building inspector at the time of the previous letter) to look into the possible zoning enforcement issue. A. Ippolito stated that she believes that the Board must give the letter back to the new Building Inspector and have him enforce it. A. Ippolito explained a situation from the past to the Board that was reminiscent of this.

MOTION : By G. Potts to resubmit the letter of violation to the new Building Inspector, seconded by B. Isler, unanimously approved.

A. Ippolito then mentioned that the letter could contain a solution in it. B. Quinn asked if the home owner needs an occupancy permit, to which P. Kane mentions the homeowners have one. P. Kane then mentioned that there are different possibilities that could occur after the letter is sent.

ZONING RESEARCH AND MASTER PLAN UPDATE

A. Ippolito then moved on to the next item on the agenda - zoning research update.

P. Kane asked B. Quinn if he had finished the language regarding the proposed lodging overly bylaw. B. Quinn explained the language would not be complete until the new lodging map was complete. B. Quinn explained that the table of use had not been finalized so when that is complete, he can finish the language. P. Kane explained that the new map should not interfere with the language, as the language is the language, and it will just refer to the map in the definition. P. Kane mentioned that just the text is needed for what they are putting into the bylaw. G. Potts asked if there were edits made to the maps, and A. Ippolito and P. Kane explained that there hadn't been. B. Quinn though did mention that there were some edits and questions brought up regarding the lodging text, and asked if the language on the draft bylaw changed. P. Kane asked that B. Quinn bring the language to the next meeting. A. Ippolito also mentioned that the community meetings for the zoning changes should be set. P. Kane stated that there should be community forums first regarding the zoning changes, A. Ippolito agrees and states that a public meeting will be very important. P. Kane mentioned that the zoning change regarding the train station neighborhood must first go through the Department of Housing and Community Development review first and then from there it could be ready to be voted on, if no changes are recommended. P. Kane stated to the Board that using MGL 40R is a longer process than the other zoning changes. A. Ippolito asked if it would make sense to have a public meeting regarding the train station neighborhood zoning changes. P. Kane stated the Board should have the specific language first so that there's something to present and talk to.

A. Ippolito asked P. Kane about downzoning and if just shifting back to A2, P. Kane mentioned that the proposal is shifting from A3 to A2. P. Kane then explained to the Board different possibilities on what the Board could do for Town Meeting regarding zoning. P. Kane asked the Board if they have looked at the "downzoning" map, to which they replied they had. A. Ippolito mentioned that she could put together language regarding rationale and why the downzoning is happening and why it is in certain areas. P. Kane mentioned that the language must list out each parcel that is proposed to be downzoned.

B. Quinn asked if the changes are going in front of Town Meeting. P. Kane explained that the Board would need to finalize the language first. P. Kane continued to explain that the downzoning and lodging map could go in front of Town Meeting, but to hold off on the 40R proposal. P. Kane also mentioned that the Board should look at inclusionary zoning, but wary of getting information and language together in time. G. Potts asked about the definition of building height, and P. Kane mentioned that the change should be to the definition, not for only one zone.

A. Ippolito asked for updates on the Master Plan. B. Isler mentioned that she and her partner for this task spoke briefly, but nothing to report. A. Ippolito asked the groups to gather for her information so that she (A. Ippolito) will be able to summarize the information regarding the Planning Boards responsibilities for the Master Plan. A. Ippolito asked the members to bring their information for the next meeting.

ZONING WARRANT ARTICLES – HEARING DATES

A. Ippolito mentioned that at the next meeting, possible dates for public information sessions should be discussed, before the hearing for the zoning changes, which could happen in April. A. Ippolito mentioned that she believes there should be two public information sessions before the meeting.

UPDATE ON NEW TOWN ADMINISTRATOR SEAN FITZGERALD

A. Ippolito moved on to the next agenda item regarding an update on new Town Administrator, Sean Fitzgerald. The Board mentioned that if they had any questions they would reach out to P. Kane.

OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE BOARD

A. Ippolito ended the meeting by reiterating to each member to gather information regarding their task for the Master plan and to bring it to the next meeting.

MOTION : By B. Quinn to close the meeting, seconded by B. Isler, unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30PM

Andrew Levin
Assistant Town Planner