

AMHERST PLANNING BOARD
Wednesday, October 5, 2005 – 7:00 PM
Town Room, Town Hall
Minutes

PRESENT: Paul Bobrowski, Chair; Carl Mailler, Leandro Rivera, Rod Francis, Chris Boyd, David Kastor, Mary Scipioni (7:02 PM)

ABSENT: Aaron Hayden, Adrian Fabos

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

Mr. Bobrowski opened the meeting at 7:01 PM.

I. MINUTES – Meeting of September 21, 2005

Mr. Francis MOVED: to approve the Minutes of September 21, 2005 as submitted. Mr. Kastor seconded, and the Motion passed 5-0-1 (Bobrowski abstained).

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

VII. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS

The Board decided not to review the following:

ZBA2006-00012, 401 Shays Street, Herter Miles
ZBA2006-00013, Strong Street, Joan Hart
ZBA2006-00014, Pomeroy Lane, Henry E. Whitlock
ZBA2006-00015, 15 Hazel Avenue, Arthur & Teri Hebb

VI. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS

The Chair endorsed the following:

ANR2006-00007, 450 Pine Street & 2 Bridge Street, Donna Nodurf

Mr. Kastor MOVED: to establish October 2005 as the date that the new lot will be eligible for a building permit. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed, 7-0.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS – ZONING AMENDMENTS

Mr. Bobrowski read the preamble and opened the public hearings.

A-5-06, R-G Dimensions

To amend footnote m., Table 3, Dimensional Regulations, to alter the additional lot area per unit required for apartments and townhouses in the R-G District.

Mr. Bobrowski explained footnote m, and said that the Zoning Subcommittee voted unanimously to recommend approval. He summarized the proposal which would allow a slight increase in density in the R-G zone, by changing the additional lot area per unit required for apartments and townhouses from 6,000 sq. ft. to 4,000 sq. ft. This would bring it in line with the R-VC zone, he noted.

Mr. Tucker explained the history of this issue and previous Board attempts to address it, and described how the amendment would work. He noted that a previous petition amendment had reversed the comparative densities of the R-G District (around the town center) and the R-VC districts (around Amherst's outlying village centers)—under the current regulations, new multifamily development in the village center residential areas could be denser than similar developments in the town center. This proposed amendment would change R-G density only slightly, but would bring the two areas back into balance.

Mr. Kastor suggested that the Board be prepared to describe the reasoning behind the amendment for Town Meeting. Mr. Bobrowski noted that amendment was one of the package of affordable housing amendments the Board had been working on. Mr. Kastor said that this was a modest contribution to add a little more density to the downtown, and would make new housing “a little less unaffordable.”

Ms. Scipioni said that it's important to emphasize that the footprint (building and lot coverage) requirements must still be met and that parking requirements need to be considered.

Mr. Francis noted that the amendment “underachieves” in terms of adding significant new density.

Mr. Francis MOVED: to close the public hearing. Mr. Mailler seconded, and the Motion passed, 7-0.

Mr. Kastor MOVED: to recommend that Town Meeting adopt this zoning amendment. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

A-6-05, Demolition Delay

To amend Section 13.7 to clarify enforcement of violations and penalties.

Mr. Bobrowski said that the Zoning Subcommittee voted unanimously to recommend approval of this amendment, which deals with enforcement and penalties. It's pretty straightforward, he noted. Mr. Tucker explained how the proposed changes clarified what kinds of action constituted a violation of the demolition delay regulations, and how fines for such violations were proposed to increase. He pointed out some recent revisions in language.

Mr. Francis MOVED: to close the public hearing. Ms. Scipioni seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Mailler MOVED: to recommend that Town Meeting adopt this amendment. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Street Acceptance Request – Section of Tanglewood Road from White Pine Road to the end of the cul-de-sac – Douglas Kohl

The Board reviewed this request from Mr. Kohl. Mr. la Cour said that an acceptable solution has been worked out for the street trees and the trees have been planted. He said the tree issue had been the only remaining outstanding issue to be resolved for this section of street.

