

# PLANNING BOARD

## DEPARTMENT MISSION

- To provide for conscientious and orderly land use development through Comprehensive Planning, Subdivision Control, Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map review;
- To develop and implement land use development and growth management regulations consistent with the goals and policies of the Town;
- To protect the natural resources, safety and aesthetic character of the Town through environmental impact and design review/site plan review and the issuance of special permits pursuant to the Zoning Bylaw.

## LAND USE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

In 2010, the Planning Board issued the following decisions pursuant to the Subdivision Control Law:

- Reviewed five Approval Not Required (ANR) plans pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 41, § 41P.

The Planning Board issued the following decisions pursuant to the Zoning Act:

- In 2010, the Planning Board considered seven Environmental Impact and Design Review (EIDR) applications and issued six approval decisions pursuant to Section 7.3 of the Zoning Bylaw for the following projects: construction of a new entrance portal and sign canopy and for alterations to an existing parking lot at Mercedes-Benz Dealership, 425 Providence Highway; construction of a new facility to house the Westwood Public Library, 660 High Street; subsequent modification of the EIDR Approval for Westwood Library; construction of an additional 99-car parking lot at St. Margaret Mary Parish, 837 High Street; establishment of a nursery as an Exempt Agricultural Use at Harlequin Nursery, 215 High Street; and construction of a garage for storage of oil trucks at Prevett Oil, 1200 East Street. A public hearing for the remaining application – for construction of assisted living cottages at Fox Hill Village, 10 Longwood Drive – has been continued to January 2011.
- The Planning Board reviewed two Definitive Subdivision applications pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 41, including the following: proposed 11-buildable lot Morgan Farm Estates Definitive Subdivision, including the consideration of the modification of the previously approved Powissett Estates Definitive Subdivision pursuant to MGL Chapter 41, Section 81W; and modification of a 12-buildable lot section of the previously approved Westview Estates Definitive Subdivision pursuant to MGL Chapter 41, Section 81W. Public hearings

for both applications were opened in 2010 and have been continued to dates in January 2011.

- The Planning Board issued two Shared Driveway Special Permit approvals pursuant to Section 6.1.26 of the Zoning Bylaw for a six-month extension of the special permit for a shared driveway to serve 480 Summer Street, and for a subsequent one-year extension of that same special permit.
- The board considered two applications for Earth Material Movement (EMM) Special Permits pursuant to Section 7.1 of the Zoning Bylaw, and issued one approval decision for the construction of an additional 99-car parking lot at St. Margaret Mary Parish, 837 High Street. A public hearing for the remaining application – for construction of assisted living cottages at Fox Hill Village, 10 Longwood Drive – has been continued to January 2011.
- The board issued a one-year extension of the Westwood Station Area Master Plan Special Permit and Consolidated Special Permits pursuant to the provisions of Section 10.3.9 of the Zoning Bylaw, Section 21.12 of the Planning Board's Rules and Regulations for Mixed Use Overlay District, and Section 19.10 of the Planning Board's Special Permit Granting Authority Rules and Regulations.

Activity	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Approval Not Required Plans	5	4	4	5	5
Preliminary Subdivision Plans	0	0	0	0	0
Definitive Subdivision Plans	2	2	5	0	1
Site Plan Review Decisions	7	11	14	5	6
Special Permit Decisions	5	2	3	4	3

## ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

- The Planning Board sponsored nine warrant articles for the May 2010 Town Meeting, all of which were recommended by the Finance Commission and approved by vote of Town Meeting. The approved articles all involved amendments to the Zoning Bylaw. The first three articles, which were co-sponsored by the Board of Selectmen, made various amendments to Section 9.6 pertaining to Mixed Use Overlay Districts, each of which were designed to increase the ability of the developers and/or tenants of properties within these districts to finance and construct a desirable mixed-use development in the immediate future.

