

Town of Westwood Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
Location: 50 Carby Street
January 13, 2009
7:30 PM

Board Members Present: Chairman Robert Malster, Steve Olanoff, Bruce Montgomery, and Henry Gale. Robert Moore was absent.

Staff Members Present: Nora Loughnane, Town Planner; John Bertorelli, Town Engineer; and Glenn Garber, Westwood Station Planning Manager. Minutes were recorded by Janice Barba, Land Use Assistant.

Chairman Malster opened the meeting at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Chairman Malster discussed February and March calendars with other Board members and set the following meetings: February 3, 2009; February 24, 2009; March 10, 2009 and March 31, 2009.

Continuation of Planning Board Public Hearing: Amendment #1 to the Definitive Subdivision for Westwood Station

Chairman Malster announced that the continuation of the public hearing for Amendment #1 to the Definitive Subdivision for Westwood Station will be immediately continued, without testimony taken. Upon a motion by Mr. Olanoff and seconded by Mr. Montgomery, the board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing to March 10, 2009 at 7:30 PM.

Public Hearing to Consider Application for Environmental Impact and Design Review Approval of Exempt Use for the Construction and Establishment of Modular Additions to the Thurston Middle School – 850 High Street

Chairman Malster opened the public hearing with a reading of the legal notice.

Project Engineer Peter Glick and Architect Alan B. DeHann, from Symmes Maini & McKee Associates, and Heath Petracca, Director of Business & Finance for the Westwood Public Schools, were present at the hearing.

Mr. Glick presented drawings of the proposed modular additions to the Thurston Middle School, and explained that the two separate additions were intended to add classroom space and expand the existing cafeteria to serve an increased school population. He stated that the buildings would be constructed on full-depth, concrete frost walls and that the outside skin would be brick veneer, very similar to that of the modular additions currently in place at Thurston. Mr. Glick noted that the classroom addition would connect to the existing building via a platform with a concrete walk. Mr. Olanoff asked for further clarification. Mr. Glick responded that the concrete walk would be 5' wide, with handrails, connecting the existing and proposed buildings. He indicated the point of connection on the plans.

Ch. Malster asked how the parking and circulation would be affected by the proposed modulars. Mr. Glick explained that the vehicle circulation route would be slightly adjusted to accommodate the new building additions. He said that the one way drop off route will remain, but that the looped area would be shortened. Mr. Gale inquired about the existing dumpster on the property and if it is the only one on site. Mr. Petracca responded that this is the sole dumpster serving the entire facility.

Mr. Olanoff asked if Mr. Glick had prepared an exterior lighting plan. Mr. Glick responded that the proposed work is limited to the installation of one new exterior light pole with a double fixture, which will be centrally located in the parking area at the front of the modular addition. He stated that the limits of the illumination from this fixture would be fully within the school property. Mr. Glick added

that a waiver of the lighting plan submission requirements was requested as part of the limited application. Mr. Olanoff asked Mr. Glick to provide the manufacturer's specifications for the lighting being utilized. Mr. Glick agreed to provide this information to the Board.

Chairman Malster asked Mr. Glick if he had met with Fire Chief Bill Scoble to address his concerns about public safety access. Mr. Glick said that he had met with Chief Scoble early in the application process but had not seen Chief Scoble's most recent comments which were only received by the town planner today. Chairman Malster explained that the Chief Scoble had requested that a public safety lane be installed along the easterly side of the classroom addition, around the northeast corner, and then along the northern side of that addition, in order to provide fire safety access to northern side of the existing building. Ch. Malster asked that Mr. Glick and his architect arrange a meeting with Chief Scoble to further discuss this issue and any other outstanding public safety issues. Mr. Glick agreed to do so.

There was a discussion concerning the loss of 9 spaces resulting from construction of the proposed additions. Chairman Malster noted that there have been complaints from the Senior Center regarding overflow parking issues that occur during extra-curricular activities and parent-teacher conferences. He stated that additional parking spaces would be beneficial and the loss of existing parking spaces would only exacerbate the problem. Ch. Malster stated that Public Safety Officer Sgt. Paul Sicard had also expressed concern about the existing lack of parking at the Middle School. Mr. Olanoff suggested that the parking problems at the Middle School might be lessened through the establishment of a carpooling program. He noted that such programs work best in situations such as this with a well-defined population.

Ms. Loughnane said that she had discussed the loss of parking spaces with the Building Inspector Joe Doyle. She explained that the Zoning Bylaw formula for parking at educational facilities was based on the number of seats in the school. She explained that, since middle school students do not drive, the seats in question have been interpreted to include those for faculty and employees, plus those used for public assembly during out-of-school events (i.e.: bleacher spaces in the gyms and auditorium seats). Ms. Loughnane said that Mr. Doyle felt that the number of parking spaces provided was sufficient to handle the number of faculty and employees at the middle school, but that the existing parking seemed to be insufficient to meet the public assembly needs during out-of-school events. She noted that the proposed classroom addition and cafeteria expansion were presented to accommodate an increased number of students, but that no new employees were anticipated, and no additions would be made to the public assembly areas. As a result, she told the board that Mr. Doyle believed that the applicant was merely required to achieve no net loss of parking spaces. Ms. Loughnane added that Mr. Doyle recommended that the Planning Board take a closer look at the Zoning Bylaw parking requirements for educational facilities and consider whether they might be rewritten to better address parking needs.