Mr. Kastor MOVED: to recommend that Town Meeting approve the street acceptance request for this section of Tanglewood Road from White Pine Road to the end of the cul-de-sac. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed 6-0-1 (Scipioni abstained).

B. Escrow Release Request – Eastwoods Subdivision – Douglas Kohl

The Board received a request from Mr. Douglas Kohl to release the escrow being held for the Eastwoods subdivision. Mr. la Cour noted said that the work has been completed to the satisfaction of Town staff, with just a few minor details left.

Mr. Francis MOVED: to approve the release of the remaining escrow funds currently being held for the Eastwoods Subdivision. Mr. Mailler seconded, and the Motion passed 6-0-1 (Scipioni abstained).

C. November Meeting Schedule

November meetings are scheduled for November 2 and 16. Because of Town Meeting, both meetings are scheduled at the Amherst Regional Middle School, Home Economics Room and will begin around 5:00 p.m. or 5:30 p.m., depending on public hearing schedules. Mr. Bobrowski suggested that the meetings begin at 6:00 p.m. or later, if the press of business made that possible.

D. Other – None

IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS & REORGANIZATION

Mr. Kastor suggested that the Board formalize this process by adopting and following a pattern of succession for the officers' positions (Vice Chair → Chair → Clerk → Vice Chair). No timeline was proposed. Mr. la Cour noted that running the meeting and participating in the meeting were two different things, and it took time for most people develop the ability to run a meeting well. He said that an automatic pattern of succession might not well serve the Board's interests if it meant that people who could run a meeting well had to leave in favor of people who could not. The Board was willing to consider the suggested pattern.

The following slate of possible officers was nominated:

Mr. Kastor nominated Mr. Hayden to serve as Chair.
Ms. Scipioni nominated Mr. Kastor to serve as Vice Chair.
Mr. Francis nominated Mr. Bobrowski to serve as Clerk.

Since Mr. Hayden was not present to accept or decline the nomination, the Board decided to postpone action on the slate as proposed, and vote on it at the next meeting..

Mr. Mailler MOVED: to approve the slate of candidates, to be voted on at the next meeting. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

Ms. Scipioni MOVED: to appoint Ms. Pamela Rooney and Mr. Leandro Rivera as Planning Board representatives to the Atkins Working Group. Mr. Francis seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

In the absence of a couple of members, the Board decided to wait until the next meeting to do any further reorganization. However, Mr. Kastor said that a Planning Board member was needed to attend the Farm Committee meeting for tomorrow night where the AG proposed was expected to be discussed. He could not participate because he is an abutter and would be in conflict – or something like that. Since no one else was available, Mr. Bobrowski asked Mr. Tucker to contact Mr. Fabos and ask him to attend on the Board’s behalf and convey the Planning Board’s role concerning the proposed AG District zoning amendment.

IX. PLANNING BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS – None

VI. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS (continued)

The Chair endorsed the following:

ANR 2006-00006, 500 Sunderland Road, Kenneth Bergstrom

VII. UPCOMING SPC/SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS

Mr. la Cour said that a definitive subdivision application has been filed for “Lawrence Circle”. The public hearing is scheduled for November 16. The Board scheduled a site visit for Thursday, October 27 at 8:00 AM.

Mr. Tucker noted that he and Town Counsel Alan Seewald will conduct a training session for the ZBA, the evening of October 27th. The Planning Board attended the last session and is invited to this one.

XI. REPORT OF THE CHAIR – Mr. Bobrowski expressed appreciation to former Planning Board member Pamela Rooney for her dedication, expertise, and graceful service during two terms on the Board.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Francis MOVED: to adjourn this meeting at 8:45 PM. Mr. Boyd seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Sue Krzanowski, Management Assistant

APPROVED:

DATE: _____

Paul Bobrowski, Chair