

# SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD REGULAR MEETING

## MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2016

As Approved January 25, 2016

**Present:** Jeff Squire, Chair; Mark Cavanaugh, Vice-Chair; Helen Fantini, Clerk; Joan Rosner, Member; and Richard Harris, Town Planner

Mr. Squire called the meeting into session at 6:30 p.m.

### 1. Minutes

*a. December 14, 2015 Planning Board meeting minutes*

Mr. Harris referenced the draft minutes which he distributed. The Board members reviewed the draft minutes.

**Motion** - Ms. Rosner moved and Ms. Fantini seconded the motion to approve the December 14, 2015 Planning Board Meeting minutes as submitted. The Board voted **Four (4)** out of **Four (4)** members present in favor of the motion.

*b. December 14, 2015 Planning Board Public Hearing (27 Bardwell Street SP) minutes*

Mr. Harris referenced the draft minutes which he distributed. The Board members reviewed the draft minutes.

**Motion** - Ms. Rosner moved and Mr. Cavanaugh seconded the motion to approve the December 14, 2015 Planning Board Public Hearing (27 Bardwell SP) minutes as submitted. The Board voted **Four (4)** out of **Four (4)** members present in favor of the motion.

### 2. Bills and Correspondence

Mr. Harris referenced the list of correspondence. He stated that there were no bills ready for payment at this time.

### 3. Request for Waiver of Site Plan Review for 400+/- square foot addition to Presstek, Inc. Property Location: 755 New Ludlow Road (Assessor's Map #9 – Parcel #7)

Mr. Harris referenced a copy of a letter requesting a waiver of site plan review and the site plan submitted with the waiver and described the proposed addition of 400 square feet of space to be added to the 56,000+/- square foot building. He noted that the addition amounts to less than 1% of the total square footage of the existing building, the site is already paved, and the addition will be used to house a piece of equipment. According to the letter of submittal, the addition will not increase employment nor increase the number of company vehicles.

Mr. Squire said he did not see any reason not to waive the site plan review.

**Motion** - Mr. Cavanaugh moved and Ms. Fantini seconded the motion to find that the proposed expansion meets the conditions to qualify for a waiver and the addition will have a de minimus impact relative to the criteria set forth for Site Plan Review in Section 12 of the Zoning Bylaw and, therefore, grant the request for the waiver of Site Plan Review as requested by Sage Engineering & Construction on behalf of Presstek, Inc. The Board voted **Four (4)** out of **Four (4)** members present in favor of the motion.

#### 4. Discussion of Master Plan Recommended Actions

Mr. Harris distributed to the Board a copy of a matrix he developed grouped the Planning Board's Top 53 Priorities into the following categories:

- 1). Design Review
- 2). Adaptive Reuse/Infill Development
- 3). Mixed-Use
- 4). Better Regulation of Multi-Family development
- 5). Balance of Development with Open Space
- 6). Affordable Housing
- 7). Interconnectivity

The remaining "Top Priority" Recommended Actions were broken down into the following:

- 8). Miscellaneous
  - 8D/R – Development/Redevelopment
  - 8B – Bylaw Reform
  - 8LP – Landscape Protection

Mr. Harris noted that this left only one Recommended Action item "ungrouped". He asked the Board to determine if the groupings were appropriate and then to prioritize the groups. Once the prioritization is completed, he suggested he may combine or restructure some of the Recommended Actions to eliminate duplications and to provide clarity.

Board members reviewed the groupings and discussed possible combinations of some groups. Mr. Harris noted the rationale for some of the groupings in Group "8" and also explained that the far right column refers to the groups and where multiple numbers indicate that the Recommended Action overlaps with other groups and is repeated in each of the identified groups.

Board members discussed possible combining of the Adaptive Reuse/Infill Development with "Development/Redevelopment". Mr. Harris explained his rationale and suggested that such a combination could lead to missing part of the focus of the various Recommended Actions.

Design Review was immediately a focus of discussion with all members present indicating that was a top priority.

In terms of a time frame for the various actions, Mr. Harris suggested that it is unlikely the Board would have anything ready for Town Meeting this calendar year – it would take some time to get the standards for Design Review in a form which is likely to get Town Meeting approval although the actual Bylaw for Design Review can be crafted rather easily. He noted that there are a variety of models for Design Review used in the region and highlighted some of the issues which have to be addressed and the models being used in adjoining or nearby communities.

All members indicated that they would accept the groupings as presented. They then indicated the following prioritization of the groups:

- #1 Design Review (Group 1)
- #2 Mixed-Use Development (Group 3)
- #3 Better Regulation of Multi-Family Development (Group 4)
- #4 Development/Redevelopment (Group 8D/R)
- #5 Adaptive Reuse/Infill Development (Group 2)
- #6 Balance of Development with Open Space (Group 5)
- #7 Affordable Housing (Group 6)
- #8 Interconnectivity (Group 7)
- #9 Bylaw Reform (Group 8B)
- #10 Landscape Protection (Group 8LP)

Mr. Harris suggested that the Housing Studies currently underway by the PVPC - they will be discussed January 25<sup>th</sup> – will provide some essential recommended details for several of these priorities including “Better Regulation of Multi-Family Development” and “Affordable Housing”. It may be possible, but unlikely, that significant measures will be ready for Town Meeting in regard to this area for the Fall 2016 although it would be good if implementation action could be taken this year.

