

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD MINUTES

October 5, 2009 City Hall, Planning and Development Department Rm 209, 7:30 p.m.
1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Full Members Present:

Tabetha McCartney, Chair
Joyce Moss, Vice Chair
David Banash
Leslie Burg
Doug Sweet
Scott Wolf

Staff Present:

Mike Kruse, Director of Planning and Development
Kathleen Cahill, Community Development Senior Planner

Public:

Michael Lepie, Resident

T. McCartney, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

Planning Board [7:30]

1. Action Item: Consider nominations and vote on a representative from the Planning and Development Board for the Community Preservation Committee.

D. Banash nominated L. Burg to represent the Planning and Development Board on the Community Preservation Committee. D. Sweet seconded the motion. J. Moss, who previously held the position, will be resigning. L. Burg was an observer for the League of Women Voters at the CPC meetings. She also reviewed CPA applications and made funding recommendations to the CPC on behalf of the League of Women Voters. The Board voted unanimously (5-0-0) to approve L. Burg to represent the Planning and Development Board on the Community Preservation Committee. J. Moss joined the Board after this vote was taken.

Board of Survey [7:45]

2. Action Item: Cornerstone Development Corp. (Mr. Tom Southworth) requesting a discussion of another one-year extension for the final completion of the construction of Kessler Way.

See Board of Survey minutes submitted by Lou Taverna, City Engineer, Clerk of the Board of Survey. [J. Moss and L. Burg left the meeting to attend another City meeting after this agenda item.]

Community Development Board [8:00]

3. Action Item: Approve the minutes of the September 14, 2009 meeting of the Planning and Development Board acting as the Community Development Board.

On request of T. McCartney for a motion to approve the minutes, D. Banash so moved. D. Sweet seconded the motion. The Board voted 4-0-0 to approve the minutes.

Planning Board [8:05]

Michael Lepie, a Newton resident, requested to submit a note to the Board. T. McCartney accepted the note and stated that Mr. Lepie would be allowed to speak on any relevant agenda items. Mr. Lepie is unsatisfied with the Board's response to his latest letter and would like answers to the questions that were contained in his letter.

D. Banash wondered, as a point of order, to which agenda item Mr. Lepie was directing his comments. Mr. Lepie said that his comments were not related to any agenda item. T. McCartney stated that the Planning Board has previously discussed and made a decision on the CAN-DO item that Mr. Lepie continues to question. This item is closed for discussion and comment.

4. Home Business Ordinance: Discharge of the Home Business Sub-Committee.

D. Sweet made a motion to discharge the Home Business Ordinance Sub-Committee, S. Wolf seconded the motion and the Board voted 4-0-0 to discharge the sub-committee.

5. Discussion: Discuss creating a Scenic Road Ordinance Sub-Committee.

T. McCartney reminded Board members that the Board has the opportunity to create regulations protecting scenic roads. Although there were past discussions amongst the Board about creating a Scenic Road Sub-committee, the focus became the Home Business Ordinance and Board of Survey traffic regulations within a subdivision.

The Board discussed the status of work on the traffic regulations. S. Wolf has previously met with staff from traffic and engineering and discussed broad language in the Board of Survey regulations. These staff members believe that the Board should focus on numerical counts and incorporating traffic studies instead of levels of service. This Traffic Regulation Sub-committee may evaluate linking traffic impact to the roadway designations that have been established in the City's Comprehensive Plan. The sub-committee will consider how far the traffic impact of a subdivision should be measured (e.g. abutting roads or all connecting roads).

D. Banash and S. Wolf would like some staff assistance with this task. It was agreed that it would be most appropriate for engineering staff to work with the sub-committee. If there was a need, M. Kruse could arrange a meeting between S. Wolf and David Koses, the Transportation Planner.

D. Sweet asked if this traffic regulation would only apply to new subdivisions. S. Wolf responded that the traffic regulations would apply to new or recently combined subdivisions. The Planning and Development Board's work could potentially provide a format to the Board of Aldermen to change a related ordinance in which special permits for developments effect traffic on roadways.

The initial idea to look at these traffic regulations came up with the redevelopment of the Omni Shopping Center on Route 9. The Planning and Development Board requested and received information from the Planning Department on the number of large acreage parcels that could potentially come up for redevelopment in the City. A revision of the traffic regulations under the Board of Survey would give the regulations more teeth with which to review these large developments. S. Wolf will be generating a list of questions to jump start the sub-committee's work.

[L. Burg returned to the Board meeting at this point.] There are seventeen scenic roads in Newton that were established by the Board of Aldermen. The Planning Board has the jurisdiction to create regulations governing these roads, but the creation of an ordinance would need to go through the Board of Aldermen. L. Burg has reviewed a sampling of regulations in other communities. The regulations primarily deal with the removal of trees and stone walls, with slight differences. Scenic road regulations may become particularly important when the Riverside train station is redeveloped. This parcel abuts Grove Street, one of the seventeen scenic roads. L. Burg will chair the sub-committee on scenic roads. M. Lepie was provided with a map of the scenic roads in Newton in response to his request to see something on the scenic roads. M. Lepie also asked why there are only seventeen scenic roads. L. Burg explained that although the City currently has seventeen scenic roads, additional roads can be designated as scenic, in the future.

The sub-committee will be comprised of L. Burg, T. McCartney, and D. Sweet with staff support from Eve Tapper, the Chief Zoning Code Official. D. Banash will be a "casual member." D. Sweet moved that the Board should form a sub-committee on scenic roads, L. Burg seconded this motion and the Board voted 5-0-0 to approve the Scenic Roads Sub-Committee.

S. Wolf made a motion to adjourn, D. Sweet seconded the motion and the Board voted 5-0-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Yuhasz
Secretary