

PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES OF MARCH 23, 2011

Present: Mr. William Bill Ramsey; Chairman, Mrs. Susan Libby, Mr. David Messier, and Mr. Peter Krawczyk

Attendees: Bill Scanlan, Town Planner, Bob Downing, Don Nickerson, David Grissom, Chief Spiewakowski, Maureen Reardon, Chris Dunphy, and James Fountain.

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Mr. Ramsey opened the Meeting at 6:00 PM.

The Board approved the minutes of December 29, 2010 and March 16, 2011.

The Board discussed the special permit application for 5 Winthrop Terrace, which is scheduled for April 6 at 6:30 PM. The hearing was advertised in the Worcester Telegram on March 23 and March 30. Mr. Ramsey volunteered to send out the meeting notices to the abutters.

Regarding the proposed zoning articles, the Board decided to hold additional information sessions on April 7 and 14 and to hold the public hearing on May 11.

As the principal purpose of the meeting was to provide an Informational Forum for Warren residents on three proposed zoning articles, Mr. Ramsey made a brief overview of the articles and the process for adoption. He then turned the meeting over to the Town Planner.

Mr. Scanlan discussed the three proposed zoning amendments using a PowerPoint presentation. In summary the key points of the presentation were:

- Warren has potential for a significant amount of new development. At buildout Warren could add 16,170 new residents. Presently there are 206 parcels that contain over 20 acres. Most of this land is zoned for residential development. The implication is that Warren should be prepared to manage this new growth.
- One slide depicted the location of a proposed resort casino in Palmer. As an abutting community, Warren could experience substantial impacts from additional traffic, DUIs, criminal activity, new residential development, new school children, over-crowding of existing dwellings (i.e. "hotbedding"), and other impacts on municipal services.
- Mr. Scanlan presented the proposed flood plain amendment. The new language contains technical corrections to the bylaw based upon a recent review by state hazard mitigation officials. Warren must adopt the new text in order for Warren residents to remain eligible to purchase subsidized flood insurance.
- Mr. Scanlan then presented the proposed rear lot bylaw. The amendment would establish a special permit process whereby lots that contain less frontage than otherwise required by zoning could receive a building permit if the lot contained 4 acres and met other dimensional standards. The purpose is to afford owners of large lots the ability to build a new home without preparing an expensive subdivision plan. The Town benefits from a reduction in density in the neighborhood by avoiding new subdivisions and related costs of service.
- Lastly, Mr. Scanlan presented the proposed Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) bylaw. The bylaw allows for small lot sizes and clustering of units, which provides cost savings to the developer and homeowners through construction of shorter roads. In return, developers must set aside a significant percentage of the property as open space that cannot be developed in the future. The presentation included an overview of the development standards, how the

process will work, and visual examples from other places in Massachusetts.

Members in the audience asked for clarification on several items contained in the proposed amendments. During the discussion, there was a consensus that the articles will help the Town manage residential growth. There was a concern, however, that more proactive steps are necessary to promote commercial development in Warren. Some felt the areas currently zoned Village, the only places where commercial development can occur, are unable to accommodate significant new commercial growth because of the existing pattern of development. Mr. Krawczyk noted that the Board is working on zoning changes to allow such growth to occur in a controlled manner. He noted that the Board was not ready to go forward with such changes at the present time, but assured the audience the Board would propose some changes in the near future.

Motion to Adjourn by Mrs. Libby, seconded by Mr. Krawczyk, voted unanimously at 8:00 PM.

William Scanlan  
Town Planner

Date Approved: April 6, 2011