

PLANNING BOARD



19 WASHINGTON STREET
SHERBORN, MASSACHUSETTS 01770

MINUTES

May 23, 2012

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

The Planning Board conducted a site visit of downtown Sherborn from 7:00pm – 8:30 p.m. The meeting began at 8:30 p.m. in Sherborn Town Hall, Room 204A.

SITE VISIT

All members of the Planning Board conducted a walking site visit throughout the downtown area. The walk started at the Town Hall, turned right onto Route 27, continued through Leland Farms and onto the wooded path to 11 South Main Street (the location of the Sherborn Sandwich & Pizza Company). The Planning Board surveyed the parking lots, the entrances and exits to South Main Street, and the path between the Citgo and 11 South Main. The site visit then continued back through Leland Farms, through Woodhaven, across the railroad tracks, and up to the fire station. The walk continued across to 41 North Main Street, then behind the post office and Walgreens, and back to the Town Hall. The Planning Board took note of the sidewalks and possible routes in and around the buildings in the downtown.

Upon returning to the Town Hall, the meeting commenced at 8:30 p.m. with a review of the site visit.

The members of the Board agreed that sidewalks in the downtown area are very important. Sidewalks are needed on both sides of road, which will entail constructing new sidewalks and repairing existing sidewalks. Charles Yon and Robin Perera commented that the condition of the existing sidewalk is poor, particularly since there is not one in front of Rose's Automotive and continuing toward the stoplight. Eric Johnson was concerned that that part of the existing sidewalk may not even be up to code, stating that a smooth and clear right of way sidewalk would be the best improvement to the existing sidewalk.

The Board members felt that an off-road path around the center would be a nice addition. This would include an interconnected path from Citgo to Leland Farms, Leland Farms to Woodhaven, Woodhaven to the railroad crossing, ending at the tennis courts or Main Street. It would be ideal

to also create a connection from the rear of the Sherborn Inn, behind the insurance agency, to the rear of Walgreens. John Stevens stated that meandering off Route 27 would be nice to promote those attractive areas and to keep people away from the high traffic.

Robin Perera agreed with John Stevens and felt that the “walk score” of Sherborn needs to be improved. Right now it is very low. Robin Perera added that, in addition to improving existing features, more needs to be done to create new and exciting aspects to the town, like an off-road path. Hopefully this project could be accomplished with minimum resources. It would be a good town project for the Eagle Scouts, Sherborn Forest & Trails, or high school students to complete as a community project.

However, there are multiple issues that would need to be worked out before installing an off-road path. First, Woodhaven and other property owners would need to consent. Also, a path across the wetlands and railroad tracks would need approval and have restrictions.

John Stevens pointed out that a Route 27 bypass may also be needed, which would require approval from the state, and may not be realistic. Eric Johnson stated that the largest barriers to the changes are property rights and the railroad. He further pointed out that there are standards for handicap accessible trails which would need to be met.

There was a review of the Northeastern study. In the study, a proposal was made to make a one way loop and eliminate Sanger Street. Eric Johnson stated that if that were done, parking could be added for the library expansion on the town property adjacent to Sanger Street. That should assist with traffic, particularly in the morning. Gino Carlucci added that additional parking near the railroad tracks would be helpful. The Board members agreed that they will plan another site walk to look at that area.

Robin Perera discussed a lecture she attended given by Mark Fenton. Fenton spoke of “free range kids.” The idea is to have kids walking and playing outside as children did years ago before society became so reliant on cars and unnecessarily worried about safety. Fenton said that many towns are no less safe then they were fifty years ago. “Free range kids” requires an alternative to driving, which zoning needs to encourage. Towns should design for walking and activity, not for cars, which means that the town’s public health is directly linked with its downtown. Fenton said that in order to achieve this goal, a town needs a variety of ways to arrive downtown, commuting facilities, to be functional and inviting, and to be safe and accessible.

Grace Shepard stated that there are two general plans for the Planning Board to work on; the immediate, such as the existing sidewalk in the right of way, and the overall scheme. The Planning Board has to create a map for next 50 years. Grace Shepard also noted that consolidating parking areas would create walkability between existing parking areas, which would require negotiation with the owners. Charles Yon recommended coming up with a plan

that benefits the business owners, then approaching them. This would require defining the connectivity that the Planning Board envisions and providing a visual illustration.

Gino Carlucci stated that the Traffic Mitigation Committee had some information that may be helpful to the Planning Board. It is also a good idea to look at the archives and eventually work with a consultant to consider options. John Higley suggested that the Board break up into teams to look at big picture ideas; traffic mitigation, current traffic safety, and documenting ideas from the site walk.

John Higley summarized the overall goals that the Planning Board discussed in previous meetings: (a) improving the town center with new and existing businesses; (b) improving town aesthetics, and (c) increasing tax revenue. These goals can be met in part by focusing on improving/adding sidewalks within the right of way, creating an off-road path for safety and visibility of other parts of Sherborn, utilizing the back areas from 41 North Main Street to the properties at 19 North Main Street (improving traffic and eliminating curb cuts), and improving the south section of the Sanger Street area.

The Planning Board determined various *action items*:

- John Stevens suggested building a ramp behind the 19 North Main Street building to connect the parking lots.
- Eric Johnson suggested drafting all ideas into the master plan.
- Robin Perera suggested creating a path/entrance on Sawin on the Town property connecting the buildings in the Town Campus with the neighborhood around Ivy Lane.
- John Higley suggesting working on improving the existing sidewalks and adding pieces/islands near Rose's Automotive and the fire station. This would include a sidewalk past the Peace Abbey along the east side of South Main Street. An off-road path is another option to explore.
- John Higley suggested defining what changes to zoning would be required to set the master plan in motion (perhaps similar zoning as Medway and Norfolk requiring connections between abutting commercial properties).
- All members agreed that the PUD needs to be revised to be more business-friendly. Reaching out to the other town committees and creating a sub-committee will be very helpful. John Stevens pointed out that getting the stakeholders involved is key. They can be approached with the Planning Board's preferred plan first, then concessions can be made if necessary. The plan needs to be visual so it is clear when shown to people.

TOWN CENTER REPORT

In light of time constraints, Grace Shepard moved to defer discussion of the Town Center Report until the next meeting. Charles Yon seconded the motion and all members were in favor.

WARRANT ARTICLES

In light of time constraints, Grace Shepard moved to defer discussion of the Warrant Articles until the next meeting. Charles Yon seconded the motion and all members were in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS

Gino Carlucci reported that the ESCO contract is moving along and a report is due to the town within the next couple of weeks.

There is an MAPC meeting on June 6th about regional solicitation of solar developments. The Sherborn landfill will be included. There is also a SWAP meeting on June 4th at Dean College. There will be a speaker lecturing on conservation subdivision design. Members of the Planning Board plan to attend both meetings if possible.

Gino Carlucci reported that the state has paid for a consulting firm to redo the assessor's maps in GIS format.

Gino Carlucci reported that ADESA has applied for renewal of its permit. There is a hearing scheduled for the June 13th Planning Board meeting.

Gino Carlucci reported that 28 North Main Street was granted approval by the Board of Health to convert a building on the site into a residence. The owners have also applied to the ZBA.

MINUTES

The May 9th Minutes were reviewed. John Stevens moved to pass as amended. Charles Yon seconded the motion and it was passed by all voting members. Grace Shepard and Eric Johnson abstained from voting as they were not in attendance on May 9th.

The next meeting of the Planning Board will be June 13, 2012.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Pettit

Clerk