

AMHERST PLANNING BOARD
Wednesday, August 5, 2009 – 7:00 PM
Town Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

PRESENT: Jonathan Shefftz, Chair (7:08 PM); Richard Roznoy, Denise Barberet, David Webber, Bruce Carson, Stephen Schreiber, Jonathan O’Keeffe

ABSENT: Ludmilla Pavlova-Gillham

STAFF: Jonathan Tucker, Director; Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner; Sue Krzanowski, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Shefftz opened the meeting at 7:09 PM.

I. MINUTES – Meetings of June 3 and July 15, 2009

Ms. Barberet and Mr. Tucker suggested grammatical changes to pages 5 and 6 of the July 15 minutes... Mr. Roznoy suggested that wording on page 7, 2nd paragraph, be amended to read that Town Meeting would consider projects to appropriate funds for.

June 3, 2009 - Mr. Shefftz signed the Minutes.

July 15, 2009

Mr. O’Keeffe MOVED: to adopt the Minutes of July 15, 2009 as amended. Mr. Carson seconded and the Motion passed 6-0-1 (Schreiber abstained).

II. PUBLIC MEETING – SIGN APPROVAL

Greenfield Savings Bank, 6 University Drive – Newmarket Center

Review and approval of two replacement signs in accordance with conditions of Plan Approval #85-6.

Mr. Alan Blanker, Vice President, Greenfield Savings Bank, appeared before the Board with a request to replace two existing signs. The new signs would be back-lit with white lettering. Mr. Blanker presented color renditions for the Board’s consideration and showed pictures of other signs in the vicinity.

Mr. Schreiber MOVED: to approve the signs as presented. Mr. O’Keeffe seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

III. APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATIONS TO COMMISSIONS

A. Appointments and Nominations

1. Agricultural Commission – Mr. Roznoy said that he attended the July 21 meeting as an interested party, and he is willing to serve as the Board’s

representative. He reported that the Agricultural Commission discussed the proposed redesign of the 'Spring Street lot' in the Town Common and the impact it could have on the Farmers' Market. There had been a presentation on the proposed redesign by Superintendent of Public Works Guilford Mooring. Mr. Roznoy said that he thought that the Planning Board should review the proposal, as well.

Mr. Tucker described the history of the project and the boards/committees involved, noting that the Town Common falls under the jurisdiction of the Select Board.

Mr. Tucker reminded the Board that the issue under discussion was if the Board wanted to nominate Mr. Roznoy as its representative.

Mr. Schreiber MOVED: to nominate Richard Roznoy to serve as the Board's representative to the Agricultural Commission. Mr. O'Keeffe seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Tucker explained that the parking lot is part of the Town Common. The Common is part of the original road, which is why it falls under the jurisdiction of the Select Board. Redesign of Spring Street has been discussed for years, Mr. Tucker said, and it had moved up on the list of Town project designs with the proposed renovation of the Lord Jeff and to accommodate the Farmers' Market.

To date, the process has included the Design Review Board and the Historical Commission. The Agricultural Commission was involved because of the Farmers' Market. The Planning Board could request to see the proposal if the Board wishes to, he said.

Ms. Brestrup said that actual work won't happen until next Spring, and would begin with changes to Spring Street east of Boltwood Avenue, so there is time for the Board to request a review.

Ms. Barberet said that she would like to know how DPW prioritizes projects like this against general maintenance projects like filling potholes. She suggested that interested citizens should contact DPW to let them know how they feel. Ms. Barberet said that she has a problem when projects like this take precedence over basic maintenance of infrastructure. Ms. Brestrup explained that this was ongoing project design. Mr. Tucker indicated that road maintenance work was dependent on the availability of funding for that work.

Mr. O'Keeffe said that the DPW has a priority list.

Ms. Brestrup noted that work on utilities in Spring Street needs to happen before renovations to the Lord Jeff can take place.

2. PVPC – Mr. Tucker noted that Mr. Schreiber had volunteered at a previous meeting to serve as the Board's representative.

Mr. O’Keeffe MOVED: to appoint Mr. Schreiber as the Board’s representative to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC). Mr. Webber seconded, and the Motion passed 6-0-1 (Schreiber abstained).

1. Agricultural Commission (continued)

Mr. Tucker offered to bring sketches of the Town Common proposal to the next meeting and asked if the Board wanted a role in the process. Mr. Roznoy suggested that David Ziomek, Director of Conservation and Development and Guilford Mooring, Superintendent of Public Works, be asked to make a brief presentation to the Board. There was general consensus to request a presentation at a future meeting.

B. Other – None

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Signatory Authority – Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk

Mr. Tucker noted that letters giving the Planning Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk signatory authority to endorse subdivision plans on behalf of the Board need to be filed with the Land Court and the Registry of Deeds.

Mr. Webber MOVED: to authorize Jonathan Shefftz, Chair; Jonathan O’Keeffe, Vice-Chair; and Ludmila Pavlova-Gillham, Clerk, to endorse the Board’s approval on subdivision plans in accordance with the Subdivision Control Law. Mr. Carson seconded, and the Motion passed 7-0.

