

BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD
Town Center Building—Flint Room
Minutes
January 7, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Amy Lloyd, Chair; Sandra Hackman, Clerk; Jeffrey Cohen, Shawn Hanegan and Lisa Mustapich

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Garber, Planning Director; Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner
Cathy Silvestrone, Planning A.A.

STAFF ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: David Powell, Finance Committee and Dot Bergin, Bedford Citizen News.

Amy Lloyd, Chair convened the Planning Board meeting at 7:30 PM

Emergency Evacuation notice - read by Sandra Hackman, Clerk

Sandra Hackman, Clerk informed the public that the best way to stay informed of town board & committee meetings, agendas, and minutes is by subscribing to E-Info. on the town's website.

Note: All meeting submittals are available for review in the Planning Office.

OLD BUSINESS:

1) Finalization of FY17 Planning Board Budget—

Planning Director Garber explained that based on Finance Committee's (FINCOM) projected FY17 Budget for Planning, the department will begin FY17 with a deficit. Staff provided a deficit budget analysis showing FINCOM level funding and a budget adjustment to cover retroactive merits that weren't incorporated in the level funding budget. Staff also provided a FY17 budget request for a slight increase in expenses and a modest amount of \$2,718 for support services to assist with minute taking (approximately 10 meetings/per year out of an estimated 30 meetings)

The Board had a brief discussion regarding the necessity of having outside support services to assist with minute taking. Board members supported getting coverage for all meetings (approximately 30 meetings @ \$250 per meeting) so the department's administrative assistant would be more available to sustain the demands in the office.

MOTION: Jeffrey Cohen moved to submit Planning's FY17 Budget Request that includes a slight increase in expenses and coverage for approximately 30 meetings of minute taking.

(Shawn Hanegan seconded the motion). VOTE: 5-0-0

2) Revised Business Zoning Scope and Strategy—(separate budget request for consulting services)

A *revised* detailed scope of consulting services for preparing a comprehensive analysis and rewrite of zoning in Bedford's primary business corridor along the Great Road (Shawsheen Road to North Road/Carlisle Road) was provided to the Board for further consideration. The previous scope did not include the North Road/Carlisle Road area; therefore most revisions made to this scope pertained to increasing cost of services to cover the additional area.

One Board member suggested that it would be advantageous to review what other towns are doing in respects to business zoning. The Board agreed to adjust the wording of the scope to include looking at some comparable or best practices. Board members and staff discussed the bid process. The Board also discussed keeping this special budget request separate from the department's operating budget.

MOTION: Lisa Mustapich moved to submit the revised Detailed Scope of Consulting Services to prepare a Comprehensive Analysis and Re-write of Zoning in the Primary Business Corridor along the Great Road (Shawsheen Road to North Road/Carlise Road) for \$120,000 to FINCOM. (Jeffrey Cohen seconded the motion). VOTE: 5-0-0

3) Continued Discussion on Industrial Zoning Amendments—

Staff and two Board members (Glenn Garber, Catherine Perry, Amy Lloyd and Jeffrey Cohen) attended an outreach meeting with the business community on January 6, regarding potential industrial zoning changes. Ms. Perry provided the board and staff with written notes as a result of this meeting.

Ms. Lloyd and Mr. Cohen shared that during the outreach meeting, some business owners expressed concern that their rights were being reduced in some respects. These concerns related to proposed increases in minimum frontage, front setbacks and lot area. The Board and staff discussed whether non-conformities would result; they were thought to be few but the facts could be re-checked. The Board noted that hotels and restaurants may want low setbacks for street scape presence, but these uses are addressed in the IMU rather than the base zoning. Height was another issue raised, with a suggestion of allowing 14 feet per story, making a maximum of 56 feet for a four story building rather than 48 feet. Staff had researched this further and considered it reasonable. Parking was also a concern raised at the meeting; however, Director Garber informed the business community that parking regulations are not being reviewed at this time, but will be in the future.

The Board further discussed the concerns raised and reviewed the latest draft amendments. It confirmed most of them, but agreed to raise the height in Industrial C to 56 feet/ 4 stories. It also proposed referring to height numbers in Table II rather than writing all the heights in the text, to better mesh with the zoning article on building height. In relation to Limited Business, the Board agreed to ask the ZBA to consider incorporating the suggested language on indoor amusements (Section 4.5.6) into its own article; it could then be omitted from the Industrial article. The Board commented that it was satisfied with the proposed changes to landscaping/ buffering dimensions, as they were more realistic.

NEW BUSINESS:

1) Residential Height Measurement Zoning Article for ATM 16—

Planning Board member Jeffrey Cohen provided language for a proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendment to Section 6.2.10--Height in Bedford's current zoning bylaws. Ms. Perry commented that although she agreed with the approach to amending this section of the bylaw, she did have some concerns with the propose language. Ms. Perry provided fourteen written comments detailing those concerns.

Mr. Cohen reviewed the proposed height amendment and said that the existing Section 6.2.10--Height will be deleted and replaced with new language, and changes will also be made to existing Table II—Dimensional Regulations. Mr. Cohen explained that part of the intent of this amendment is to change the way height is currently being measured on buildings with pitched roofs (in all districts). The current maximum allowable height in all residential districts is 37ft, and this height is measured as the vertical distance from the average ground elevation around the perimeter of the structure to the mean average finished grade between the plate and the ridge (essentially half-way up the roof). Mr. Cohen pointed out that this method of measuring height causes confusion and questions are raised about why some residences appear to be much taller than 37ft. A second proposed change affects the lower point of measurement; a concept of base elevation is introduced for residential districts only. A provision for up to two feet of mounding/raising of the measurement point is included and there is a ZBA special permit process for further variation. The wording of the allowance made for rooftop projections is also adjusted with the additional types of structure and the phrase "not for human occupancy or storage". Mr. Cohen acknowledged he has some uncertainty about the distinctions between buildings and structures and that it may not be necessary to include wind turbines.

Mr. Cohen went on to state that even though some residential heights meet the standard of 37ft., they can have a looming effect on other surrounding residences and can be out of scale with their existing neighborhood. Therefore the proposed amendment would also reduce the number of feet of height allowed in each residential district, from 37 feet to either 35 or 32 feet. He commented that towering homes can cause privacy issues and a loss of air and light. Mr. Cohen shared that it's become common practice for builders to bring in additional fill to raise the lot elevation in order to create a walk-out basement level when new structures are built.

Board members discussed the proposed language and suggested some adjustments for clarity in both sections: 6.2.10 (height) and 6.2.10.1(base elevation). Lisa Mustapich expressed concern regarding Residence C being proposed as 32ft/3 stories, while all other Residence Districts are proposed as 35ft/3 stories; she strongly suggested changing Residence C to align with the others. Mr. Cohen explained that the intention was to relate height to minimum lot area, which varies. The Board had mixed feelings but overall supported making the maximum height 35 feet in all residential districts. The Board also briefly discussed some of the questions raised by Ms. Perry, about non-conformities, and the intent of the proposed special permit for additional mounding/adjustment of lower measurement point. It was agreed that Ms. Perry would discuss her other more technical points with Mr. Cohen.

January 7, 2016 FINAL/APPROVED

REPORTS/DEVELOPMENT UPDATE: (verbal reports; non-deliberative)

- Questions/Comments on development update chart--
No questions/comments were provided.

- Planning Board Liaison to Boards & Committees (verbal updates)—
No verbal updates were provided.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Lisa Mustapich moved to adjourn the meeting. (Shawn Hanegan seconded the motion)--VOTE: 5-0-0

TIME: 10:25 PM