

Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
26 September 2013

Approved:
October 10, 2013

Location: Room 23, Forbes Building

Members present:

Ed Behn, Chair
John Arnold
Kathy Rosenblum Senie
Sharon Kaiser
Gary Wells
Peter Allen
Hank Rauch

Members absent:

Jim Tepper
Lisa Blazejewski

Others Present:

Jim Robbins, Town Planner
Lester Hensley, Planning Board/Economic Development Committee

Mr. Behn called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Behn decided to wait on approval of the 9-23-13 meeting minutes until the committee had a chance to review.

Review of Fall 2013 Special Town Meeting Warrant

Articles 22 through 27 – Zoning Bylaw Changes

Mr. Robbins, Town Planner, and Mr. Hensley from the Planning Board met with the Advisory Finance Committee to discuss the amendments to the Zoning Bylaws that are being proposed in Articles 22 through 27.

Article 22:

This article is looking to amend Zoning Bylaws, Article 4, Special Regulations, Section 4100, Earth Moving Regulations – specifically Subsections 4112, 4120, 4125, 4133, and 4142. These changes are being requested by the Planning Board to remove redundancy in the permitting process. For example, Mr. Robbins pointed out in Subsection 4112 that if a Building Permit is issued for a job that involves earth clearing, such as putting in an in-ground pool, then the earth clearing is covered under the Building Permit and there's no need for a special permit. The intention of this article is to remove the burden on the Planning Board for issuing permits for the same things, while also making the permitting process more efficient and less complicated for the Applicant.

Article 23:

This article is looking to amend Zoning Bylaws, Article 2, District Regulations, Section 2600, Dimensional Schedule, Subsection 2610 by deleting footnote "i" which states the front lot setback requirement would be "not less than 50 feet from the street centerline", and leaves the setback determination up to the Building Inspector. Mr. Robbins pointed out the language – as currently stated – is too confusing since it is difficult to figure out the centerline of a street when it could be of variable width. The Building Inspector would be allowed to take the average from the other properties on the street. Mr. Robbins mentioned that the ZBA requested this change.

The other change proposed in Article 23 is adding footnote “q” which would define how man-made retention and detention basins are counted in Open Space calculations for commercial properties. This article would not change anything for residential properties, but would allow commercial properties to count these retention/detention basins toward their open space requirements. Mr. Robbins stated that right now there are two conflicting definitions. The aim of this article would be to clear up the language since it is a recurring subject.

Article 24:

This article is looking to amend Zoning Bylaws, Article 3, General Regulations, Section 3200, Environmental Controls, specifically Subsections 3220, 3230, and 3240. The request of this article is to delete Subsections 3220 and 3230 concerning Pollution Control and Liquid Waste disposal since these two Subsections have been superseded by state and federal regulations and are obsolete. This article also requests amending the language in Subsection 3240 regarding street trees and making this Subsection more consistent with the rules already established for Subdivisions. It would also move Subsection 3240 up to 3220 if Subsections 3220 and 3230 are deleted.

Article 25:

This article is looking to amend Zoning Bylaws, Article 4, Special Regulations, Section 4500, Flood Plain District. The request of this article is to delete Section 4500 in its entirety since it was voted by town residents in 1973 and is now obsolete. As Mr. Robbins pointed out, the Westborough Board of Health Regulations and the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act now supersede this bylaw making it unnecessary.

Article 26:

This article is looking to amend Zoning Bylaws, Article 2, District Regulations, Section 2300, Use Regulations Schedule. The request of this article is to change the allowable use of land in Districts IB and ID from “yes” to “no” with regard to developing a single family dwelling, two-family dwelling, or the conversion of an existing structure to more than a two-family dwelling. By making this change to Districts IB and ID, the zoning would be more comparable to that of other industrial districts.

Article 27:

This article is looking to amend Zoning Bylaws, Article 5, Definitions. The purpose of this article is to clarify current definitions, or to bring definitions in line with rules and regulations at the town or state level, and to add a new definition “Lot Area – Minimum Buildable”.

Bedroom – The definition of a bedroom would be redefined to include “for the use of sleeping” and “contains a space for the use of a closet”. This definition would be applied to new construction.

Camping – This definition would be redefined in order to comply with licensing regulations required by the Massachusetts Dept. of Health.

Lot Area – This definition would be redefined to still exclude any area in a street or public way as part of a lot area, but would delete the part about the wetlands since that is now regulated by the state.

Lot Coverage – This definition would be redefined and would remove the word “roofed” when referring to a structure.

Major/Minor Residential Development – The request is that both of these definitions be deleted in their entirety since this is now regulated by the Town's Subdivision Rules and Regulations and conflicts with similar terminology in the current Zoning Bylaws.

Open Space – This definition would be redefined to remove the sentence regarding man-made retention areas, and refers back to requirements for the district as shown in Section 2600, Dimensional Schedule.

Structure – This definition would add a sentence to the end specifying that “walls and fences shall comply with the Massachusetts State Building Code”.

Lot Area – Minimum Buildable – By creating this definition, it would clarify the difference between total lot area and minimum buildable area. Lot Area – Minimum Buildable would be at least 90% of the Lot Area excluding wetlands.

