

Present: William J. Keller, Jr. (Chairman), Lisa Eggleston, Christopher Morely,
Michael Hunter, Michael Fee, Eric Poch (Associate),
Jody Kablack (Planner)

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 p.m.

Board Reorganization

Board Reorganization has been rescheduled until the close of Town Meeting.

Brooks Pharmacy; Variance Application – Recommendations to Zoning Board of Appeals

The applicant has postponed meeting with the Planning Board until they have had more time to submit the required materials.

The Town Planner spoke with the Board regarding an increase in the amount of prohibited use variances being requested in Zone II. In addition to the Brooks Pharmacy application which proposes a 1 hour photo lab there have been the following inquiries for variances involving Water Resource Special Permits:

- Hercules Dry Cleaners is researching installation of a closed system dry cleaner
- Sullivan Tire has inquired about a car wash

Additionally, attempts are being made by the Mobil Station on the corner of Route 20 and Nobscot Road to sell their property to the Jewelry Exchange who in turn would apply for a special permit to allow parking in the front of the property. The Zoning Board has asked the Planning Board for its opinion on the parking situation. The Planning Board has not had sufficient time to review the application. The Board will advise the Zoning Board to postpone the hearing.

If a variance is issued, it is no longer a special permit use and the Planning Board is unable to be involved.

Lisa Eggleston: We need to get the Zoning Board more involved with the Planning Board.

Jody Kablack: There has been a recent Water Resource Special Permit application submitted by Kearney Automotive on 80 Union Ave. The Planning Board has just become involved in this application but it has already been to the Zoning Board, a Site Plan has been submitted, and an Order of Conditions has been issued. The applicant is proposing an 8,000 square foot addition, they will tear-up 8,000 square feet of pavement. The Building Inspector is also cautious about this proposal.

They are submitting the proposal in two phases:

Phase I: They will build the actual building, re-pave and do stormwater management.

Phase II: The 8,000 square foot addition.

The bylaws need much revision; the Zoning Board should not be the first source for the applicant.

Lisa Eggleston: We should submit paperwork for the Planning Board's Water Resources regulations after reviewing them with regard to covering special use variances. Once that happens, we should have power over adherence.

Jody Kablack: The drainage requirements and detention basin criteria will need revision.

Lisa Eggleston suggested distributing copies of the regulations for the Board to review and critique.

Jody Kablack: Would like to get the Zoning Board involved with the Planning Board's regulations.

Bill Keller: If the Board does not see an application as a hardship case, a requirement to obtain a variance, then the applicant should come before the Planning Board.

Mike Fee: May be helpful to verse the Zoning Board on the Water Resources Special Permit Regulations and the general intent of the bylaw for Special Permits. This would allow them to do a similar review the Planning Board would otherwise do.

Jody Kablack: Could part of the variance requirements be to get a special permit?

Mike Fee: We cannot require them to go before another Board.

Mike Hunter: Can the Zoning Board put conditions on variances?

Eric Poch: A variance is specific, clear cut.

Mike Fee: The Planning Board should express concerns to the Zoning Board with the recent trend of applicants shirking the Water Resources bylaw.

Bill Keller: We should encourage the Zoning Board to send applicants to us prior to their hearing with the applicant.

Mike Hunter entertained the possibility of the Zoning Board putting a section on their application or verbally encouraging applicants to come before the Planning Board when Water Resource areas are involved.

Jody Kablack: With regard to the application for 80 Union Ave., the Planning Board will need more time to review; the applicant should either meet with the Board or get an extension in order for the Zoning Board to get the Planning Board's input.

Bill Keller directed the Town Planner to draft a memo to the Chairman of the Zoning Board, Pat Delaney, with the Planning Board's suggestions. He will then discuss the memo with Mr. Delaney.

2003 Annual Town Meeting

Article 49: Signs

Jody Kablack reviewed the input received right after Town Meeting with ideas for the reconsideration of Article 49. Included in the suggestions was the idea of separating the items; neon signs as one and self-illuminated as another.

Lisa Eggleston suggested not showing existing signs which are not in compliance.

Mike Hunter: May want to show a list of alternatives to the proposal which are permitted and are not favorably received. An opposing point brought up at Town Meeting was that people in Town already know where shops are. Statistically, there are approximately 6,000 houses of which 1,000 are sold to new owners each year which demonstrates not all residents are familiar with local businesses.

Mike Fee: Believes the most compelling argument the Board could present is that the Town's business owners have been pushing to be more visible. The business owners pay much higher taxes than residential owners and typically have no children in the school system. If their businesses fail, it's a huge tax loss for residents.

Bill Keller: We will need to have business owners speak in support of the Article.

Lisa Eggleston: Separate examples of what is used and what is allowed and the minor changes presented in the Article.

Jody Kablack: The business owners did not have the opportunity to speak and therefore the motion to reconsider the Article.

Lisa Eggleston: The fundamental misconceptions regarding traffic and safety should be clarified.

Mike Fee: The Board may want to propose an amendment to take Neon out.

Lisa Eggleston: It would be very effective to get the Finance Committee on board.

Bill Keller: There is no need to get too complicated; emphasize the help this Article provides to local businesses.

Lisa Eggleston: In addition, we should emphasize this Article is in sync with the Master Plan and Downtown Visioning.

Jody Kablack suggested the Board submit a letter to the editor. The Town Planner was instructed to draft the letter.

Article 54: Senior Tax Relief

The Board will not further address Article 54.

Minutes to Approve:

On motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To approve the Planning Board minutes of 3/5/03, 3/19/03, 4/7/03 and 4/8/03.

Miscellaneous:

Appointments:

On motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To appoint Christopher Morely as Planning Board Representative to the Land Use Priorities Committee for a term of 3 years.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To appoint June Allen as Planning Board Representative to the Permanent Landscape Committee for a term of 3 years.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To appoint Daniel Martin as Planning Board Representative to the Design Review Board for a term of 3 years.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To appoint Patricia Windle as Planning Board Representative to the Design Review Board for a term of 3 years.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To appoint Abner Salant as Planning Board Representative to the Metrowest Growth Management Committee for a term of 3 years.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To appoint Craig Blake as Planning Board Representative to the Permanent Building Committee for a term of 3 years.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To appoint Michael Fee as Planning Board Representative to the Community Housing Committee for a term of 3 years.

Coalition for Zoning Reform

Mike Fee informed the Board the Massachusetts Bar Association will be endorsing the Zoning Reform; it is universally thought of as a good idea.

Jody Kablack opined the Board should join on in support of the group.

The Board agreed to join the Coalition and instructed the Town Planner to send their support.

New England Rain Barrel Program

The Town Manager asked the Board to review material submitted by the New England Rain Barrel Company asking the Town to participate in its municipal program, whereby the Town would help promote the sale of rain barrels for water conservation purposes. Lisa Eggleston feels this would be a good program for Phase II Stormwater Management; worthwhile project.

The Town Planner will provide input to the Town Manager.

Ledgewood II

The Town Planner updated the Board of the status of the Ledgewood II subdivision. No further progress has been made; the developer has blocked off the road. The neighbors are in a difficult situation. The Planner suggests the Board consider taking the bond to complete the work. The Board will ask Bill Place to provide an estimate to complete the work prior to proceeding.

Goodnow Road Stonewall

The Town Planner was advised to look at the stonewall that has been rebuilt on the corner of Goodnow and Hudson and investigate who is responsible.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.