

BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD
Selectmen's Meeting Room
Minutes
February 6, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Shawn Hanegan, Chair; Jacinda Barbehenn; Jeffrey Cohen; Timothy Gray; Amy Lloyd, Clerk.

STAFF PRESENT: Tony Fields, Planning Director; Kim Siebert, Recording Secretary.

STAFF ABSENT: Catherine Perry.

ALSO PRESENT: Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates/ Great Road Zoning consultant; Daphne Politis, RKG/Community Circle/Great Road Zoning consultant.

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

Mr. Hanegan called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at 7:32 p.m.

The Emergency Evacuation notice was read by Ms. Lloyd.

BUSINESS SESSION—Evergreen Avenue Approval Not Required (ANR) Application and Plan Review

Mr. Fields said the proposal meets the criteria for a ANR. In this case, the majority of open space in the development, labeled "Parcel X", which includes a meadow, will come under Town control. The remainder, labeled "Parcel Z", is comprised of a narrow strip behind the new houses and will continue to be under the control of the development's Home Owners' Association. Included in the Town controlled area will be 3 acres on the other side of Wiggins Avenue.

Motion: Ms. Lloyd moved to ratify the Approval Not Required for Parcel X for the Evergreen Avenue development. Mr. Cohen seconded. The motion passed, 5-0-0. The plans were signed by all Board members.

PUBLIC HEARINGS—Great Road Zoning Project Public Hearing—continued from January 31, 2018

Mr. Gray moved to re-open the Great Road Zoning Project public hearing at 7:38 p.m. Ms. Lloyd seconded. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

To finalize the Town Meeting articles, remaining outstanding questions were addressed:

Height: Mr. Hanegan noted that at the last Public Hearing session on January 31, the Board debated height limits in the Shawsheen and Marketplace areas of the Great Road corridor. Mr. Fields presented lot maps of the two districts, with particular attention to the parcels with adequate depth to accommodate the proposed setback. Mr. Fields also provided photographs of 4-story buildings in neighboring towns.

Mr. Halvorsen said, as currently written, the proposed zoning stipulates that building side and rear setbacks would match the building height, which is a maximum height is 48 feet. The front

setback would equal 20 feet.

Mr. Hanegan said setbacks should be made very clear so that residents, as well as developers, will understand where four stories are allowed. Mr. Cohen said drawings of theoretical 4-story buildings could aid understanding as well.

Ms. Lloyd said it would improve clarity to separate building regulations from height regulations.

Mr. Hanegan advocated for separating the 4-story height component into a stand-alone Town Meeting article, noting that the necessary 2/3 majority vote is a high hurdle. He expressed concern that including the 4-story allowance in the main article could scuttle the whole initiative, even though there are few parcels to which 4 stories would apply. Mr. Gray said separating the articles means the Board has another full 10-minutes to explain the height component alone. Ms. Lloyd said she believes separating the articles ensures that the 4-story article will fail.

Ms. Politis and Ms. Barbehenn noted that people who attended the Public Hearings were passionate about public amenities, which are less likely to happen if developers cannot maximize investments by adding a 4th story. Ms. Barbehenn prefers to keep the article intact. Mr. Gray said opponents of a 4th story are more likely to attend Town Meeting to vote against the article than proponents will be. Ms. Politis said the Board should reach out to opponents to have discussions with them prior to Town Meeting and to proponents to encourage them to attend to support the effort. Board members agreed and referred to the list of town organizations to which they will make pre-Town Meeting presentations.

Mr. Cohen said it might quell fears if voters could be assured that there are only a handful of parcels to which the 4th story could apply. Mr. Gray noted that three stories are allowed now under current zoning, even though buildings have generally not been built to that height. Ms. Lloyd said the zoning proposal lowers the allowed height in the Center from what it is now, a demonstration that the Board is trying to make different-but-appropriate provisions for each of the four districts.

After discussion, the Board reached consensus that 4 stories would be allowed by Special Permit in the Shawsheen district for the two applicable parcels but not, for the time being, in the Marketplace district. The allowance could eventually be broadened to propose the Marketplace if results in the Shawsheen district are favorable. Mr. Gray, Mr. Cohen and Mr. Hanegan supported splitting the Town Meeting articles so that the four-story height component is separate; Ms. Barbehenn and Ms. Lloyd supported keeping the article intact. Based on the results of the straw poll, the articles will be split.