Mr. Petracca stated that 9 additional lined parking spaces could be added along the driveway going down the hill in front of the Middle School. He noted that people currently park in these spaces, but that they were not now counted as official parking spaces. Ch. Malster recommended that these spaces be added to the plans to meet the minimum zoning requirements. Ms. Loughnane stated that Mr. Glick had mentioned the possibility of establishing a new or expanded parking area adjacent to the Senior Center. She noted that, while such a parking would be off-site, it would be within a reasonable walking distance of the middle school, and would most likely be used by those attending out-of-school events. Mr. Petracca responded that the school department is investigating the possibility of adding parking in that area. Ch. Malster said that such parking would be preferable to the current situation where visitors to the Middle School park at St. Margaret Mary's and have to cross Route 109.

Chairman Malster informed Mr. Glick that Mr. Doyle had also expressed concerns about the loss of a handicapped parking space which previously served the adjacent Fisher School. He said that this space was eliminated at the time of the first modular additions to the Middle School. Ch. Malster said that Mr. Doyle would like to see this space replaced as part of the proposed construction. He

asked Mr. Glick to see if he could revise the plans to add a handicapped parking space with access to the Fisher School along the front driveway.

Ch. Malster asked Town Engineer John Bertorelli for his comments on the proposed modular additions. Mr. Bertorelli said the applicant had not submitted necessary documentation to comply with section 7.3.6.1.6 (stormwater/drainage) and the required stormwater calculations to demonstrate compliance with the MA DEP standards, and documentation showing compliance with section 7.3.7.5 (drainage/erosion). Mr. Bertorelli asked that calculations be provided to his office. He noted that some concerns had been expressed about runoff, particularly the impact runoff may have on the adjacent Fisher School. Mr. Glick presented the proposed drainage plans, noting that storm drains would run under the new building to a dry well. Mr. Montgomery questioned whether their would be an increase in impervious area. Mr. Bertorelli said there would be less impervious area in the parking lot, resulting in less dirty water, but more impervious area overall due to the size of the new roof areas. He noted that the roof areas would produce cleaner water runoff. There was some discussion about the location of existing catch basins and their current condition. Mr. Olanoff suggested the need for a stormceptor. Mr. Glick stated he would obtain the necessary drainage calculations and forward this information to Mr. Bertorelli.

Ch. Malster opened the hearing to public comments. Ernest Greppin, 490 Gay Street, President of the Westwood Historical Society, spoke on the Society's behalf. Mr. Greppin requested that the Board look closely at the drainage plans and do what they could to ensure that no additional water would be directed down the hill toward the basement of the Fisher School. He stated that water problems caused by runoff have been an issue since the last modular addition, and expressed concern that this proposed addition might exacerbate the problem. He also requested that the handicapped parking space be restored and that a handicapped ramp be installed in the sidewalk nearest the path to the Fisher School.

Chairman Malster requested that the Applicant take measures to satisfy the concerns of the Fire Chief and the Town Engineer, and add the requested parking spaces to the plans, before returning to the Board at its next meeting.

Upon a motion by Mr. Gale and seconded by Mr. Olanoff, the board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing to January 27, 2009 at 7:30 PM.

Update on Proposed Zoning Warrant Articles

Town Planner, Nora Loughnane, provided the Board with an update on proposed zoning amendment warrant articles. She stated that she had reserved space on the Town Meeting warrant for each of the twelve articles that had previously been discussed by the Planning Board, as well as an additional article to permit housekeeping revisions to the Zoning Bylaw. Finance Commission Member Peggy O'Brien was present. Ms. O'Brien confirmed that space had been reserved for each of the proposed articles. Ch. Malster stated that he expected some of the articles to be tabled for consideration at future town meetings.

Article 1: Proposed Amendment of Section 4.1.5.1 of the Zoning Bylaw regarding Non-exempt Agricultural Uses

The Planning Board directed Ms. Loughnane to draft amendments which would either prohibit agricultural uses on lots of less than 5 acres, or to allow such uses by special permit. Ms. Loughnane will research standards and criteria used for such uses in other towns, and will review with Health Director Linda Shea.

Article 2: Proposed Amendment of Section 4.1.7 of the Zoning Bylaw regarding Wind Turbines

Ms. Loughnane and Ms. Barba have been researching models for this proposed amendment.

They have collected samples from several Massachusetts towns as well as a model bylaw produced by the state. Chairman Malster suggested that the engineering department may be able to identify specific areas in town that would be favorable for operating wind turbines. The Planning Board directed Ms. Loughnane to draft appropriate Wind Turbine language for consideration at the next Planning Board meeting.

