



**TOWN OF WINTHROP
Planning Board
Town Hall
One Metcalf Square
Winthrop, MA 02152**

Peter Roche, Chairman
David Proctor
Honor Merceret, AIA
Vincent P. Zappulla
David Stasio, Esq.
Gina DiMento, Esq.
Robert Carroll, AIA

**Minutes
Planning Board Meeting
April 14, 2014**

Chairman Roche opened the April 14, 2014 meeting of the Winthrop Planning Board at 7:05 pm. In attendance were Planning Board Chairman Peter Roche and Members Gina DiMento, Honor Merceret, Vincent Zappulla, Robert Carroll, David Proctor, and David Stasio. Approximately 11 members of the general public were in attendance.

First order of business on the agenda was consideration of minutes from the March 10, 2014 meeting of the Board. After consideration by the Board, motion to approve the minutes as drafted was offered by Vincent Zappulla, second by Honor Merceret. Motion approved by acclamation. 7 – 0 votes.

Next item on the agenda was Review of Proposed Amendments to Zoning Bylaw, MAPC

The chair introduced the topic with a brief discussion of the purpose of the proposed amendment, the history of the policy discussion and the role MAPC has played as advisor to the Board. The Chair indicated the Board's interest in soliciting recommendations on how to improve and streamline the zoning associated with the Winthrop CBD.

Cynthia Wall (MAPC) walked the group through the differences between special permits and site plan review and discussed the implications of reducing or eliminating the designation of certain uses to be allowable only by Special Permit. Generally speaking, the Special Requirement review process is more cumbersome for the Applicant, but provides more control by the Town.

Ms Wall next reviewed her synopsis of the Board's prior discussion with regard to changes to the Code's Table of use Regulations. The Board provided Ms. Wall with direction on specific uses that should be adjusted to accomplish the Town's objectives for a more streamlined and predictable permitting process. There was also considerable discussion about the need for an effective design review process, to ensure that additional permitting flexibility is supported by thoughtful and enforceable design review.

Public comment:

David Kelston asked if the board was considering changes to the waterfront (WF) zone at this time. Chairmen Roche noted that no recommendations are being considered for the water front district at this point.

There followed a brief discussion of the status of a request by the owner of a commercial condominium situated at Atlantis Marina that was referred to the Board of Appeals for its consideration.

An unidentified member of the public, resident of Atlantis Marina, was concerned that changing use indicated her concern that any relaxation of Special Permit requirements to allow "As of right" will effectively take the public (abutters) voice out of the process. She advised the board to balancing rights of citizens with the desire to encourage development.

The chair noted that this discussion will continue in two weeks.

Next item on the agenda was Policy Discussion-Impact of Proposed Casino Development

The Board discussed its statutory role to advise the Town on all issues that have a profound and lasting impact on development, land use and quality of life within the community. The Board was unanimous in their understanding that the proposed development of a Gaming Resort within 1 mile of Winthrop would certainly have profound influence on development patterns and quality of life in the community. In this context, the Chair circulated a draft Policy/Impact Statement to describe the projected impacts of the proposed Mohegan Sun Casino, and to suggest potential mitigation strategies that should be considered by the Town Council and the Massachusetts Gaming Commission. After a brief overview of the findings and recommendations, the Chair solicited comments from the public, as follows.

- Carol Facella – (P4), thanked the board for their policy statement and noted it captured the important issues that the anti-casino has been trying to highlight. See video of 4/1 mtg. Ms. Facella suggested the board add stronger language that it more clearly "oppose" this casino. Quality of life, no legal obligation for funding – only false promises. "15k people, google Mayor Wesley Johnson Ledyard report of 355k visitors a day, emergency medical, 15-25 per year (not 56), higher auto insurance, Casino always connected to organized crime, fencing, money laundering, etc. Political leadership will change the casino. Vote no.
- Paul McGee (President of Winthrop Chamber of Commerce) noted the chamber had no official position at this point but, was very concerned about a poor mitigation package. He also noted that the Chamber of Commerce will be voting next Tuesday to determine a formal position on the casino proposal.

- Another member of the public thanked the board for their good work and after review of the ENF, Notice of Project Change, indicated his opposition to the casino. There are enough vacant storefronts, casino will be a big vacuum. Take a strong stance – say no.
- Peter Gill (Town Council President) thanked the board for assembling the most comprehensive statement to date on the casino proposal. He also urged the board to vote yes tonight to allow the impact statement to get to the Town Council's prior to their next meeting (the following evening).
- Lisa Alberghini (P6) – thank you for the first statement. The opportunity to issue not the obligation to issue permits. We should not view this as a done deal. Crime Mohegan & Foxwoods +25%, gambling rates double. Listen to tape lots of good info. Hedge fund majority owner – will promises be kept? Gaming commission has not decided yet. 4/22 best and final offer...8 days! Winthrop should be a host community.
- P. Gill noted that the Mass Gaming Commission is not under any obligation issue a gaming license. The law is written as “up to 3”.
- Anita Paci (P6) – indicated her strong opposition to the casino as a business whose values are inconsistent with the Town's interest in a strong quality of life.

After consideration of the Policy/Impact Statement, and consideration of the public comment, Honor Merceret and Gina Dimento offered proposed edits to more clearly reflect the fact that: 1) the projected impacts are not simply financial in nature and no mitigation can fully compensate for the potential impacts of a gambling casino; and 2) the Board believes Winthrop should be accorded the rights and privileges of a Host Community, whether by amendment of statute, or negotiation with the Casino Proponent, prior to awarding any license. The Chair offered language to reflect those edits, and a Motion to formally adopt the Policy/Impact Statement with those edits was proffered by Honor Merceret, seconded by Gina Dimento. The Motion was approved by roll call, with the following members voting in the Affirmative: Crosby, Dimento, Zappulla, Stasio, Carroll, Merceret, Roche. No votes were cast in Opposition to the Motion.

New business/announcements:

With no further business before the Board, Motion to adjourn was offered by Vinny Zapulla and seconded by Gina DiMento. The Motion was approved by acclamation and the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Roche, Chair