

PLANNING BOARD

TOWN OF GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
14 Court Square, Greenfield, MA 01301

413-772-1548
413-772-1309 (fax)



GREENFIELD PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of May 21, 2009

Greenfield Police Station

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. with the following members:

PRESENT: Roxann Wedegartner, Chair; Mary Newton, Clerk; Jim Allen; Clayton Sibley and alternate Tracey Sutphin.

Also in attendance: Tom McLellan, ZBA; Eric Twarog, Senior Planner/GIS Coordinator; Alternate Tim Gorts, and Jeff Terrell from WHAI.

ABSENT: Linda Smith, Vice-Chair

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Moved by Sibley, seconded by Allen and voted 4:0 to approve the meeting minutes from May 7, 2009.

Wedegartner announced Alternate Tracey Sutphin as a voting member for this evening's meeting in place of Linda Smith. Wedegartner asked McLellan about the appointment of the Planning Board's second alternate Tim Gorts. McLellan stated that he was appointed. It was pointed out that Mr. Gorts has not yet been sworn in.

Public Hearings

7:30 p.m. – Proposed Zoning Amendments – Public Hearing Continued From May 7, 2009

Wedegartner asked McLellan about the Economic Development Committee (EDC) public hearing on the proposed zoning amendments. McLellan stated that the EDC did close their public hearing and will be forwarding suggestions to the Planning Board relative to the proposed amendments. McLellan stated that his primary issue with the proposed amendments is with the proposed definitions under Amendment #1 because he believes that they are either unnecessary or go against common sense. McLellan used the proposed definition of a "gas station" and BJ's as an example of what he is concerned about. McLellan stated that using the proposed definition of a "gas station" today would have allowed BJ's to also have a gas station as part of its development. McLellan also used "taxi-dispatch" as an example. McLellan mentioned that Dan Guin of the EDC had concerns about some of the other proposed definitions and that the 27 proposed zoning amendments should be handled as separate amendments. Guin also stated at the EDC public hearing that further vetting of the proposed amendments by town departments should occur. Wedegartner stated to McLellan that the Board is looking for a memo from the EDC with recommendations on the 27 proposed amendments. Twarog clarified that the 27 proposed zoning amendments are 27 separate amendments to be voted on separately. Sutphin asked for clarification on the process and timing for proposed zoning amendments which Wedegartner explained to her. McLellan handed a document to the Board on his recommendations on the proposed amendments and asked that it be made a part of the official record. The Board discussed its options relative to the proposed amendments. McLellan stated that the Town Council members do not have much experience in zoning matters and rely heavily on the recommendations of the Planning Department, Planning Board and EDC. Wedegartner opened up the public hearing to public comment. No public comment.

MOTION: Moved by Sibley, seconded by Allen and voted 5:0 to close the public hearing at 7:35 p.m.

Wedegartner opened the meeting up to Board deliberation. Allen asked if McLellan's letter has any more weight than other public comment since he is a member of both the ZBA and Town Council. Newton inquired as to what made the EDC believe that 27 proposed zoning amendments need to be dealt with as one package and not as separate amendments. Wedegartner read the memo from the Planning Board to the Town Council dated February 20, 2009. Allen stated that he did not hear anything in the memo to indicate that the proposed amendments are to be treated as one block of amendments. The Board discussed whether to get a legal opinion on whether the proposed amendments need to be considered as one block or separately. The Board reached consensus to get a legal opinion on the matter and to use the 21 days after the closing of the public hearing to determine the next step. The Board determined that the June 4, 2009 Planning Board meeting will be used to forward a recommendation to the Town Council.

Discussion Items

Master Plan

Wedegartner discussed the master plan relative to a new comprehensive plan with the Board and stated that she had invited Nancy Hazard of the Greening of Greenfield Committee to tonight's meeting to discuss possible funding sources. Wedegartner stated that she would like to bring up this issue again after a new mayor is elected. Twarog made the following points relative to a new master plan: 1) the Board should wait until the state legislature acts on the proposed Land Use Partnership Act (LUPA) because it has many implications relative to master planning and zoning, 2) the Board should wait until the 2010 decennial census has been completed so that the new statistics could be used for the new master plan, and 3) the existing master plan update is almost 9 years old and the background data for the update is from 1974 which is an update from the original 1969 master plan. Nancy Hazard asked about the time frame for master plans under LUPA. Twarog confirmed that it is 10 years. Nancy Hazard mentioned AIA's grant funding for master planning which isn't a lot but enough to get started. She mentioned that the City of Northampton used this funding for their sustainability plan. The Town of Orange was also awarded a grant under this program. The program is a nationally competitive program so grant awards are most likely distributed geographically. She stated that the application is due sometime in November. Wedegartner stated that the Board should wait until July for an official discussion on this.

Wedegartner asked Tom McLellan to e-mail her his comments on the 27 proposed zoning amendments so that she can distribute it to the Board members.

Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Sibley seconded by Newton, and voted 5:0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Twarog, AICP
Senior Planner/GIS Coordinator