Article 3: Proposed Amendment of Section 2.0 of the Zoning Bylaw to add a Definition for "Agricultural Use, Exempt"

The Planning Board agreed to add this definition, and to combine this article with proposed article 1.

Agricultural Use, Exempt Agricultural use of property exempted by M.G.L. Chapter 40A. Section 3.

Article 4: Proposed Amendment of Section 2.0 of the Zoning Bylaw to add a Definition for "Fast Food Establishment"

Ms. Loughnane reminded the board that the Economic Development Advisory Board had recommended against any changes to the current "fast food" definitions. Mr. Olanoff asked if Ms. Loughnane had reviewed any materials used by the EDAB in developing its recommendation. Ms. Loughnane stated that she had only received the recommendation, but that she was in the process of collecting sample definitions from other towns for the Planning Board's review. Ch. Malster stated that the Planning Board may decide to table this proposed article for consideration at the 2010 Town Meeting, as more time and research may be needed. Mr. Olanoff said that he would like the board to consider specific definitions refer a recommended definition back to the EDAB. Ms. Loughnane will provide the board with definitions uses by other towns to classify separate categories of fast food establishments.

Article 5: Proposed Amendment of Section 2.0 of the Zoning Bylaw to alter the existing Definition for "Lot Width"

Ms. Loughnane is finalizing wording for a new definition for "Lot Width". The Planning Board supports a new definition for "Lot Width" which would be designed to eliminate a potential loophole. The planning board directed Ms. Loughnane to obtain Building Inspector Joe Doyle's opinion on a new definition.

Article 6: Proposed Amendment of Section 2.0 of the Zoning Bylaw to add a Definition for "Wind Turbine"

The zoning bylaw does not currently contain a definition for "Wind Turbine". The Planning Board will support a new definition for "Wind Turbine", and will combine this article with proposed article 2.

Article 7: Proposed Amendment of Section 2.0 of the Zoning Bylaw to add a Definition for "Street Tree"

The zoning bylaw does not currently contain a definition for "Street Tree". The Planning Board will consider a new definition for "Street Tree". Mr. Olanoff stated that he would like to see a broad definition which would allow fro the protection of trees shading public ways, whether or not those trees are growing on public land. The Board agreed that more research would likely be needed, and that this proposed article may need to be held for the 2010 Town Meeting. Ms. Loughnane will present more information for the Board's consideration at the next meeting.

Article 8: Proposed Amendment of Section 8.5 of the Zoning Bylaw regarding Major Residential Development (MRD)

Ch. Malster stated that this proposed article requires far more time for development than is currently available. The Planning Board will appoint a committee to prepare a recommendation for the comprehensive revision of section 8.5 for consideration at the 2010 Town Meeting.

Article 9: Proposed Amendment of Section 9.6 of the Zoning Bylaw regarding Mixed Use Overlay District (MUOD)

Ch. Malster stated that this proposed article also requires far more time for development than is currently available. The Planning Board will appoint a committee to prepare a recommendation for the comprehensive revision of section 9.6 for consideration at the 2010 Town Meeting.

Article 10: Proposed Amendment of Section 5.2.8 of the Zoning Bylaw to change the setback requirements within the Local Business A (LBA) District

Ch. Malster suggested that this article be tabled for a future Town meeting. Mr. Olanoff noted that the proposed article was needed to address an outstanding recommendation from Westwood's Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Board agreed to table this amendment, as this will require more research than can be accomplished at this time.

Article 11: Proposed Amendment of Section 6.1.17 of the Zoning Bylaw relating to Landscaping Design Requirements in Parking Areas

The Zoning Bylaw currently requires the landscaping of parking lots and specifies a minimum amount of landscaping treatment based on the size of the parking area. The Planning Board directed Ms. Loughnane to research this issue and present recommendations at its next meeting.

Article 12: Proposed Demolition Delay Bylaw

The Town does not currently have a demolition delay bylaw. Ms. Loughnane stated that the Westwood Historical Commission requested that this proposed article not be considered at this time. The Planning Board agreed to table this proposed article.

Ch. Malster stated that he would appear before the Finance Commission on January 20th to give brief update on the Planning Board's warrant article requests. He said that he would let the Finance Commission know that the Board had boiled their requests down to five or six articles, and that specific language for those articles would be developed over the course of the next few meetings.

Miscellaneous

The Board briefly discussed the status of the decision for the Phase 1B EIDR for Westwood Station. Chairman Malster said that the decision had been signed and would be filed with the Town Clerk tomorrow. Ch. Malster told the Board that Glenn Garber, Westwood Station Planning Manager, had finalized the budget for peer review of the Westwood Station subdivision amendment. He noted that a further extension for consideration of the revised subdivision plans would be needed, beyond the March 31, 2009 extension now in place.

Approval of Minutes for Prior Meetings

Upon a motion by Mr. Gale and seconded by Mr. Montgomery the Board voted to approve minutes

for the Planning Board meetings of July 8, September 15, September 23, October 22, November 3, November 5 and December 1, 2008, and to approve minutes of the Executive Session Planning Board meeting of September 23, 2008, as presented to the Board by the town planner.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:35 PM.