

PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Minutes, March 15, 2005

Members present: Andy McClurg, Deborah Emello, Karl Haglund, James Heigham

Members absent: Joseph Barrell

Also present: Timothy Higgins, Senior Planner

7:00 p.m.: There being a quorum Andy McClurg acting as Chair called the meeting to order.

- The Board approved the minutes from 3/1/2005 with 2 minor edits (4:0 vote).
- Executive Session minutes from March 1st were approved and it was voted for them to remain closed at this time.

7:05 p.m.: Continued Public Hearing on the “Distinctive Accessory Structure Preservation By-Law” proposal was opened by J. Heigham reading the hearing notice. It was immediately continued to March 29 at 7:00 p.m.

7:08 p.m.: The discussion on the “Planning Standards” document for the future design of Trapelo Road and Belmont Street produced by Andy McClurg was opened. Andy McClurg explained it was a draft and only his thoughts at this time. Copies were distributed to those present. He explained the time frame as requested by the Selectmen. A report will be forwarded to the Selectmen by April 1st. This will be a dual project with the Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC) although they will take the lead role. Many additional meetings and hearings will be held by the TAC to involve the public. This project is larger than the Pleasant Street project.

Mary Jo Frisoli, Chair from the TAC joined the Board at the table. Andy McClurg then presented his planning standards. They are not designs but planning concepts for the TAC to use to guide their work. The basis of this work is the 2003 Economic Development Plan (“the Corridor Study”). He explained the different types of zones as defined by land uses present along the corridor (i.e. commercial, mixed use, transition zones and residential).

It was noted that there is no transportation/traffic data to support the proposals to date. He then walked through seven (7) planning objectives within the document. There were generated from the Corridor Study (generally). A brief discussion of the proposed “Operational Issues” then took place. This list should grow to include other items as determined through the TAC review process. Possible road “Cross Sections” and 15 individual planning segments were then presented in a brief over view. These planning segments divided the roads into segments in terms of desirable pavement widths. The number is flexible and can change based on several variables.

Andy then asked for comments on the document structure and its formatting. Several were discussed and amendments were agreed to. The second issue concerned the content of his proposal (i.e. topic specific).

Mary Jo Frisoli spoke first. She was uncomfortable with the lane width proposals as there is little data to support these at this time. It should be a general “template” that should be provided to the consultant. Andy McClurg acknowledged this and pointed out text in the document supporting this approach. She requested the zoning delineation of the corridor. Tim Higgins will provide each TAC member with the Economic Development Plan and the corridor zoning. The corridor study is the genesis of the whole project. The Office of Community Development will also provide a brief description of each zoning district.

The process and time frame were then discussed.

April 1st a document will be delivered to Board of Selectmen. It is then expected that it will be forwarded to the TAC. Andy McClurg will be the Planning Board’s liaison. The intent is to get this project on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in the spring of 2006. The TAC will work with the Planning Board through the design of the project to ensure the design reflects the findings of the Corridor Study. Ms. Frisoli was concerned with the language about “narrowing the road”

Tim Higgins spoke in favor of leaving this recommendation noting the 12 month planning process revealed an extremely strong sentiment to reduce the pavement width. Many residents participated in the planning programs. A lengthy discussion followed. The terms “re-allocating space” and “road diet” were proposed instead.

Tim Higgins urged that the planning concept of increased side-walk widths and creating a more pedestrian friendly environment need to be included in the document. This theme came through very clearly during the planning process.

The need to develop a consensus by public meeting of the proposal is essential.

The public must “buy” into this. Mary Jo Frisoli said this will occur through the TAC review process and the consultant will attend virtually every meeting.

The discussion then turned from formatting to content specific concerns with the proposed segments. Andy McClurg briefly discussed his rationale behind the proposed segments. Mary Jo Frisoli expressed the need for continual cooperation with the Planning Board through the TAC planning process.

In general Mr. McClurg kept four moving lanes in the three squares to allow for the flow of traffic. Andrea Masciari noted that there was only one area where two (2) lanes were proposed thus there will be very little pavement reduction. Andy McClurg generally agreed and explained his rationale for the recommended widths noting many areas would be three (3) lanes. The only two lane road should be in front of the country club. Again, he noted traffic data is necessary.

Adam Tocci spoke and contradicted Tim Higgins opinion on road narrowing. Tim Higgins noted that Mr. Tocci attended the Planning Board meetings nine (9) months after the process began and did not have the benefit of hearing the attendees of earlier meetings.

J.C. Boyajian from Alba Press, spoke as a land owner and business person. He wanted to say that the business comminatory should be involved in the process. He questioned the desire to reduce pavement width and is concerned that the consultant may not agree.

Andy McClurg will produce a new draft. It should be placed on the web as soon as possible. Tim Higgins will send his comments to Andy McClurg electronically in the morning. The Board and guests commended Andy McClurg for his fine effort on the document.

8:50 p.m. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.