



BOXBOROUGH PLANNING BOARD
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Owen Neville, Chair Eduardo Pontoriero, Clerk Nancy Fillmore John Markiewicz Hongbing Tang

Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2014
7:00 PM
Morse Room, Town Hall, 29 Middle Road

Members present:

Owen Neville, Chair
Nancy Fillmore, Member
John Markiewicz, Member
Hongbing Tang, Member
Adam Duchesneau, Town Planner

Members absent:

Eduardo Pontoriero, Clerk

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Meeting Minutes of December 1, 2014

Mr. Markiewicz MADE a MOTION to approve the minutes of December 1, 2014 as amended.
Ms. Tang SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor.

112 Prescott Road ANR Application

Mr. Duchesneau read an email from Rita Grossman, President of the Boxborough Conservation Trust (BCT), which explained a bit of background regarding the ANR Application. Simon Bunyard, of 1092 Hill Road, was present on behalf of the BCT and property owner David Shurtleff of 112 Prescott Road was also in attendance. Mr. Bunyard indicated they are looking forward to the conveyance of this rear portion of the property to the BCT.

Mr. Neville asked Mr. Duchesneau to explain why this ANR plan was permissible when the property only had 89 feet of frontage on Prescott Road. Mr. Duchesneau indicated the property was awarded a Special Permit to allow for the reduced frontage several years ago and this ANR Application would still be in compliance with that Special Permit because the lot which contains the house would encompass more than 120,000 square feet. David LeRoy of David E. Ross Associates, Inc. was also in attendance and indicated he had created the plan for the ANR Application.

Mr. Markiewicz then MADE a MOTION to endorse the ANR Plan for 112 Prescott Road and to authorize the Planning Board Chair, the Planning Board Clerk, or the Town Planner to sign the plans on behalf of the Planning Board. Ms. Fillmore SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor.

Master Plan Update Status

Manisha Bewtra from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) was in attendance to discuss the status of the Master Plan Update with the Planning Board, as well as to present a recap of the Public Kickoff that was held on November 19, 2014 when the Planning Board joined the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Markiewicz stated that at the first Master Plan Update Committee (MPUC) meeting held on December 9, 2014, almost all of the voting and ex-officio members were in attendance. He indicated the MPUC started with the draft Vision Statement that was provided by MAPC, which were ten bullet points, and began to craft a slightly different Vision Statement which encompassed all of the bullet points' ideas. Mr. Markiewicz gave particular credit to Rita Grossman, President of the BCT, who was also in attendance, for helping to form the basis for a new, concise Vision Statement.

Mr. Markiewicz indicated the new Vision Statement, which would be discussed later that evening with the Board of Selectmen, attempted to encapsulate the viewpoints from the Public Kickoff. He stated that most people wanted a rural community with land conservation, but also noted there was a voice for economic development as well. Mr. Markiewicz noted the MPUC felt the bullet points MAPC had provided were more closely associated with specific elements of the Master Plan and were likely too detailed for the Vision Statement. He indicated the MPUC wanted to make the Vision Statement relatively straight forward and simple. Mr. Markiewicz also stated the MPUC acknowledged that residents want to maintain the community they currently have, but people also desired an economic environment that fits well into the community.

Ms. Tang suggested perhaps using the word "sustainable" in place of the word "balanced" before the words "economic development" in the Vision Statement. Mr. Markiewicz felt the word "sustainable" seemed to indicate things would continue on as they are currently operating. He indicated the word "balanced" gave the economic development portion of the statement more flexibility. Mr. Markiewicz also stated that in looking at the demographics of the community, it was clear that something needs to be done to address future needs. He noted there was some pushback from members on the MPUC about promoting economic development, but everyone seemed agreeable to using the word "balanced" in the Vision Statement. Mr. Markiewicz indicated people want to find a mechanism for getting together as a community and fostering what Boxborough already has to offer. Events such as Fifer's Day, the Harvest Fair, and Town Meeting are occasions that people enjoy, but it would be preferable if the sense of community from these events could be replicated on a more daily basis.

Ms. Bewtra noted MAPC did a lot of listening at the Public Kickoff and then went back and analyzed all of the data they had collected. Ten bullet points were developed as part of the draft Vision Statement they had created after they had filtered all of the information they collected. Mr. Markiewicz reiterated that Boxborough has a very strong sense of community now and the objectives of this Master Plan Update process should be to help foster this sense of community. He also pointed out that the ten bullet points should be reflected in the individual sections of the Master Plan as those are developed.

At 7:31 PM the Planning Board then joined the Board of Selectmen and the Master Plan Update Committee to discuss the Master Plan Vision Statement.