B. Master Plan Progress – Mr. O’Keeffe said that the draft is almost finished. The Subcommittee was unable to reach consensus about a controversial issue related to infill development and redevelopment in town centers and so will leave that issue for the full Board to consider. Mr. Roznoy said that he had noted that the discussion of passenger rail service was missing from the transportation discussion in the draft Master Plan. Mr. O’Keeffe acknowledged this and said that the Subcommittee needed to meet again to review adding language to that effect.

C. Upcoming Training Session – Schedule (?) – Mr. Tucker noted that Town Counsel customarily provides one or two training sessions a year, particularly to assist new members with their role. Other topics covered have included conflict of interest, writing decisions, etc. The training is usually a joint session with the Zoning Board of Appeals and other boards/committees are welcome to attend. Mr. Tucker noted that the agenda for August 19 was pretty light and suggested that the Board schedule the session for that night, pending availability of Town Counsel. The Board agreed, by general consensus, to schedule a training session with Town Counsel for August 19 or for September 16. Staff will notify the ZBA.

D. Upcoming Meeting Schedule – Mr. O’Keeffe noted that the Board needs to continue progress on the Master Plan and recommended that a full Board discussion be scheduled for September 2.

- E. Other** – Mr. Tucker noted that the Board received a request from Guilford Mooring, Superintendent of Public Works, asking for the Board’s support for funding for the Atkins Corner Intersection Project. There is uncertainty over whether or not additional funding will be available at this time, and the project is in jeopardy of not receiving full funding for FY 2010. Mr. Mooring has requested that the Board submit written comments to PVPC to ensure that the Atkins project stays in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for FY 2010. Mr. Mooring has also requested that the Board send a representative to an August 19 Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting in West Springfield to support the funding.

Mr. Tucker said that this is a critical project which has been planned for many years. Retaining the funding is very important, he said.

Mr. Webber disclosed that his company has represented the Yiddish Book Center and so he will not participate in the Board’s decision-making or vote on this issue.

Mr. Schreiber MOVED: that the Board authorize the Chair to write letters on its behalf to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the Metropolitan Planning Organization supporting the funding for the Atkins Corner Intersection Project. Mr. Carson seconded, and the Motion passed 5-0-2 (Webber and Barberet abstained).

V. OLD BUSINESS – None

- VI. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS** – There were no applications but Ms. Brestrup noted that there would be one for August 19.

VII. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS

Mr. Shefftz asked staff for clarification on the process. Mr. Tucker explained that the Planning Board’s review is part of the process of communication between permitting boards. The Board could, if it chose, ask a Special Permit applicant to make a presentation and could then forward recommendations to the ZBA.

The Board decided not to review the following:

ZBA FY2010-00003 – Paul Higgins – Request for Special Permit to renew ZBA FY2007-00037 for a flag lot, under Section 10.33 of the Zoning Bylaw, at 269 Leverett Road (Map 3A, Parcel 100, R-O).

Public Hearing: August 13, 2009

ZBA FY2010-00001 – Bonnie Smith – Request for Special Permit to create a flag lot, under Section 6.3 and Section 3.25 of the Zoning Bylaw, at Belchertown Road (Map 21B, Parcel 17, R-O & ARP District).

Public Hearing: August 27, 2009

ZBA FY2010-00002 – Sonya Sofield – Request for Special Permit to renew (re-issue) ZBA FY2007-00039 for a flag lot and to request removal of Condition 1 regarding allowable building height, under Section 10.33 of the Zoning Bylaw, at South East Street (Map 23D, Parcel 57, R-O & ARP District).
Public Hearing: September 24, 2009

VIII. UPCOMING SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS

Mr. Tucker noted that New England Environmental may soon be ready to submit final plans in compliance with the conditions of its SPR approval. He noted that this would be a public meeting, not a public hearing, and would probably be scheduled in the next couple of months, depending on when the plans are submitted.

IX. PLANNING BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Zoning – Mr. O’Keeffe said that the Subcommittee reviewed the list of public comments from the recent Zoning Forum and began setting priorities. The Subcommittee will focus on items in the uppermost section of the work list, he said. Mr. O’Keeffe also noted that it is important for Planning Board members to attend Town Meeting when the zoning articles are addressed.

B. Master Plan – Given under New Business

X. PLANNING BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Pioneer Valley Planning Committee – No Report

B. Community Preservation Act Committee – No Report

C. Agricultural Commission – given above under III. APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATIONS TO COMMISSIONS

D. Puffers Pond 2020 – Mr. Webber said that he has not heard from anyone regarding his appointment.

E. Save Our Stop Task Force – Mr. Schreiber said that several options are being looked at by the Task Force, one of which would be to improve the Springfield to Greenfield line to keep Amherst in the loop.

Mr. Tucker explained the plan for the “Knowledge Corridor” rail improvements west of the Connecticut River. He said that he could provide copies of the letters for the Board.

IX. PLANNING BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS (Continued)

A. Zoning – Mr. O’Keeffe said that he wanted to note that the Zoning Subcommittee also hopes to bring an article regarding the “four-unrelated persons” issue to Town Meeting, an issue which had recently been brought before the Subcommittee by a former student.

XI. REPORT OF THE CHAIR – No Report

XII. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – No Report

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Shefftz adjourned the meeting at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Sue Krzanowski, Administrative Assistant

Approved:

Jonathan S. Shefftz, Chair

DATE: _____