

**AMHERST PLANNING BOARD**  
**Wednesday, March 30, 2005 – 7:00 PM**  
**Town Room, Town Hall**  
**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Paul Bobrowski, Chair; Carl Mailler, Adrian Fabos, Aaron Hayden, Chris Boyd, Pam Rooney, Rod Francis, David Kastor

**ABSENT:** Mary Scipioni

**STAFF:** Jonathan Tucker, Interim Director; Niels la Cour, Senior Planner; Sue Krzanowski, Management Assistant

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Mr. Bobrowski opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

**I. MINUTES – Meeting of March 16, 2005**

Ms. Rooney MOVED: to approve the Minutes of March 16, 2005 as submitted. Mr. Fabos seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0 (Kastor abstained).

Since it was not yet time for the scheduled public hearing, the Chair moved ahead on the agenda.

**II. NEW BUSINESS**

Noting that he is an employee of Amherst College, Mr. Hayden recused himself.

**A. Amherst College Crosswalks – South Pleasant Street – Mr. James Brassord, Director of Facilities Planning & Management**

Mr. Brassord provided a brief history of Amherst College's efforts to improve safety for pedestrians around the College. He said that vehicle/pedestrian accidents at both UMass and Smith College had provided momentum to speed up the efforts. Improvements recently implemented on College Street (Route 9) are working well. Mr. Brassord told the Board that since Route 116 is much different than Route 9, a different approach will be used. The goals are the same: to calm traffic and create a safety zone for students.

Mr. Chris Wall, landscape architect with The Berkshire Design Group, presented the plans. Mr. Wall said that the crosswalks will all be at grade and will include brick pavers. Pedestrian lights will be the same as on Route 9, with flashing lights on both sides of the crosswalks. The two major changes on Route 116 will be the installation of islands at intersections with mountable curbs on some, and the roadway will be narrowed at some points by 8 to 10 feet. A row of appropriate large street trees is also proposed along the east side of South Pleasant Street between Hitchcock and Walnut Streets, which will enhance the entranceway into the downtown area. Mr. Brassord said that lighted message signs will be used to help direct traffic during events.

Mr. Tucker noted that the Historical Commission and Design Review Board had both reviewed and endorsed the proposal. The Historical Commission's review had been advisory and it had been involved because the green along the east side of this stretch was an extension of the original Town Common.

Ms. Rooney expressed concern that the proposed 11 foot roadway would be too narrow and suggested considering 12 foot lanes.

Mr. la Cour said that the Town has adopted a policy of narrowing lanes down to 11 feet from 12 feet.

The Board discussed encouraging pedestrians to use the crosswalks, and made several suggestions regarding minor improvements to adjacent sidewalks, including signs to direct pedestrians along the east side of the area into the downtown using Amherst College sidewalks.

Mr. Frank Wells, Public Transportation Committee, commented that students don't seem to push the buttons to use the lights on Route 9 very much. Enforcement is lacking, he said. Mr. Wells advised against planting crabapple trees because the fruit will make surfaces slippery. Mr. Wells said that narrowing the road is a good idea as long as it doesn't impinge on bike lanes.

Other issues discussed were speed limits, sidewalk changes, signage, the area of the original Town Common, and using a marker to indicate it.

Ms. Rooney MOVED: to recommend that the Select Board endorse the proposal and encourage Amherst College to work with the Town to provide an historic marker for the original Town Common. Mr. Boyd seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0 (Hayden abstaining).

## **II. PUBLIC HEARINGS – ZONING AMENDMENTS**

Mr. Bobrowski opened the public hearings.

### **A-8-05 Olympia Drive Rezoning**

To change the zoning designation for the property at Map 8D, Parcel 20 from Fraternity Residence (R-F) to Neighborhood Residence (R-N).

Mr. Bobrowski reported that the Zoning Subcommittee voted unanimously to urge the Board to support this amendment. A portion of the Olympia Drive property that had been mistakenly put into conservation status was originally earmarked for affordable housing. This zoning change was needed to help facilitate a future affordable housing project.

Ms. Audrey Child, Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee urged the Board to recommend that Town Meeting support the amendment. Mr. Roy Rosenblatt, Community Services Coordinator, said that funding is available and an RFP ready to be issued. The amendment is the first step.