## PLANNING BOARD

The fourth article removed Section 8.5 pertaining to Major Residential Development, which section had previously been invalidated by the courts. The fifth article amended sections of the Zoning Bylaw related to parking lot landscaping by replacing confusing percentage-based requirements with a straightforward set of landscape requirements, directly related to the number of vehicles per parking area. The sixth article amended minimum parking space requirements for certain uses in order to provide the most appropriate minimum parking space requirements for each use. The seventh article established coffee shops and ice cream parlors as by-right uses in certain districts and added a definition for retail take-out counter. The eighth article included various minor housekeeping amendments intended to correct or clarify misleading or confusing sections, and implemented reformatting to avoid unnecessary waste of paper in the printing of the Zoning Bylaw. The ninth article established a new Official Zoning Map.

### WESTWOOD STATION

- For the past several years, the Planning Board has worked extensively with other Town boards and departments, staff and consultants to review and approve several applications related to the development of Westwood Station. During this past year, the Planning Board's Westwood Station subcommittee met with the developer, other Town boards, and staff, to discuss options for moving the Westwood Station project forward. One of those options involved the development and promotion of amendments to the Mixed Use Overlay District section of the town's Zoning Bylaw, which amendments were presented and approved at the May 2010 Annual Town Meeting. This subcommittee continues its consideration of strategies for the most efficient and effective review of future applications associated with development in the University Avenue area.
- The Planning Board and staff remain well poised to handle the next review of these applications in a most efficient and effective manner.

### COLLABORATION

- The Planning Board continued to work collaboratively with the Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Towns of Norwood, Dedham, Canton and other municipalities to advance regional planning initiatives, especially the comprehensive redesign of the Interstate 95/93/Route 128 interchange. These regional planning efforts will be coordinated primarily through the Route 128/ABC Coalition and the Regional Working Group.

- In 2010, the Planning Board commenced the process of updating the town's 2000 Comprehensive Master Plan, beginning with a Visioning Workshop held in October 2010, and including two Housing Information Sessions held in November and December 2010.



*Board Members Bruce Montgomery, Steven Rafsky & Steve Olanoff*

- The Planning Board's web site is continuously updated to include information on pending applications, public hearings, decisions and planning documents such as the Zoning Bylaw, Comprehensive Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, Development Guide, the Board's Special Permit Granting Authority Rules and Regulations and applications for site plan, special permit and subdivision review. Approved minutes of Planning Board meetings are available for download. The web site also serves as the repository for the voluminous amount of Westwood Station information generated as part of the permitting process.
- The Planning Department continued to facilitate the Land Use Committee, which serves as a forum for applicants to informally present proposed development projects for staff comment and technical review, and encourages collaboration and information-sharing among the various departments involved in land use development issues, including the Planning, Health, Building, Fire, Police, Public Works, Economic Development, Conservation Commission and Engineering Departments.

### 2011 SERVICE PLAN

- In 2011, the Planning Board will continue to work collaboratively with the Board of Selectmen, the Economic Development Advisory Board, other town boards and project developers to pursue

## PLANNING BOARD

initiatives designed to encourage near-term development and re-development of commercial properties, especially within the Westwood Station/University Avenue area. The board will continue to pursue zoning strategies related to the redevelopment of Southwest Park, University Avenue, Glacier Drive, and other locations that could benefit from more flexible approaches to land use regulation.

- The Planning Board will devote considerable time and attention to the update of the Town's 2000 Comprehensive Master Plan in coordination with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee had its initial meeting in January 2011, and will continue to meet throughout the year.



*One of the several Comprehensive Plan Sub-committees, brainstorming.*

- The Planning Board will continue working with the Housing Partnership and interested parties to encourage and facilitate affordable housing and senior housing initiatives. The board will continue to develop proposed revisions to the Zoning Bylaw related to housing, including the addition of a new Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) section, and substantial amendments to the Senior Residential Development (SRD) section.
- As time permits, the board will complete the comprehensive revision of all Planning Board rules and regulations, including those for the Subdivision of Land, and for all Special Permits which may be issued by the Planning Board.



*Planner Nora Loughnane & Board Member Carol E. Chafetz*

### **Planning Board Members**

Steven M. Rafsky, Chairman  
Steven H. Olanoff, Vice Chairman  
John J. Wiggin, Secretary  
Bruce H. Montgomery  
Carol E. Chafetz

### **Staff**

Nora Loughnane, Town Planner  
Janice Barba, Planning & Land Use Specialist



*Board Member John J. Wiggin*