

Westwood Planning Board Meeting
Tuesday, July 10, 2018 – 7:00 pm
Champagne Meeting Room, 50 Carby Street
Westwood, MA 02090

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Atkins at approximately 7:05pm. The meeting was video recorded by Westwood Media Center.

Present:

Planning Board members present: Chairman David L. Atkins Jr., Michael L. McCusker, Brian D. Gorman, Christopher A. Pfaff and Deborah J. Conant. Staff members present: Abigail McCabe, Town Planner and Jessica Cole who recorded the meeting minutes.

Update and Review of proposed Gay Street Sidewalk Design

Ms. McCabe gave an overview. There was a public informational meeting held on June 6 hosted by the DPW where the consultant performing the design study, TEC, presented 30% design plans and presented two alternatives.

Alternative 1 is for the sidewalk on the northside of Gay Street (from High to Pine Ln.), which is the recommended approach from the consultant, with a 10 foot lane. Alternative 2 is for the sidewalk to be on the north side from High Street to Thatcher then cross to the south side to Buckboard. The idea of having the sidewalk behind the stone walls largely beyond the Town's right-of-way was brought up with favorable and some mixed support from the property owners. Depending on which side of the road the sidewalk is on there are about 20-30 different property owners along this portion of Gay Street. Less stone walls to move and less telephone poles to move, with 11 foot lanes.

The Pedestrian & Bike Safety Committee unanimously voted at their June 28 meeting to recommend they examine options for the sidewalk to be behind the stone walls and not along the road for safety reasons and aesthetics. If a sidewalk is on private property this could be done through an easement to allow access while the property owner still owns the land, or the land could be transferred to the town from the property owner through an eminent domain land taking process that requires an appraisal and compensation to the property owner. The walls could also be relocated to be close to the paved road and sidewalk maybe still within the right of way or only partially outside right of way. This would need further review.

Staff and Board Comments:

Is the sidewalk in the right of way?

Still on private property? Consider a conversation with residents. Still an idea, not all has been fully explored. The general consensus of the Board was that it was too early for the Board to make a recommendation.

What is the next step? On July 23 DPW goes to the Selectmen's Meeting with an update of the project.

Do we have anything to offer at this stage as a Planning Board?

How many property owners on the North Side? Estimated about 20+ residents

Public comments:

K. Foscaldo, Norfolk Avenue, commented that there will be a lot of stone walls that need to be moved. Have you thought about moving behind the walls, everything in the current proposals are on town property.

Action taken:

Not enough information to make a recommendation. No formal recommendation was made at this time.

Review and Discuss Zoning Articles for a possible Fall Town Meeting

Staff Comments:

Ms. McCabe states that she is getting ready for a Fall Town Meeting, but she is still not sure if we will have a Fall Town Meeting. She is looking for any ideas for zoning articles.

The Board of Selectmen will likely close the warrant the week of September 11. Any zoning articles the Planning Board has should be done by early September. The Selectmen will decide in early to mid-September if there will be a November Town Meeting.

Tentative Timeline:

Submit a request to Board of Selectmen by Sept. 6 (after Sept. 5 meeting)

Board of Selectmen to consider a Fall Annual Town Meeting

Planning Board to hold Zoning Amendment Public Hearing Oct. 9

Fin Com Public Hearing for all Articles Oct. 16.

Town Meeting Nov. 13 (Tentative)

Staff and Board Comments:

Split Zoned Lots: Westwood has about 5 lots, not too many, and are in the main business districts that are split between more than one zoning district. The wording is vague in the town bylaws and may want to clarify what "more restrictive zone" means.

How can we resolve this? Usually refer to the Building Commissioner as the zoning interpretation and enforcement authority. Not changing anything, we just want to make the wording more clear. Ms. McCabe can look into suggested revision language.

More than three cars: Section 4.3.3.2 of the Zoning Board, may want to look at eliminating the words, "of parking or storage" because the way that it is written now, you need a special permit if you have more than 3 cars. Maybe leave this alone. Presently, when a building permit is received for garages that hold more than three vehicles then a special permit is triggered with the Zoning Board. But the zoning technically goes a step further and refers to parking or storage, implying that four cars in a residential driveway also triggers a special permit and not

just for parking garages. The zoning currently requires screening for 5 or more vehicles allowed. The purpose was likely aimed at trying to maintain the aesthetics of the neighborhood. Keep thinking about it. Ms. McCabe will look at zoning board applications from the past and recent ones too. It can apply if you still have a garage.

Nonconforming Uses (Section 4.5.2 of the Zoning Bylaw):

Staff Comments:

Ms. McCabe met with the building commissioner and some clarifying language was suggested to strengthen the language in the town bylaws.

Ms. McCabe had some suggested changes:

If it meets each of the following circumstances:

There is no extension or expansion of the exterior of the structure.

There is no interior expansion that would intensify the use and

The alteration sufficiently improves the degree of compliance with building code requirements for health and safety purposes.

Board Comments:

Board likes the new language that Ms. McCabe recommended

Fence Height Discussion:

Currently can do a fence 6 feet or under by-right.

