Meeting of the Planning Board  
Thursday, January 9, 2020

The 13th meeting of the Milton Planning Board for FY2020 was called to order at 6:39 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, Assistant Town Planner Allyson Quinn and Sr. Administrative Clerk Julia Getman.

1. East Milton Square Outreach Update with Judi Barrett

Consultant Judi Barrett of Barrett Planning Group L.L.C. reported on the first public outreach meeting which was held on November 21st to discuss planning options for East Milton Square. She discussed the findings of a visual preference survey, which indicated that residents preferred 2 to 3-story structures in an urban setting. She commented that residents seemed ready to shift the focus from opinion gathering to information analysis, including market assessments, case studies and developers’ needs. Ms. Barrett said she would provide research findings on similar areas with specific calculations and traffic mitigation solutions for the second community outreach meeting, planned for January 29th.

The Board discussed how the technical visual analysis helped the public envision the design and massing of the Village under the overlay and aided in determining district needs. The Beta Group Inc. traffic studies completed for Milton Village and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) build-out analysis from 2019 were noted, as well as strategies for attracting a diversity of businesses to the area. Traffic and parking enforcement challenges were discussed. Parking sharing agreements between businesses and involvement of the Chamber of Commerce in guiding parking solutions were discussed.

Ms. Barrett discussed the need for a working group to steer the public meeting process and the need for a thorough market analysis. She believed that a smaller, more focused group would streamline the planning process, allow the community to “take ownership” of the planning process and serve as an effective asset for larger groups and potential developers. Four working group meetings were to be held amongst three larger public meetings. Budgeting the visuals was considered, with funding to be drawn from both the Planning Board and Master Plan Implementation budgets. On a motion by Ms. Anderson, seconded by Ms. O’Donnell, the Board voted to authorize Mr. Clark to renegotiate Ms. Barrett’s contract to include an additional $20,000 for additional meetings, analysis and visual renderings, 5/0/0.

2. Administrative Items: Upcoming meetings were confirmed for January 23rd and February 13th. Ms. Tougias reported that the Select Board had accepted two zoning articles for the May Town Meeting, one for the Milton Village Mixed-use PUD overlay zoning and an amendment involving affordable housing to the Great Estates PUD zoning. The first public hearing to discuss the articles was scheduled for February 13th. A meeting with the MAPC to discuss a town center municipal district was confirmed for January 15th. On a motion by Ms. Swenson, seconded by Ms. Anderson, the 10/17/19, 11/7/19, 11/21/19, 12/2/19 and 12/5/19 meeting minutes were approved 5/0/0.

3. Citizens Speak: No one spoke.

4. 485-487 Blue Hills Parkway/Ice House 40B Comprehensive Permit Discussion

The Board discussed letter drafted by Ms. O’Donnell to the Select Board on behalf of the Planning Board which addressed Mass Housing’s application for site eligibility for a 56-unit development with 14 affordable units on the former Ice House site. Inaccuracies involving open space calculations, lot coverage, existing conditions, access to amenities and surrounding conservation land were addressed. The
design and massing of the proposed building, setback calculations, the historical significance of the Parkway and the character of surrounding homes were discussed. It was noted that the application did included neither grading plans nor building dimensions, the purchase and sale agreement had not been signed by the seller, the sale prices were inconsistent, the zoning was incorrectly listed as commercial, and the plans did not meet smart growth criteria. The efforts by the community to develop mixed-use zoning for the site in 2017 were considered, and Ms. Touglas mentioned that efforts had been made to meet with the developer, whom she believed may be open to negotiation.

**Public Comment:**

K.D. Schmidt, 62 Churchill St., drew attention to a section of the application listing the development as one that would “reduce or eliminate neighborhood blight,” which the Board agreed was inaccurate. She said the application failed to address access to the surrounding conservation land or protections for delicate ecosystems and habitats. The Board agreed that a paragraph should be added to the letter to address DCR land protections.

Ms. Swenson disclosed that she and Joe Sloane belonged to the same neighborhood coalition.

Joe Sloane, 55 Concord Ave., believed the letter to be effective, as well as those submitted by community members. He mentioned that the developer had submitted a list of application corrections to the Select Board recently that were not available to the public, and asked how these corrections might affect the application process. He questioned whether the application should be resubmitted.

Joe Modugno, 248 Blue Hills Parkway, stated his belief that the density and design of building did not appeal to the public and asked what the rights of the community were in challenging a 40B development.

Ms. Touglas replied that a meeting had taken place with the developer and that a second one was planned, and she believed there was a willingness to work on community concerns. Mr. Modugno asked about encroachment issues involving land filled in by the previous owners. Mr. Clark responded that the Conservation Commission was aware of the issue and discussed Con Comm’s plans to build a walking path around Popes Pond with access from an existing parking area.

It was noted that conditions would be included in an eligibility assessment and that certain Town boards and commissions would provide input.

Mr. Modugno mentioned that the site provides a breeding ground for certain amphibians. Mr. Clark noted that the Department of Conservation and Recreation had no immediate comments on the application.

On a motion by Ms. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Boehler, the Board voted to accept the letter with the adjustments discussed, 5/0/0.

**5. Milton Village Overlay Zoning Discussion**

Ms. Touglas stated that the zoning language voted upon by the Planning Board December 17th had been accepted by the Select Board for inclusion in the warrant and that the Select Board would be willing to reopen the warrant to accept revisions at a later date.

Ms. Touglas introduced Joshua Wild of 11 Horton Place, who recently purchased the building within the Baker Chocolate Factory complex at 1 Adams St. Mr. Wild discussed plans for upgrades to the historic building and praised its architectural features. He said he intended to create a mixed-use, “live, work, play” building that would engage the community and discussed potential businesses it might attract.
The Board discussed a memo from Bylaw Review Committee Member Alexander Whiteside regarding the overlay zoning language with comments included from Ms. O'Donnell and Ms. Tougias. It was noted that the comments had been shared with Town Counsel.

The scope of the overlay and complications and risks involved with site-specific zoning were discussed. Ms. Tougias noted that the existing zoning includes neither affordable units nor design guidelines and allows for larger buildings than what is allowed in the overlay zoning. She believed that designing zoning for each property was “unrealistic” and said that a great deal of thought had been put into the overlay zoning by the Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) and MAPC. Site-specific zoning for the Swift Hat Shop was considered. The topography of the area and how it affects height allowances on Adams and High Streets were discussed, as well as square footage bonuses, massing issues, frontage requirements and adjustments to minimum lot sizes. Pre-existing, non-conforming properties and the role of the Board of Appeals were addressed. It was suggested that all commercial districts be zoned as mixed-use. The Board discussed frontage requirements and the tendency for height adjustments to be made under the Board of Appeals after special permits are approved.

Incentives for historic preservation and the role of the Historical Commission in guiding preservation efforts were considered. The benefits and detriments and process involved in creating a historic district were discussed.

Parking availability, needs, requirements, enforcement and car-per-residence ratios were discussed. The demographics of the area, parking for other housing complexes in the area and parking arrangements agreed upon by business owners were considered.

The Board discussed language on affordable housing provisions, including language ensuring permanent affordability with perpetual deed restrictions and regulatory agreements. Incentives for providing affordable housing were considered. Establishment of a district improvement fund was discussed.

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

Denise Swenson, Secretary