Mr. Squire asked if members of MPIC had any questions/comments. Judith Gooch inquired as to where the Board stood with the other “Responsible entities”. Mr. Harris stated that the Board had reviewed all of those Recommended Actions and identified priorities. He hoped to have those Priorities ready for the February meetings.

Judith Gooch inquired as to whether the Board was rewriting Recommendations. Mr. Harris stated that, at this time, the Board merely determined what they thought should be the priority for the next 5 years.

Judith Gooch queried as to how the priority will be communicated to the other boards. Mr. Harris that had not been determined yet – but the Planning Board will need to initiate the communication.

There was discussion as to the role of MPIC. Judith Gooch suggested that they did not see their role as “enforcing the plan” and questioned if the MPIC was to continue to monitor the actions of the other boards that have completed their Recommended Actions. Mr. Harris opined that the role MPIC was just to monitor the implementation of the Recommended

Actions outlined in the Master Plan. Judith Gooch indicated that would mean that when the Recommended Actions have been completed, the MPIC would no longer need to visit that entity. Mr. Harris and the Board indicated that they would agree with Ms. Gooch.

Mr. Harris suggested that “enforcement” would be by the Selectboard/Town Administrator/Town Meeting as the appointing, approving, and evaluating entities.

#### **5. Discussion of Bylaw amendments/proposals for 2016**

Mr. Harris stated that he thought the prior discussions pretty much addressed this topic – the priorities for the next 12-18 months have been set forth. However, he suggested the Board may wish to address a General Bylaw amendment proposal – the terms of the Planning Board members.

Mr. Harris noted that the Planning Board members have 5 year terms and it is increasingly difficult for persons to commit to a 5-year term – they could run for 5 years and then resign midway through but that is not a desirable approach. Ms. Rosner commented that they have had a number of members do exactly that.

Mr. Harris reviewed results of a survey he conducted through the MassPlanners ListServe. He noted that he received approximately 44 responses. The division between 5 year and 3 year terms was almost even. There were several communities which have changed to 3 year terms in an effort to attract more interest.

Members discussed the issues regarding the terms. There was discussion as to whether 5 years is needed due to the Learning Curve required for the Planning Board members. There were suggestions that there are now online programs which provide the ability to learn quicker plus the Town has more professional staff as compared to when the 5 year term was established.

Mr. Harris suggested that the 5 year staggered term ensured that the Board’s approach to development review and planning would not change abruptly. However, precluding that could be thwarting the will of the public.

There was discussion that the times have changed. Getting younger people to commit to a 5 year term is more difficult due to the change in lifestyle and mobility of the population.

All members indicated that they would either support such a change or not be opposed to changing the terms.

Linda Young, 15 Westbrook Road asked that the Board include this on a future agenda for more discussion. Mr. Squire said it would be.

Mr. Cavanaugh inquired as to whether a public hearing would be required. Mr. Harris stated that the Planning Board has always held a public hearing on any bylaw proposal it put forward (Zoning or General Bylaws).

Mr. Harris asked if there were comments from the members of the public on this topic. Joanne Brown commented that she thought the Board's comments about the change in society are correct – people are not employed with the same firm for a life time nor set in one community as they used to be.

There was discussion that the 5 year term may be precluding many new residents from stepping up to serve on the Board. It was noted that other elected Board's – with the possible exception of the Housing Authority – do not have terms beyond 3 years.

Linda Young, 15 Westbrook Road, noted that the Board does not have an “open forum” but asked if the Board would consider creating an advisory committee to help plan changes in the Zoning Bylaws. Mr. Harris noted that the Board has used ad hoc committees on specific topics – such as the Flexible Development. Ms. Rosner commented the committee approach worked very well on that topic. Mr. Squire stated that where it was appropriate, the Board would consider an advisory committee. Mr. Harris suggested that such a committee may be best suited to develop the Design Guidelines/Standards for Design Review

## **6. Development Update and Planner's Report**

Mr. Harris reviewed the status of various developments and recent Planning Department activities:

### *a. Development Report*

- Annafield Estates Subdivision (No change; still waiting for input as to whether the draft As-Built Plan is acceptable for SHELD)
- One Canal Street (no change)
- Mountainbrook Street Acceptances (no change)
- Rivercrest Condominiums (the infrastructure has been largely installed; several foundation permits have been sought and apparently granted)
- Ethan Circle (no change)
- Berkshire Hills Music Academy proposed expansion (no change – application for Site Plan Review and Stormwater Management Permit anticipated to be submitted this month)
- Mount Holyoke College new Dining Hall project (Application for Site Plan Review and Stormwater Management Permit anticipated to be submitted by March 1st)
- Possible Home Occupation at 146 Ferry Street (No change – there was not a request for an informational meeting with the Board so no such meeting has been scheduled. One of the buyers indicated that they have a place in Sunderland where they operate their business and plan to continue such operation at this time)
- Development Status Update – Mr. Harris provided a copy of a Development Status report which he prepared for the Town Administrator. The copy is also on the Town's website.

