

Final Approved Minutes

BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD
Regular Session Minutes
Town Hall – Selectmen’s Meeting Room
October 9, 2013

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Shawn Hanegan, Clerk

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

STAFF ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: See Attached

Emergency Evacuation read by Amy Lloyd, Acting Clerk

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

Jeffrey Cohen, Chair, convened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

BUSINESS SESSION:

1. Athena Lane Subdivision / 93 Hartwell Road— request for mylar endorsement

Attorney Brown submitted on September 25, 2013 a mylar plan set dated April 2, 2013 for the approved Athena Lane Subdivision at 93 Hartwell Road seeking Planning Board endorsement. The Board approved of this subdivision (with conditions) unanimously at its duly-noted public hearing on May 14, 2013.

Board members reviewed the presented mylar plan set dated April 2, 2013 for Athena Lane and endorsed it as requested.

2. Comprehensive Plan—discussion of logistics and upcoming steps

Chair Cohen stated that Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, suggestion to move forward with a presentation to Special Fall Town Meeting and cover the process with an emphasis on the amount of participation, the structure of the plan, and give some examples of snapshots/maps/visions/goals/actions, and who to contact if residence have questions is good.

Lisa Mustapich agrees that the Board should present something on the Comprehensive Plan status at Special Fall Town meeting.

Chair Cohen suggested having a cohesive draft document (referring to the CP) ready for public viewing around the time of fall town meeting.

Director Garber shared that Planning staff is near completion of its second round edits of all six elements; and that it is important to wait until all six elements are ready before presenting them to the public in order for the

Comprehensive Plan to make sense. Director Garber further shared that there is a possibility that the six text elements will be ready within a few days but that the snapshots and maps need editing. Director Garber informed the Board that staff is waiting for the consultants to pull all the pieces of the CP together as a single, more polished document.

Amy Lloyd agreed with Director Garber's strategy to wait until all six elements are complete and polished before presenting to the public.

Chair Cohen stated that he didn't want the process rushed; and also agreed that it would be best to wait until staff was comfortable with the outcome of the six drafted elements before posting.

Amy Lloyd also articulated that she was concerned about the Board rushing to prepare for the upcoming BCAT broadcasting regarding the current status of the CP; and said that it may be best to take time to think what message needs to be conveyed.

Lisa Mustapich commented that the Board shouldn't try to finalize the CP too much in the sense that it would make the residents and boards feel as though they don't have an option to share last minute concerns.

Sandra Hackman suggested providing a summary statement about the Comprehensive Plan's status and to post it on the town's website in time for Special Fall Town Meeting. Ms. Hackman further suggested sending a current/polished draft of the CP to boards and committees and provide a deadline for feedback.

A brief discussion took place regarding the process of incorporating comments into the CP. Director Garber explained that it isn't as easy as one would believe to incorporate new comments; and that people need to be aware that whatever comments are made to a specific section of the plan, could very well have a ripple effect and need to be carried throughout several sections in the CP.

Catherine Perry spoke about the importance of getting people to focus on the ideas in the Comprehensive Plan in principle and not be overly involved with editing.

Director Garber, referring to the recent public comments on housing, asked Board members how much effort should be given to amend the housing element.

Jeffrey Cohen commented that some tweaks are needed in the housing element; however, most of the negative comments received on the town's approach to housing were a result of people not having the facts.

Amy Lloyd mentioned that no matter how the housing element reads, there are some people who have already made up their minds to be against providing more affordable housing.

Lisa Mustapich pointed out that opposition to 40B development in town has been going on for years; and that negative reaction sometimes spills over into other aspects.

Sandra Hackman suggested that mansionization needs to be re-examined, and to review how Bedford can better preserve its existing neighborhoods. Ms. Hackman also mentioned the fact that although some of the multi-family housing developments have brought in some additional school aged children, so have a number of single-family housing developments and people don't seem to complain about that.

Amy Lloyd commented that we need to educate people on the facts related to housing issues and as to what a Comprehensive Plan is.

Glenn Garber stated that we should clarify the myth that Planning is the housing agency for the town, and inform people that Planning has no control over local housing initiatives.

The Board agreed to move forward with a brief presentation to Fall Town Meeting emphasizing the CP process and the basics with examples of substantive content. Jeff Cohen reiterated the suggestions Catherine Perry offered in her October 7 email which also includes moving forward with a single BCAT session (not one on each chapter) using similar content as to what the Board plans to present for Fall Town meeting.

Sandra Hackman spoke about the upcoming Veterans Administration Hospital proposal for additional housing for displaced Veterans and how that development would add to the affordable housing unit count.

Catherine Perry expressed that residents raised an understandable question when asking why the town is significantly over the 10% state requirement, but that the answer probably lies in the fact that several large private development proposals, including 40Bs, came forward in a short space of time and the town did not have the ability to fine-tune things.

Lisa Mustapich said the town is trying to slow down growth of larger housing developments; and shouldn't dismiss the smaller unit developments.

Sandra Hackman pointed out that Gene Clerkin said that private developers create all the additional housing, not the town.

Chair Cohen communicated that some people may be under the impression they are voting on the approval of the CP.

Amy Lloyd asked if a pdf of the CP document could be sent to boards and committees by mid-November; staff replied yes.

Chair Cohen said would this document be also ready for public viewing; staff replied, yes.

A discussion took place in regards to preparing for the Planning Board's BCAT Broadcasting. Catherine Perry suggested displaying some snapshots, maps and other related visuals during the broadcast. Director Garber said Planning staff could ask DPW to provide larger sized versions (mounted on foam board) of the snapshots, maps, or any other visuals the Board would like to present that evening. Julie Turner of BCAT could be consulted on the format of such materials, and she may like to receive electronic copies. Sandra Hackman asked if it were possible to have Julie Turner provide in advance questions she plans to ask the Board during the broadcast.

Closing Comments—

Director Garber spoke about the importance of being inclusive of all six Comprehensive Plan elements; and not just focusing on one element in particular. Director Garber said; it's best to approach reviewing the updated CP holistically/as the big picture.

Sandra Hackman reiterated that a summary is important; and then suggested placing an executive summary on Planning's webpage prior to posting the drafted elements.

Jeffrey Cohen commented that the BCAT presentation will be a dress rehearsal for Town Meeting with the expectation that it will be aired after special fall town meeting. He agreed to ask about the timing.

Planning Director Garber said he is in favor of using the web and social media to alert residents (and others) of the CP status and process.

Chair Cohen reported that he plans to attend the Chamber of Commerce meeting first thing tomorrow morning on October 10 to share information regarding the revised Sign Bylaw plan and give a brief update on the Comprehensive Plan status.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Lisa Mustapich moved to adjourn the meeting. (Amy Lloyd seconded the motion)

VOTE: 4-0-0

TIME: 7:50PM