Bike Parking: Moving on to other aspects of the proposed zoning, the Board discussed bike parking. Mr. Hanegan noted that the bike parking ratios appeared to be unrealistic. Mr. Halvorsen suggested, based on comments from RKG consultant Judi Barrett, that the bylaw could refer to a separate bike amenities guideline, much as landscaping references are provided in a separate tree/shrub checklist.

Ms. Lloyd said she believes the draft places too much burden on small businesses, particularly. Debate ensued about bike parking for long-term, short-term, retail, business and residential. Consensus was reached to merge 22.7.3 (i) and (iii) – retail, personal service, and offices—

requirements into a single category that stipulates one short term bike parking spot and a .5 (non-residential) long term bike parking spot. Category 22.7.3 (ii) will remain separate as it is, currently.

Based on this discussion, edits to the bylaw text were made. The Board noted that bike parking accommodations can be evaluated on a case-by-case basis during the permitting process and waived if appropriate. Bike parking requirements might be shared across multi-tenant buildings and different thresholds might trigger different requirements. Bike parking will be moved into a table format for better readability.

Ms. Politis said the consultants would confer further about bike parking and other loose ends and return their recommendations to the Planning Office by Friday, February 9. Article wording, minus the bike parking number, will be finalized; the bike parking number will be added when the Board meets at 6:30 p.m. prior to the Selectmen's meeting on February 12.

A 5-minute recess was called at 9:58 p.m. The Public Hearing reconvened at 10:08 p.m.

Elevators: Consensus was reached that 6 units, like the Blake Block, would be a defensible trigger for requiring an elevator.

Use Table: There are several new uses proposed such as Live/Work Unit, Craft Brewery/Distillery, and Co-Work Center for which there are proposed definitions but other uses such as Farmers' Market, Custom Fabrication/Artisan Industrial, and Art Gallery need definition. Staff and consultants were asked to provide definitions for the Board to discuss on February 12th before the Selectmen's meeting. If agreement cannot be reached on these definitions, action may be deferred on this component until Fall Special Town Meeting.

Ms. Lloyd will do the presentation for the Selectmen's meeting. Ms. Politis recommended using visual aids as a component of the presentation.

Motion: Ms. Lloyd moved to close the Public Hearing at 10:25 p.m. Mr. Gray seconded. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Development Updates/Staff and Liaison Reports

The Planning Board meeting on February 13, 2018 was canceled. The next full meeting will take place on Tuesday, February 27, 2018.

Mr. Fields said that a new, illustrated Design Standards will be developed to replace current guidelines. These will help further define aesthetic preferences for the four different Great Road commercial districts.

39 Crosby Drive: Mr. Fields heard from the architect for the Crosby Drive hotel project that the developer will go before the Zoning Board of Appeals for relief for FAR and setbacks. Ms. Lloyd asked for further information, noting the project requests a variance from Section 6.2.13 and Table 2 dimensional requirements per plans filed, although she recalls nothing about the permit that would have triggered this.

St. Michael's Church: The Planning Board will review a site plan and ADA compliance issues.

Ms. Barbehenn said she will present the Great Road Zoning initiative to the COA Board next Tuesday morning. Ms. Politis said the COA might be strong advocates for the zoning initiative as the revisions will ideally lead to better housing options for seniors.

Liaison reports: Mr. Cohen reported there will be a Lane School Building Committee Public Meeting about the school parking lot on Wednesday, February 7, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. One Sweetwater Avenue resident attended a Community Preservation Committee meeting to protest the location of the playground and the planned removal of a large number of trees. Mr. Hanegan said CPC advised the resident to contact the School Committee.

There will be a meeting on Wednesday, February 7 at 7:30 p.m. about the Davis School building project.

Ms. Lloyd said MAGIC is spearheading an effort to have all the member towns certified by the AARP as senior-friendly communities. There is potential grant money available. The Selectmen have the application and a letter to be signed. Ms. Lloyd believes the Planning Board will be asked for an opinion on the matter.

Ms. Barbehenn attended the Middlesex 3 meeting and placed into the public record a community contact inclusion report for regional transportation recommendations.

Mr. Fields noted that Bedford's Instrumentation Labs on Hartwell Road will host the Middlesex 3 meeting on the morning of Thursday, February 8, 2018. Also, on Thursday, February 8, MAGIC will hold a forum on climate resiliency in Acton.

Motion: Mr. Gray moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 p.m. Ms. Lloyd seconded. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Siebert,
Recording Secretary