If a fence is over 6 feet, and under 8 feet, it requires a special permit.

Structures are 7 feet, do we want to revisit it?

Do we want to leave it at 6 feet?

A 9 foot fence would need a variance, which is harder to get.

Keep it there, think about it, and we can discuss at the next Planning Board.

Board members would like some examples for the next meeting.

Public Comment:

Ms. Klosi, 31 Beacon Street, asked if there are 2 properties with 2 different grades with a 3-4 foot discrepancy, and the owner with the higher grade already has a fence put up a 6 foot fence and the other neighbor wants to put up a fence, it will see it as 9 feet. What would happen? How does this work? The zoning bylaw states: Combined height of 6 feet or less measured from the lowest point of grade adjacent to the fence or combined wall and fence.

Accessory Setbacks for OSRD-Open Space Bylaw

Such as sheds or garages. Can be a special permit or EIDR, check setbacks for accessory structures.

Public comments submitted via email:

F. Fusco, Pine Lane, Could not attend tonight, but she sent in an email to Ms. McCabe.

Invite her to the next meeting to discuss her comments further.

Board Comments;

Reducing the maximum building height to 29' from 36'

It is the max of height for businesses.

Do we want to see some continuity in Islington?

Need to do some more research on this.

Is every accessory apartment counted?

It is still looked at as a single family home?

We will bring all of this back at the next meeting.

Comprehensive Plan (Master Plan) Update Work Session:

Ms. McCabe did some brainstorming with Mr. Pfaff and Ms. Conant. Ms. McCabe thinks that it is best to have a steering committee of 10-15 people, possibly 18, acting as the experts, 2 people per element. There are 8 elements in the Plan and an addition of a 9th element, 1-2 people for each element. The Town will send out letters of interest to serve on the Steering Committee with the Planning Board acting as liaisons. Comprehensive Plan updates will be added to every meeting going forward. Board of Selectmen is the appointing authority.

We have no budget for outsourcing the plan, we will update the data of the Plan from 2000.

Ms. McCabe discussed a timeline: Appoint steering committee members in October Drafts to review, Steering Committee could have first meeting in mid-November

Work on community survey Nov-Feb, committee work, meet with different organizations March, come back to the Planning Board meetings and focus on something different each time.

Staff and Board Comments:

How much from the original document needs to be changed?

Ms. McCabe would be the main project manager.

It will be a 12-14 month process.

We need a timeline for each committee.

Working groups would happen during Planning Board meetings.

Are there additional elements? Health? Sustainability? Resilience?

The top 8 elements are required by State Law.

Do we need a chair of the steering committee? Selectmen could identify.

Action Taken:

The Board recommended 18 steering committee members, and the Planning Board is open to including additional elements. Recommend start looking for steering committee members.

Other Business

Review of upcoming ZBA Applications, there are 2 applications:

1. Second story for an expansion for non-conforming setback, a recommendation will be to change the plans slightly
2. Accessory Apartment

Various Committee Reports

Approval of Minutes:

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Upon a motion made by Mr. McCusker and seconded by Mr. Pfaff to approve the Minutes from June 12, 2018. All were in favor 5-0.

New Business:

2 Associate memberships

One expired and one does not want to be reappointed. The Planning Board will need a joint meeting with the Board and Selectmen. Associate members are a backup of Planning Board members, in case there is a vacancy or a conflict of interest. Steve Rafsky and Steve Olanoff have expressed interest in the positions. Board members want the positions to be advertised, Ms. McCabe will look into it. The Planning Board will meet in September with the Selectmen.

Speed Limit Update: The Planning Board has invited Public Safety Officer Sicard to our next meeting.

321 Washington Street:

Trees did not survive, will need to submit a new plan with tree recommendations.

Ms. McCabe will check to see if Karon Skinner is involved, and aware of the situation.

Adjournment:

Upon a motion made by Mr. McCusker and seconded by Mr. Gorman the Board voted 5-0 in favor to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:58 pm.

List of Documents:

<p>Gay Street Sidewalk Design Gay Street Sidewalk Improvements, From: The Engineering Corp.,6/6/2018, 9 pages</p>	<p>PDF</p>
<p>Preliminary Zoning Amendment Discussion Fin Com 2018-2019 Meeting Schedule, 1 page Zoning Public Comment, From: F. Fusco, To: Abigail McCabe, Input for Zoning Changes, 7/10/2018, 2 pages</p>	<p>PDF</p>
<p>Comprehensive Plan Update Work Session Comprehensive Plan 2000, 2/4/2000, 48 pages CPTC Comprehensive Plan Overview Presentation, From: Ralph Willmer, Creating a Master Plan for Your Community, 23 pages Mass Gen Law Comp Plan, Chapter 41, Section 81D, 2 pages Key Questions to Plan, Questions for the Planning Board-Comprehensive Plan, 4 pages DRAFT Comprehensive Plan Process, Preliminary Comprehensive Plan Process & Timeline, 2 pages</p>	<p>PDF</p>