Mr. Frank Wells, Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee spoke in support of the amendment and said that affordable housing is desperately needed in Town. He read aloud the 2002 Amherst Housing Policy.

There was discussion about where the property lines between the housing and conservation portions of the property would be drawn, and aspects of the language of the original article.

There was no additional public comment.

Mr. Hayden MOVED: to close the public hearing. Ms. Rooney seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously, 8-0.

Mr. Hayden MOVED: to recommend that Town Meeting adopt the proposed Zoning Map change, that resolution of the exact boundaries of the housing and conservation portions of the property is in the future and subject to change, and that under any such change the parcels will retain their size and proximity to similar areas. Mr. Francis seconded the motion.

Mr. Tucker indicated that the boundaries referred to, while never surveyed, had been shown on maps upon which Town Meeting actions had been based. It would be difficult to move the boundaries in any substantial way. He recommended against raising an issue concerning a future action which might or might not ever occur.

After discussion, Mr. Boyd said he would prefer to send a simple recommendation to rezone to Town Meeting. Mr. Tucker noted that Mr. Hayden's comments could be appropriately included in the Planning Board's Report to Town Meeting.

Mr. Hayden agreed to amend his motion to MOVE: that the Board recommend that Town Meeting adopt the amendment. Mr. Francis seconded this Motion which passed unanimously, 8-0.

**A-9-05            Table 3 Amendments**

To amend Table 3, Dimensional Regulations, and associated Footnote m., to clarify the density calculation for selected types of new dwelling units in the General Residence (R-G) and Village Center Residence (R-VC) districts.

Mr. Fred Hartwell, former Planning Board member and author of Footnote m, said that there are significant public policy issues buried in this. Whether or not to include non-conforming properties in the average density calculation was one such issue, he said.

Mr. Bobrowski said that the Zoning Subcommittee has not finished working on the amendment. Mr. Tucker added that calculation methods are still being worked out.

Ms. Rooney MOVED: to continue the hearing to April 13, 2005 at 7:05 PM. Mr. Fabos seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously, 8-0.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS (continued)**

- B. Massachusetts Federation of Planning and Appeals Boards – Meeting Schedule**  
– in packet
- C. Massachusetts Land Use Forum – Invitation** – in packet
- D. May Meeting Schedule** – The Board decided to hold early meetings on May 4<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> which are both Town Meeting nights. The meetings will be scheduled for 5:00 PM at the Middle School. The May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting may be cancelled if there are no public hearings for that night.

**V. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION PLANS** – None

**VI. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS**

The Board decided not to review the following:

ZBA 2005-00024, East Hadley Road – Eric Pietz  
ZBA 2005-00025, 560 West Street – John A. Rankin

**VII. UPCOMING SPC/SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS** – None

Because he was unable to participate in the next proceeding, Mr. Kastor stepped down from the Board at 8:44 PM.

**III. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. SPP 2005-00002, Sunwood Pines – Deliberations on Draft Decision & Findings**

The Board reviewed the Homeowners Association Documents, but noted that the Rules & Regulations were not included. Mr. Bobrowski noted that there should be something in the Rules & Regulations prohibiting spotlights and floodlights. Mr. Tucker suggested that it would be most efficient to reference the Special Permit and include the record of decision which lists the conditions in Article II, Section 2 of the Homeowners Documents.

Ms. Rooney MOVED: to approve the Homeowners Association Documents subject to the stipulation that a copy of the Rules & Regulations be provided and the Homeowners Association Documents include a reference to the Special Permit and list of conditions as stated in the discussion above. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

The Board then reviewed the Findings which were drafted by Mr. Bobrowski and made some modifications to the language.

Mr. Francis MOVED: to approve the Findings as amended. Ms. Rooney seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Francis MOVED: to approve the Decision, including the amended findings, as submitted. Ms. Rooney seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Boyd MOVED: to adjourn this meeting at 9:30 PM. Ms. Rooney seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Respectfully submitted:

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Sue Krzanowski, Management Assistant

Approved:

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Aaron A. Hayden, Vice Chair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_