Joint Public Meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Master Plan Update Committee to discuss the Master Plan Vision Statement

Adam Duchesneau, Town Planner, members of the Planning Board, members of the Master Plan Update Committee (MPUC), and MAPC consultant, Manisha Bewtra, were present to report on the Master Plan Public Kickoff & Visioning Forum and to discuss the Master Plan Vision Statement. This kickoff meeting was extremely well attended; between 90-100 residents came. MAPC has compiled the input provided at the Forum and other any communications received by Town Planner Duchesneau. Ms. Bewtra spoke to a prepared presentation. The “raw” data is available on the MPUC’s webpage and they will also be posting tonight’s presentation. The findings were discussed. The consensus seems to be to preserve the Town’s character but be open to careful “balanced” development. It is not surprising that many feel this way; what was interesting is that there was little, if any, concern about whether the tax rate was burdensome. Upon review and much discussion the MPUC has developed the Vision Statement presented tonight. There was discussion as to the MPUC’s process in developing this statement. The Planning Board has endorsed it and the MPUC is now seeking the Selectmen’s endorsement. There was discussion as to the statement’s intent, the wording used, and the brevity of the statement. Member Fox moved to support the Master Plan Vision Statement as presented by the Master Plan Update Committee and further to recommend its adoption by the Planning Board. Seconded by Member Stemple. Approved 5-0.

At 8:05 PM the Planning Board reconvened their meeting in the Morse Room of Town Hall to discuss the remaining items on their agenda.

Mr. Markiewicz MADE a MOTION to approve the Boxborough Vision Statement for the Master Plan as proposed. Ms. Fillmore SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor.

Mr. Markiewicz noted the Planning Board, the MPUC, and MAPC all need to think about the housing situation in the community and the successes and failures of past initiatives as this process moves forward. Ms. Bewtra mentioned MAPC still has District Local Technical Assistance grant funding available which could potentially be used to supplement the Master Plan Update process. This money could be used to allow Ms. Bewtra more time to reach out to each MPUC member individually, or others in the community, to get more information which can be used in the update process. Mr. Markiewicz also suggested that perhaps outreach could be done to the senior population at one of the senior luncheons, perhaps even incorporating the use of technology somehow. He felt it might be a creative way to find out what some of the senior citizen issues are in the community. Ms. Bewtra also noted there is a strong desire from some people to stay in the community but they simply cannot afford the housing costs (ex. Police and Firemen).

Discussion Regarding Potential Zoning Bylaw Amendments

The Planning Board then continued their conversation about possible proposed Zoning Bylaw amendments for the 2015 Town Meeting. Mr. Neville asked Mr. Duchesneau to highlight some of the key amendments that were being proposed.

Mr. Duchesneau began by discussing the proposed change to the definition of “Accessory Structure” to “Accessory Building”. He then discussed the proposed amendment to put a height limitation on certain structures that would be considered landscape features. Certain items that exceeded a particular height would still be permitted, but they would only be permitted as

structures and would have to adhere to half of the setback requirements for the zoning district per Section 5006 of the Zoning Bylaw. Mr. Neville asked Mr. Duchesneau to obtain some written feedback from the Building Inspector on this topic of limiting the height of certain landscape features.

Mr. Duchesneau then discussed the proposed new use category of "Building Trade" which would include plumbers, carpenters, electricians, and the like. He noted that this use category would only include uses which occupied a property solely as commercial enterprises with no residential component. The Planning Board felt this particular use category, should they decide to propose it to Town Meeting, should only be allowed in the Business, Business-1, and Industrial-Commercial zoning districts. There was also discussion about potentially allowing the Bed and Breakfast use category by Special Permit in the Agricultural-Residential and Residential-1 zoning district. This use is currently only allowed by Special Permit in the Town Center zoning district. Mr. Markiewicz indicated this might be one good way to allow some older residents to remain in town.

Mr. Duchesneau also noted his proposal to reduce the minimum parking space size to 9 feet wide by 18 feet long. Some of the Planning Board members felt that maintaining the current minimum parking space size of 10 feet wide by 20 feet long would help allow for larger vehicles to park more easily. Mr. Markiewicz asked Mr. Duchesneau to think about ways to encourage developers to include more pervious pavers in their parking areas. It was then determined that the proposed amendments to the Signage Section of the Zoning Bylaw should be discussed at the Board's next meeting in January because the changes were so numerous. The Planning Board wanted additional time to think over all of these proposed amendments and Mr. Neville asked that this Proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendment topic be included on the Board's next meeting agenda.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:56 PM on a MOTION by Mr. Markiewicz, SECONDED by Ms. Tang, with all members voting in favor.

On Behalf of the Boxborough Planning Board



Eduardo Pontoriero, Clerk