

PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Minutes, July 26, 2005

Members present: Sami Baghdady, Deborah Emello, Jennifer Fallon, Karl Haglund, Andy McClurg

Also present: Jeffrey Wheeler, Planning Coordinator

7:40 p.m.: General Business

Organization of the Board

Karl Haglund was elected Chair (5-0)

Deborah Emello was elected Clerk (5-0)

Appointments to Committees

➤ Capital Budget Committee - There was a lot of question and confusion about why the Planning Board has a representative on the Capital Budget Committee. It makes sense for a member to sit on the Mega Committee and Permanent Building Committee since these committees discuss and decide issues relating to planning. However, neither of these committees provides such an opportunity. Karl Haglund agreed to check with Board of Selectmen to see why such an appointment was necessary. As a result, the appointment to Capitol Budget was put on hold until further resolution on this issue.

➤ Housing Trust and Belmont Center Planning Group - Andy McClurg and Deborah Emello agreed to remain on the Housing Trust and Belmont Center Planning group, respectively.

Other Issues

The Board inquired about representation on the Vision Implementation Committee. The Board agreed to review this later after it has more clarity on its existing committee appointments.

7:50 p.m.: Review Planning Board Projects and Issues

Jeffrey Wheeler discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Board and Staff. He discussed potential interaction with Zoning Board of Appeals. The Board agreed that it was important to get the Zoning Board of Appeals perspective on zoning amendments prior to the Planning Board making recommendations. Deborah Emello agreed to talk with Zoning Board of Appeals about their issues and to bring back to the Board at its next meeting what she uncovers.

Jeffrey Wheeler reviewed the Planning Board's projects and issues. He provided a general overview of the planning process and reviewed the projects that the Board has completed in the past 5 years. He also suggested what the next steps might be with respect to the continued implementation of these various projects.

- Design and Site Plan Review and Special Permit Zoning Amendments – since these Sections were significantly amended last year, mentioned the need to meet with Zoning Board of Appeals to discuss amending the Table of Uses (Section 3.3)
- Demolition/Moratorium Zoning Amendment- reviewed what the Planning Board did last year. He discussed the need to balance contemporary housing standards while preserving the existing housing stock. He mentioned that other Communities (Lexington, Wellesley) are struggling with this issue, though in these communities it is a much larger issue.

8:30 p.m. Improvements to Central and Palfrey Squares

Susan Marsh, a resident of Belmont, presented a report and recommendations for Central and Palfrey Squares. She recommended creating the Pequotsette Park District. She stressed the need for connections and effective design, especially with regard to the streetscape. She mentioned that in her experience when people go to the park they leave shortly after arriving because it is such an unfriendly place to access. She proposed a new entrance to the Pequotsette Park on the east side of the VFW since that provides direct access to the playground and is a bigger more open area which would allow for further design enhancements.

A resident spoke in favor of installing a pedestrian light to make crossing Trapelo Road easier. Susan stated that the Fire Station Committee suggested that adding a pedestrian light phase to the traffic lights is not difficult – it just cost money which the Committee did not offer. She believed that the park is underutilized because of fear of crossing Trapelo Road.

Lyn Doblin, 3 Francis Street, mentioned that the Butler School community is on both sides of Trapelo Road; however, Trapelo Road cuts it in half. She spoke in favor of these improvements since they would bring the community together.

Another resident agreed with Susan’s recommendation of creating a sense of place and that landscaping and other street furniture will help achieve that goal.

Andy McClurg offered to talk to the Traffic Advisory and Fire Station Committees about the pedestrian light and will report back at the Board’s next meeting.

Susan concluded her presentation by stating that she will continue to meet with other Boards and Committees in the fall and would appreciate any support that the Planning Board might offer.

9:45 p.m. Set Calendar for the Year

Jeffrey Wheeler finished reviewing the Board’s projects and next steps for their implementation.

The Board agreed to set its goals at their next meeting after they've had time to review and think about what they would like to accomplish during the year.

The Board agreed to meet September 13 and 27 and to schedule public hearings for the Historic Accessory Building zoning amendment and the Design and Site Plan Review for the reuse of the Waverley Square Fire Station on the 13th and 27th, respectively.

10:20 p.m. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.