

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Meeting Date. October 16, 2008

CALL TO ORDER

The Meeting was called to order at 7:04 P.M. in the Community Room, Amherst Police Station

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Brian Morton (Chair), Kay Moran (Vice Chair), Marilyn Blaustein, Barry Federman, Doug Slaughter, Andy Steinberg, Marylou Theilman

OTHERS PRESENT

John Musante (Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director); David Ziomek (Director of Conservation and Development), Jonathan Tucker (Planning Director), Walter Wolnik

COMMITTEE AGENDA

1. Planning Board Articles
2. Vote Affordable Housing Recommendation (if questions have been answered)
3. Larch Hill
4. Write-ups for the Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting
5. Member Reports
6. Minutes
7. Next Meeting and Agenda
8. Miscellaneous

COMMITTEE ACTION

VOTED 7-0 to recommend STM 11/17/08 Article 6

VOTED 7-0 to take no position on STM 11/10/08 Article 7

VOTED 7-0 to recommend STM 11/17/08 Article 8

VOTED 7-0 to recommend STM 11/17/08 Article 9 Parts A,B,D,E and to take no position on Part C

VOTED 7-0 to recommend STM 11/17/08 Article 10

VOTED 7-0 to recommend STM 11/17/08 Article 11

VOTED 7-0 to accept the amended minutes of the October 6, 2008 meeting.

DISCUSSION

1. **STM 11/17/08 Planning Board Articles (7, 8, 9, and 10).** Tucker explained each of the planning board articles. Article 7 applies to duplexes and seeks to increase the density in the General Residence and Village center by changing the zoning to allow duplexes by Site Plan Review (i.e. by right) instead of Special Permit. The goal is to increase residential properties (and therefore property taxes) in these areas by this change to the zoning. This higher density growth is in alignment with the Master Plan. Article 8 Part A seeks to change the requirements for residential development in the General Business and Village Center Business (the “center of

the centers”). The purpose is to allow for more dense development of residential components to these properties by removing certain lot area requirements while adding other requirements to maintain the aesthetics and functions desired in accordance with the Master Plan. Article 8 Parts B and C correct an error in the zoning and require that the Design Review Standards must be applied in the regulations for Town Houses and Apartments. Article 9 is in response to a petition article. Parts A and B define some terms for use in the zoning bylaws. Part C adds requirements for open space for certain types of residential development. Parts D and E are technical fixes to resolve conflicts and bring alignment relative to the other changes implemented by the article. Article 10 expands the uses allowed in the Light Industrial zoning district and changes the boundaries of one of the Light Industrial zones to match with the property lines (and current usage).

2. STM 11/17/08 Article 6 – Establishment of Municipal Housing Trust. The committee discussed the email that Musante had forwarded answering the outstanding committee questions regarding the Towns liability for obligations of the trust (it does not have liability for these obligations) and the appropriation of CPA funds to the trust without a specific project being named (this is allowed).

3. Article 11 – Larch Hill. Ziomek outlined the specifics of the article and the subsequent actions that may result from this initial article. The conveyance of the property from the Conservation Commission to itself is to expand its ability to work with the Hitchcock Center in their development of a new center at that location. The expectation is that the changes to occur in the future will have no negative financial impact on the Town. Article 11 specifically has no financial implications but does initiate a process which may have a positive financial impact. Preliminary indications from the state regarding the change to the Article 97 land involved in this article are that there will be no mitigation nor compensation needed. Ziomek stressed that this information is preliminary and that he would update the committee as new information was available. Legislative approval will need to be obtained to make the changes to the Article 97 land. Ziomek also noted that any changes with financial implications (e.g., changes to the lease with the Hitchcock Center) would come before Town Meeting.

4. Write Ups for the Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting. The committee finalized the assignment of article write ups, discussed the deadlines for those write ups, and some of the finer points to be included for the articles discussed at this meeting.

5. Member Reports. Steinberg reported on the progress of the Community Choices committee. He stated that at the last meeting the topics to be included in their report had been discussed but not specifically the content of the report. He also expressed the committee’s desire to make a fairly detailed report to Town Meeting. Morton stated that his Finance Committee report to Town Meeting will focus on the Town’s short term financial picture and that he hoped that the Community Choices report would be more focused on the long term. Steinberg also reported that about 230 Community Choice surveys had been completed but that many more were expected due to the outreach efforts of the committee.

6. Minutes of the October 6th meeting were approved as amended.

7. **Next Meeting and Agenda.** The next meeting will be held November 6th with initial topics of the Guidelines for FY2010 and a discussion of the Reserves Policy.

8. **Miscellaneous.** Moran made the motion to Adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Doug Slaughter
Acting Clerk