

FINAL APPROVED MINUTES

BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD
Regular Session Minutes
Town Hall – 2nd Floor Meeting Room
January 6, 2014
(meeting postponed from January 2 due to snow)

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Garber, Planning Director; and Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner

STAFF ABSENT: Cathy Silvestrone, Admin. Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT: See Attached

Emergency Evacuation notice given by Jeff Cohen

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

Chair Cohen convened the meeting at 7:30 PM

DEVELOPMENT SESSION:

1) 8 Alfred Circle – Continuation of Site Plan Review

Paul Finocchio, surveyor and project designer, presented a revised site plan dated December 23, 2013, for the Bedford Montessori School's occupation of the property, and outlined the changes from the previous version. These include: reducing the number of parking spaces by 4 with a corresponding small increase in the landscaped area; adding a pedestrian path to the street; adding a rack for 4 bikes; showing detail of the play area fence (a white PVC stockade design); showing one tree to remain at the front together with some rhododendron plantings; and showing the position for a business sign. In response to the Board's suggestion of adding some evergreen plantings at the rear of the property to improve screening in winter (based on the bylaw's green belt provision) a note has been added: "additional plantings (mountain laurel) can be added in rear of lot on approval of Conservation Commission".

The Board received a memorandum from Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, commenting on the changes, and a memorandum from the Department of Public Works engineers updating their previous comments.

The Chair asked about the proposed surface treatments for the unpaved areas. The triangles in the back corners of the lot are proposed to be seeded (per Conservation Commission approval) and the play area is proposed to be artificial turf.

The applicant's engineer confirmed that painting and striping will be supplied for the disabled parking space.

The need for a better means of restraining vehicles that park in the front spaces, from impinging on the path and the play area, was discussed. The applicant's engineer was concerned about satisfying the flood volume calculation for concrete wheel stops but was prepared to substitute bollards, which the Board considered acceptable.

The Board welcomed the addition of a bike rack and asked about its design. It was agreed that the selection could be approved by Planning staff, taking account of preferences that have been expressed by the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

The applicant agreed to show the pedestrian path extended to the street curb.

The Chair asked about site lighting. There will be lights mounted on the building at doors. The Board thought it would be desirable to have some more targeted lighting on the rear parking area and not to have flood lights at a near-horizontal angle on the back of the building, illuminating the wetlands. The applicant agreed to place lights on the utility pole near the rear lot line to illuminate the parking lot.

The applicant reported that the obstruction issues related to two existing utility poles have been discussed with the utility company and a visit will be scheduled. It is believed to be expensive to remove the pole that is in the edge of the circulation area at the rear of the building, and therefore the applicant proposes to add protective bollards instead.

Traffic flow in the area of the lot boundary with 7 Alfred Circle, currently operated as a shared driveway, was discussed. In the morning all vehicles are likely to be entering the site but later in the day there may be vehicles exiting from number 7 at the same time as vehicles entering for number 8. There are no formal access easements in place. The Board did not think the potential conflict was likely to amount to a major safety issue but that some monitoring of the situation was desirable, with the potential for triggering measures such as lane markings, curb alterations and signage. The applicant was agreeable to this.

Amy Lloyd asked why the play area fence is high and solid. The applicant's engineer answered that it was chosen for child safety. The Board was satisfied.

Sandra Hackman asked for notes to be added to the plans, for protection during construction of any trees that are to remain, as per state standards, and for the footpaths to be kept clear of snow.

The Board confirmed that it would prefer the addition of some evergreen plantings near the rear property line to improve visual screening in winter (having regard to the bylaw's normal greenbelt requirement) but that it was happy to allow some flexibility in the selection of species, recognizing the Conservation Commission's jurisdiction.

MOTION: Lisa Mustapich proposed, and Amy Lloyd seconded, a motion to make a recommendation to the Building Inspector/ Code Enforcement Officer for approval of the site plan, incorporating the points discussed [above] and any remaining recommendations of the DPW engineers and Conservation Commission, and with waivers from Section 6.6 of the zoning bylaw to the extent necessary to implement the plan as approved.

VOTE: 5-0-0

BUSINESS SESSION:

Budget Strategy

Steve Carluccio of the Finance Committee attended for this item.

Director Garber outlined a proposed Planning Board budget for FY15. He explained that the budget is based on increasing the hours of the Assistant Planner to full time, with a net increase in cost of only approximately \$11,000 after reductions in consultancy fees and other expenses.

