

# PLANNING BOARD



19 WASHINGTON STREET  
SHERBORN, MASSACHUSETTS 01770

## MINUTES

March 7, 2012

**Members present:** Chairman John Higley, John Stevens, Eric Johnson, Robin Perera, Associate Grace Shepard, Town Planner Gino Carlucci

**Others present:** John Edgar

The meeting came to order at 7:06 p.m. in Sherborn Town Hall, Room 204B.

### APPOINTMENT WITH JOHN EDGAR

John Edgar was invited to discuss his experience with the town of Needham. He owned businesses and property in Needham and previously served as the Chair of Needham's Economic Development Committee and President of the Needham Business Association. John Edgar discussed various planning and zoning issues that the town has worked through, including signage, store front upgrades, plowing, and restaurant licenses. John Edgar discussed that the town hired a consultant to assist with planning and the permitting process.

There had been very few changes during the previous 50 years and the town citizens were concerned with preserving the Town Hall and the village atmosphere of the town. By-right always existed, but was very stringent. Needham was re-zoned with the assistance of the "Smart Growth" state program. Recent zoning changes included use code and building height. In 2008-2009, the zoning changes were approved and projects were started. John Edgar stated that the height of the buildings was the most important change and now 3-story buildings are allowed. There was further discussion about Needham being a service community and not a retail center like Wellesley, which is due to the restrictive zoning of the old buildings in the town center. The Industrial Center has been re-zoned and a plan to build a Residence Inn and an 800,000 square foot office space is underway. John Edgar explained that the tax base in Needham had a strained ratio between residential and commercial prior to this change. The citizens were open to the changes once they were proposed. The zoning changes resulted in Needham being zoned almost identically to how it was zoned in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Robin Perera noted that there are many of the same types of businesses in Needham, e.g. dry cleaners, and that this may not be the best outcome of planning. John Edgar felt that the goal of planning is to create the appropriate regulations and environment to invite business to come, not to regulate which businesses are in a town. John Higley inquired whether the changes created

recent success and John Edgar said they did with two new buildings and the office park in development. Grace Shepard and Robin Perera noted that downtowns are drying up because of malls, leaving small specialty stores obsolete (such as the camera shop). Several members agreed that the infrastructure in Sherborn needs to change (water and sewer to the town center) in order to have more businesses in town. There was general discussion about preserving the look of Sherborn while adding the benefit of additional businesses to lower the tax rate. Eric Johnson pointed out that when Proposition 2.5 was passed it made towns stagnant, and caused greater polarization between communities of varying demographics. For example, an affluent town like Wellesley will regularly pass overrides; however, less affluent communities are less likely to do so. Split tax makes a huge impact on towns when businesses fail. Wellesley solves this problem by having overrides, but other towns don't. John Edgar added that Needham did not have debt before Proposition 2.5 passed. John Edgar also stated that businesses are looking to come into suburbs that are located near highways because the office space in Boston is getting filled up.

### **198 SOUTH MAIN** (*Reference Document #1*)

Gino Carlucci explained that this property is currently two lots. The owner says he cannot build as is because of zoning requirements. The owner wants to combine the lots and sell the property. He would like to buy a smaller house or buildable lot in town. There are 6.4 acres in total with 150' of frontage. The lot in the back is large and could attract a developer to build 2-3 homes. John Higley motioned to endorse the plan combining the lots and all members were in favor.

### **TOWN CENTER REPORT**

John Higley and Gino Carlucci met with a member of the Levitation Committee. The Committee member suggested that the market will demand an independent living elderly home and that might be a good addition to Sherborn. John Higley noted how the town of Milford changed the age restriction to finish the Rail Trail development. John Higley also met with Steve Gaskin from the Conservation Commission about the master planning process and affected wetlands.

### **WARRANT ARTICLES** (*Reference Document #2*)

Members discussed whether to take out "noncriminal" from the penalty provisions. Town Counsel advised that it stay in. John Higley stated that it is the Board of Selectmen's intent and can be discussed at Town Meeting if necessary. Eric Johnson was concerned about ambiguity between referencing a first, second, and third offense and listing each day as a separate offense. A Planning Board member can go before the Selectmen on March 8<sup>th</sup> to discuss. John Higley noted that amendments can always be made after it passes.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

John Higley suggested a field trip to Norfolk to view the changes to its center. The trip was planned for 4/18 at 5pm.

Gino Carlucci will be attending a planning conference from 4/10-4/18.

### **MINUTES**

**Minutes from the 2/8 meeting:** John Higley suggested that names of guests not be included in the official minutes and asked the Board members their opinion on the matter. Eric Johnson and Robin Perera agreed that in some cases that might be appropriate. John Stevens thought that all meetings should be treated the same, therefore including the names when comments are noted.

Eric Johnson was concerned about the factual accuracy when comments are attributed to a guest, because the guest does not have the opportunity to review them before they are officially published. Robin Perera suggested that resident names not be mentioned, but in the case where people are invited to the meeting to speak, their names should be mentioned. Grace Shepard and Eric Johnson noted that content and facts are most important to preserve in the minutes. Eric Johnson said people should be reminded at the beginning of the meeting that it is a public meeting and comments may be attributed. Gino Carlucci stated that generally names are included. The Board members discussed coming up with an official policy in the future. The Board decided to keep the draft minutes filed as meeting notes and to ask Gino Carlucci to redraft the official minutes without the names.

As for content, Eric Johnson suggested the comment he made during the meeting that the water cost would most likely be less than \$1M, not the \$2M that was referenced, be added to the minutes. He stated that he had made this correction in the cost at the meeting and it was due to a second well test that indicated that iron removal would not be necessary. John Higley suggested that a comment attributed to "BB" was probably "Dusty Burke," as that was most likely a mistake in his notes.

**Minutes from the 2/22 meeting:** Absent members should be listed as such. Eric Johnson and John Stevens suggested 2-3 minor changes to clarify their comments.

The minutes from were approved as amended by John Stevens and seconded by Eric Johnson. Grace Shepard and John Higley abstained because neither was in attendance on 2/22.

The next meeting of the Planning Board will be March 21, 2012.

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Pettit

Clerk

## **DOCUMENTS REFERENCED DURING THE MEETING**

1. Plan of 198 South Main Street
2. Warrant Articles