Article 18 – Economic Development Committee Revolving Fund

Mr. Hensley discussed with the committee the EDC's request for funds to hire a part time person. He went over the history of the EDC. The EDC was formed in 2008 as an advisory committee to the Board of Selectmen in an effort to increase the commercial tax base, and to help minimize the residential tax base. They were given \$10,000 in order to get started with their efforts. Right now their outreach has been done by volunteers, who serve as ambassadors on the committee. They identify businesses in town that may have expansion plans and try to make sure that business stays – and grows – in Westborough. However, these volunteers have full time careers and it is difficult for them to contact businesses during normal business hours since they are at work. A part time person would need to be available during the work week to meet and correspond with business contacts and to also attend trade shows as part of the EDC's outreach plan. Since Clear Channel is paying the town \$50,000 per year for the electronic billboards along Rte 9, the proposal is to take half of this amount for a salary for a part time employee. Committee members asked why \$25,000 was chosen as a salary amount. Mr. Hensley mentioned that the EDC members wrote up a job description and determined \$25,000 was enough to get started. There is also an additional \$5,000 left in an old article from 2009. The EDC initially spent some money on brochures, training, and trade shows but need to continue their efforts. Committee members also asked what becomes of the other half of the \$25,000 from the \$50,000 payment by Clear Channel, and that portion would go in to the General Fund. Mr. Behn pointed out that Westborough currently has about 37.4% of taxable revenue coming from commercial/industrial use, which puts us at about 8th in the state.

Continued Discussion of STM Warrant Articles

Mr. Behn is starting to put together the book for voters.

The committee reviewed what needed to be done for clarification on articles:

Article 1, 28, & 29 required no further action after Mr. Harrington's discussion with the committee on 9/23/13.

Article 2 – A TIF spreadsheet was sent out to committee members via email on Cumberland Farms. Mr. Behn will follow up with Mr. Malloy on the performance of eClinical for comparison purposes.

Article 3 through 7 – Further discussion on these articles will take place at the AFC meeting on 9/30/13 when Jim Malloy, Town Manager, and Ian Johnson, Board of Selectmen Chair, are scheduled to meet with the committee.

Article 8 – no further action required.

Article 9 – Mr. Arnold followed up with Maureen Ambrosino and Ms. Ambrosino, along with the Library Board of Trustees, would like to come in and discuss their long range plans for the Library with the committee. In looking at their availability, along with preparations for the Special Town Meeting, it was decided they could meet with the AFC in November, since this article did not require the appropriation of town funds.

Article 10 – Mr. McNulty will attend the AFC's September 30th meeting to discuss the request for a part time Health Inspector. Additional clarification on this article can be directed to Mr. Malloy when he meets with the committee to discuss the purchase of the State Hospital land on 9/30/13.

Article 11 & 12 – Mr. Wells followed up with Kristi Williams, Assistant Town Manager, regarding what he calculated to be as an increase in Rec Dept personnel. Mr. Wells said that the Rec Dept has exceeded their available positions and need to expand their job definitions so they can accommodate their current staff. Presently, some of the staff are being paid as sub-contractors, but should be added to the Rec Dept payroll. It was noted that all part time positions and salaries are being funded by Rec Dept program fees.

Article 13 – Mr. Rauch had contacted Mr. Burn and reported the easements would only be in Westborough – no further action required.

Article 14 – Mr. Saari and Mr. Walden met with members of the AFC on 9/23/13. Further clarification of this article was requested by committee members. Ms. Rosenblum Senie would like to see this article include only the watershed maintenance on the DPW managed land abutting Sandra Pond, and explicitly exclude timber harvesting on Conservation parcels. She feels that the issue of timber harvesting and forestry management plans should be considered, and voted on separately. It was decided that further discussion and clarification of this article was needed. Ms. Rosenblum Senie noted that she plans to request that the Board of Selectmen restrict the article to watershed maintenance or remove the article from the warrant. The article can also be discussed when Ian Johnson and Jim Malloy attend the 9/30/13 AFC meeting.

Article 15 – No additional action required.

Article 16 – Ms. Kaiser is waiting to hear back from George Barrette regarding what specifically these funds will be used for by the Council on Aging in providing assistance to seniors. She will update the committee once she has further clarification.

Article 17 – Mr. Wells will follow up with Mr. Malloy regarding funds remaining in an old article designated for paving of the Senior Center parking lot. He will report back to the committee after speaking with Mr. Malloy.

Article 18 – Lester Hensley from the Economic Development Committee met with the committee this evening and provided clarification – no further action required.

Articles 19, 20, & 21 required no additional action.

Articles 22 through 27 were discussed at tonight's meeting with Mr. Robbins and Mr. Hensley. No further action required.

Article 30 – Mr. Behn has requested a map from Mr. Malloy indicating the proposed changes to the Country Club property.

Article 31 – addition off back of Town Hall – no additional action needed.

Future Meetings

The next Advisory Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 30, 2013 at 7:00 pm in Room 23 at the Forbes Building. Mr. McNulty from the Board of Health will be here to discuss the request for a part time Health Inspector, followed by Mr. Malloy and Mr. Johnson regarding Articles 3 through 7, and any questions relating to other articles.

Liaison Reports:

Mr. Behn mentioned the upcoming Association of Town Finance Committee Annual Meeting at the Tri Regional High School in Franklin on October 19th. He will scan and email to the committee for those who would like to attend.

Peter Allen reported that the next Municipal Building Committee meeting will be this Wednesday, 10/2, at 8:30 am at the fire station.

Mr. Arnold reported on the School Dept and mentioned they will start meeting soon regarding their budget for next year. The School Committee should have their numbers for the budget before the winter break. Mr. Allen mentioned that the public hearing on the school budget will be in December.

Adjournment

Mr. Wells moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 pm. Motion to adjourn was 7 in favor, with 7 being present.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Thomas, Administrative Assistant