As background information, two draft handouts have been prepared, illustrating a) the volume and complexity of the department's permitting work (subdivisions, special permits, site plan reviews and related items), and b) those action items proposed in the Comprehensive Plan for which the Planning Board will need to be involved in implementation.

The Board noted that the economy is picking up, which is likely to mean a continuing flow of permitting applications, especially if the town's economic development efforts including the new position of Economic Development Coordinator are successful. The Board was eager for Planning staff to have time to interact with the Economic Development Coordinator and be able to process applications quickly.

On the implementation side, Board members commented that there is a pent-up need to revise some of the zoning bylaws (particularly ones that affect business and mixed use areas), and that follow-through on the comprehensive plan is important to achieving a wide range of the town's aims. A further initiative suggested recently is to take a detailed, coordinated look at land uses at the eastern end of The Great Road.

Board members also remarked on the staff's high level of productivity and skills, concluding that with an ongoing varied workload, it will be more cost effective to use internal staff than a series of consultancy contracts. While overheads have to be considered, the part-time position already carries benefits, and employer pension contributions are lower for more recent recruits.

The Board asked Director Garber if he could supply some staffing comparisons with similar towns, which he agreed to do.

The Board cautioned against being too restrictive on professional development expenses such as travel to conferences.

Several members were interested in attending the presentation to the Finance Committee on January 9 and therefore staff undertook to post it as a meeting for the Planning Board.

MOTION: Lisa Mustapich proposed, and Shawn Hanegan seconded, a motion to recommend a Planning Board budget to the Finance Committee, substantially as recommended by the Planning Director, not to exceed \$178,000.

VOTE: 5-0-0

STAFF REPORT:

1) Update on Development Permitting

Catherine Perry gave an update on permitting work. The Isabella Lane subdivision is awaiting submission of the covenant and other documents by the applicant prior to plan signing. There are several potential applications under discussion but none currently submitted.

2) Flood Plain District – new Flood Insurance Rate Maps

Catherine Perry supplied a briefing note dated January 3, outlining the flood plain provisions in the Zoning Bylaw and stating that FEMA has recently produced updated versions of several of the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) that the bylaw references to define the Flood Plain District. Catherine explained that the new map sheets and their related Flood Insurance Study will need to be incorporated in the bylaw, via a Town

Meeting vote, before the maps become operational in July, 2014. FEMA has supplied draft wording for amendments to the Zoning Bylaw, which include changes to the regulatory wording as well as the new maps. It is important for the Town to satisfy FEMA's requirements to maintain participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. Catherine reported that she and Kristin Dowdy of the DPW have questioned the proposed wording with FEMA staff and believe they are close to resolving matters. Catherine said that it would be appropriate for the Planning Board to sponsor the zoning amendment and, in view of the timeline for the lead up to Town Meeting, to put at least a placeholder article on the warrant. The Board will need to hold an advertised public hearing on the amendment.

MOTION: Amy Lloyd proposed, and Shawn Hanegan seconded, a motion to sponsor a Zoning Bylaw amendment relating to flood plains, and to authorize Catherine to supply wording for a warrant article to the Selectmen/Town Manager's office, prior to examining the matter in detail at a public hearing.

VOTE: 5-0-0

3) Comprehensive Plan Update

Glenn Garber reported that a low number of written comments have been received on the plan to date, but we have not reached the advertised deadline. The Board confirmed its intention to review the comments at its meetings on January 28 and February 11. Catherine Perry suggested inviting the past members of the Ad Hoc Committee, and the Board extended this to include all current relevant committees. The Planning Board will vote on adoption of the plan at a later date, probably February 25.

The Chair expressed a desire to have a meeting with Schools representatives to exchange information and understanding about housing and enrolment issues. Planning Director Garber suggested publishing a fact sheet based on "Frequently Asked Questions", mainly on these issues.

OTHER BUSINESS:

285 The Great Road

Jeff Cohen announced that the ZBA will review an application for a bank on the Former Travelodge site, on January 23. The plan shows a driveway further east than the former restaurant proposal.

MAPC Population and Housing Projections

The Board noted the receipt of information about new population and housing projections for Metropolitan Boston, from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. Discussion was deferred to a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: A motion to adjourn was made by Lisa Mustapich and seconded by Amy Lloyd.

VOTE: 5-0-0

TIME: 9:45 PM

Minutes submitted by Catherine Perry
Approved as amended February 11, 2014