Meeting of the Planning Board  
Thursday, January 23, 2020

The 14th meeting of the Milton Planning Board for FY2020 was called to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Blute Conference Room of Milton Town Hall.

Present: Planning Board Members Cheryl Tougias (Chair), Denise Swenson (Secretary), April Anderson, Richard Boehler and Kathleen O’Donnell; Planning Director William Clark, Sr. Administrative Clerk Julia Getman.

Absent: Assistant Town Planner Allyson Quinn

1. Administrative Items:
Upcoming meetings were confirmed for February 13th and 27th. A joint meeting with the Select Board and Affordable Housing Trust was confirmed for January 27th, an East Milton planning session with consultant Judi Barrett was confirmed for January 29th and a teen visioning session sponsored by MPIC and MSAPC with MAPC was confirmed for February 11th.

2. Citizens Speak: No one spoke.

3. Milton Village Overlay Zoning Discussion:
Julie Creamer of 58 Frothingham St., Chair of the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT), and Melinda Collins of 170 Hillside St., a member of the AHT and Chair of the Select Board’s Housing Committee, discussed proposed amendments to the affordable housing provisions to better meet the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). They proposed an increase in the total number of required affordable units in the overlay from 10% to 12 %, under deed restrictions. They believed that eligibility for bonus incentives should require between 17% and 20% inclusionary units and that ideally these should be provided on-site. They discussed the method for developing a payment-in-lieu-of formula, which was based on the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)’s Qualified Allocation Plan and regional research. Prioritizing particular housing types and ensuring that revolving funds remain within the district were discussed.

The Board addressed comments of the Building Commissioner concerning parking requirements for restaurants and bars in the district.

Public Comment:
Forbes Sargent of 25 Canton Ave. discussed how the grade of Adams St. in the Village impacts building heights and noted that the building at 5 Canton Avenue at the top of the slope was one and a half stories tall. He discussed the property owner’s analysis of a 5-story complex with two levels of parking on the site, as reported in the Milton Times, and encouraged the owner to discuss the plan with local residents and Town officials. He said he appreciated efforts to save the Swift Hat Shop and found the owner’s recent redevelopment plans for the shop agreeable. He asked if height could be “capped” at 5 Canton Avenue to accommodate the grade of the land and believed that setbacks would be necessary.

Ms. Tougias discussed design standards in the overlay zoning for the area and noted that if the overlay is passed by Town Meeting design guidelines should be developed to augment the design standards in the overlay zoning. She mentioned that the state, when considering comprehensive permits, would look favorably upon local zoning efforts that include affordable housing.
Meredith Hall of 41 Russell St., a member of the Historical Commission, said she believed it was important for the community to be able to conceptualize the design of the area and to identify community needs in order to embrace change. She discussed the unique character of the Village community and believed it to have great potential, and noted that most of the businesses in the district are owned by Milton families. She mentioned the charm of the area, the need to “get ahead of the developer,” and proposed historical features, such as gas lights. She said the Historical Commission is considering pursuing the adoption of a local historic district through the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Alexander Whiteside of 79 Hillside St., a member of the Bylaw Review Committee and former Planning Board member, discussed his comments on the zoning language that had been provided to the Board. He proposed an increase in lot size for PUD eligibility, questioned the 50% floor area requirement for business use, asked for a definition of a ground floor, questioned the legality of the height and square footage bonuses, believed the historic preservation and affordable housing guidelines set out by the Secretary of Interior should be implemented, and asked for a definition of historic “elements.” He noted that 2 Adams St. and 2 Elliot St. had not been included on the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) and believed that any building over 75 years old should be included on the inventory. He believed the buildings on High St. should be treated differently than those on Adams St. in regards to square footage, height and business use requirements and that frontage should be required for the sake of measuring height. He believed that the parking provisions were inadequate and that signage guidelines needed to be better defined. Issues with the underling commercial zoning, including parking and affordable housing requirements were discussed. The status of the building to be constructed under specific zoning at 2 Adams St. was considered, and it was agreed that the special permit for the building would need to be amended. Mr. Whiteside noted that the stairs to the MBTA station were closed indefinitely which made access to the area by public transit difficult. He believed that certain off-site parking spaces should be deeded, and mentioned issues with traffic impact mitigation.

The Board discussed two new companion articles provided by Town Counsel to be submitted to the Select Board for consideration for inclusion in the May 2020 Town Meeting warrant; one establishing the Milton Village District Improvement Revolving Fund and one for the Milton Village Historic Preservation Revolving Fund. The Board discussed Mr. Whiteside’s comments and agreed to adjust some of the language involving signs and historic preservation. Existing parking requirements for commercial zones, access to public transportation, how parking affects historic districts and parking demands for certain demographics and business types was discussed. Off-site parking agreement requirements were addressed.

Select Board Co-Chair Melinda Collins discussed plans by the MBTA to redesign the Milton St. station.

On a motion by Ms. O’Donnell, seconded by Ms. Swenson, the Board voted to request that the Select Board reopen the warrant to include the revised language for the overlay zoning and the two additional revolving fund articles.

4. On a motion by Ms. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Boehler, the meeting was adjourned at 9:49 pm.

[Signature]
Denise Swenson, Secretary

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