### *b. Other Projects*

- Mr. Harris is continuing to work on the Permitting Guide.
- Work is continuing with General Code on the codification project.

- Smart Growth District Design Guidelines. Mr. Harris received comments from the State DHCD regarding the proposed edits the Board wants to make in the Design Guidelines. He indicated that the Guidelines need to be explicit as to what is required.
- Health Impact Assessment – Working with Public Health Director Sharon Hart, Mr. Harris submitted an application for a \$12,500 MiniGrant to undertake a Health Impact Assessment of the Subdivision Regulations and the draft Design Guidelines.
- Emergency Management Planning – Mr. Harris will be working with other Town officials and the PVPC consultant to update the Town’s Emergency Management Hazard Mitigation plan

c. *Workshops/Training Opportunities*

Mr. Harris stated he is planning to attend the following workshops/conferences/webinars:

- “MAPD Luncheon – Fair Housing: Foundations and Looking Ahead” in Quincy January 15th.
- “DHCD Downtown Technical Assistance Workshop: Design Guidelines and Lighting in Your Downtown” in Brockton, January 27th.
- “Baystate Roads Program - Complete Streets Workshop” at the PVPC in Springfield, February 10th.

**7. Other New Business**

*Self-storage units behind Taylor Rental*

Mr. Harris stated that the owner of the Taylor Rental property on Route 202 came into the office and expressed a desire to build self-storage units on the rear of the property. However, since the property is zoned Business A-1, warehousing is not allowed on the property. Mr. Harris suggested that the property could lend itself to such a use quite well – the Taylor Rental building would screen the units from public view off Route 202 and the site is approximately 2.79 acres (including the front portion on which Taylor Rental is located).

Mr. Harris suggested there were two means by which the property could have self-storage units: a rezoning to Business B or amend the Business A-1 zoning district to allow the use by Special Permit with restrictions for screening, etc. However, he noted that there is not any Business B zoned property adjoining the site. Therefore, rezoning the property to Business B would clearly appear to a case of spot zoning. Additionally, while this site makes sense for self-storage, the Board has been opposed to amending the Zoning Bylaw to fit the desire of a single property owner.

Board members indicated that they concurred with Mr. Harris’ assessment. Some indicated that they would not object to self-storage in this area properly screened while one or more expressed reservations about self-storage units in this area.

Mr. Harris stated he will convey to the owner that the Board is not inclined to proceed with nor support either of the approaches to accommodate self-storage units on this site.

Support for 2016 Recreation Trails Grant Application

Mr. Harris stated that last year the Town applied for a Recreation Trails Grant to construct an accessible trail off Ferry Street and behind Town Farm. This trail would, eventually, be part of a larger trail that would connect to the Mount Holyoke Range. He stated the application was unsuccessful but the Town is revising the proposal – with help from the PVPC and others – for submittal this year. Last year, the Planning Board endorsed the application and he asked the Board to endorse this new application and presented a draft letter for their review and consideration.

**Motion** – Ms. Fantini moved and Ms. Rosner seconded the motion to endorse the proposed Recreation Trails Grant. The Board voted **Four (4)** out of **Four (4)** members present in favor of the motion. Mr. Squire signed the letter as presented.

February Meeting Dates

Mr. Harris noted that the scheduled meeting dates for February are February 8<sup>th</sup> and February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Three members have indicated they cannot attend on February 8<sup>th</sup> and Mr. Harris has a conflict on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. He also noted that February 15<sup>th</sup> is a holiday and February 1<sup>st</sup> is only one week after the last meeting in January. Therefore, he had polled the members and determined that the following dates are viable meeting dates for all of the members:

- Wednesday February 10<sup>th</sup>
- Wednesday February 24<sup>th</sup>
- Monday February 29<sup>th</sup>

He asked the members present which of those two dates the Board would like to schedule for a meeting. All members present indicated that February 10<sup>th</sup> and February 29<sup>th</sup> would be good dates.

Ms. Rosner noted that the campaign expenditure statements are due shortly.

**8. Adjournment**

**Motion** – Mr. Cavanaugh moved and Ms. Fantini seconded the motion to adjourn. The Board voted **Four (4)** out of **Four (4)** members present in favor of the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**AS APPROVED**

Richard Harris, Recorder

Attachment A

List of Documents Reviewed in January 11, 2016 Planning Board Meeting

<u>Document</u>	<u>Record Location</u>
Planning Board Meeting Agenda and Background Information	Planning Board Agenda Packet Files
Request for waiver for 755 New Ludlow Road	Planning Board Files
Zoning Bylaw	Planning Board Files
South Hadley Master Plan	Planning Board Files
Master Plan – Planning Board Top Priorities	
Recommended Actions Matrix – Draft	Planning Board Files

AS APPROVED