

**FINAL APPROVED** Regular Session Minutes--

**BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD**  
**Regular Session Minutes**  
**Town Hall—Selectmen’s Meeting Room**  
**January 28, 2014**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeffrey Cohen, Chair; Shawn Hanegan, Clerk; Sandra Hackman; Amy Lloyd and Lisa Mustapich

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Garber, Planning Director; Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner; and Cathy Silvestrone, Planning A.A.

STAFF ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: See Attached

**Emergency Evacuation notice** read by Shawn Hanegan

*Note: All submittals are available for review in the Planning Office.*

Chair Cohen convened the meeting at 7:30 PM

**BUSINESS SESSION**

1) Zoning Bylaw Change for Annual Town Meeting: Flood Plain Boundary Changes—

Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, reported that, as agreed at the last meeting, she has worked with Department of Public Works engineers and a Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinator to craft language that would amend the Zoning Bylaw concerning flood plains, for the Annual Town Meeting, and forwarded it to the Town Manager for the Warrant. Ms. Perry explained that the proposed language change is to incorporate the revised Flood Insurance Rate Maps and the related Flood Insurance Study prepared by FEMA, thus altering the boundaries of the Flood Plain District. The map panels that are being replaced encompass the Concord River flood plain. FEMA’s coordinator has agreed that no changes are needed to the wording of the regulations that apply within the district. As it is the role of the Planning Board to hold a Public Hearing for a Zoning Bylaw Amendment, Planning staff will advertise a February 25, 2014 Public Hearing in the Bedford Minuteman newspaper on February 6 and February 13.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SESSION**

2) Public Outreach: Post-Comprehensive Plan Commentary (all plan elements)—

During the Comprehensive Plan (CP) Public Comment period, the following individuals submitted written comments: (details of these comments, plus a summary prepared by Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, will be included in Volume 3 of the CP as explained in the next paragraph)

- Sue Baldaulf, Director of Youth and Family Services-December 19, 2013
- Diane Bujalski, Resident-December 29, 2013
- David Sukoff , ORASC (Open Recreation Available Space Committee)-January 2, 2014
- Bob Dorer, Chair, Transportation Advisory Committee-January 11, 2014
- Frances Bigda-Peyton, Transition Town Bedford-January 14, 2014
- Bea Brunkhorst, Co-Chair Board of Health-January 15, 2014
- John Stella, Resident-January 15, 2014

- Carla Olsen, Healthy Bedford-January 16, 2014
- Michael Barbehenn, Chair, Trails Committee-January 17, 2014
- Matt Heid, Resident-January 17, 2014
- Carol Campbell Amick, Chair Volunteer Coordinating Committee-January 17, 2014
- William Moonan, Resident/Selectman-January 20, 2014

Board members agreed that overall the Comprehensive Plan (CP) thus far has been well-received. Chair Cohen announced that the Board is in its final stage of collecting public comment prior to adoption of the CP. Chair Cohen reported that over the past couple of years, the Board has interviewed and met with several town boards, committees, staff, held two public workshops, and hosted many joint work sessions with the CP Ad Hoc Advisory Committee when creating the CP. The final plan will consist of three volumes: **Volume 1:** The Bedford We Want: Shaping Our Future, CP—December 2013; **Volume 2:** The Bedford We Want: Shaping Our Future, CP Appendices—December 2013; and **Volume 3:** CP, Collection of Comments—January 2014. Volume 3 will consist of all written comments and responses to those comments, and minutes from two post-CP commentary discussions—this evening being the first and February 11 the second. Mr. Cohen further reported that the Board is targeting its February 25 meeting to adopt all three volumes of the CP, and once adoption takes place, the CP will be used as a tool to begin implementation. Mr. Cohen said time will be provided on future Planning Agendas to further discuss implementation of the CP, and that the public is always welcome to attend.

Sue Baldauf, Director of Youth and Family Services, commented that she was involved in the process of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan and asserted that the current document exceeds that plan. Ms. Baldauf added that although the process to create a new plan was intensive for the Board and staff, it has been produced expeditiously. Ms. Baldauf articulated that the current document is well organized and detailed and that it will serve as a guide for boards and committees now and well into the future. Ms. Baldauf said she particularly appreciated how the action items were collaboratively presented; and then asked how the designated committees/boards will be encouraged to implement the actions.

Planning Director Garber said some communities create an implementation committee or in many cases the Planning Board oversees implementation of actions. Director Garber reiterated that time will be available on future agendas for ongoing implementation discussions.

Sandra Hackman suggested that Planning Board liaisons could play a role in working with other boards/committees on implementation. Board members favored this suggestion.

Director Garber noted that Ms. Baldauf's question regarding why the population in Bedford dropped during 1970 – 2000 was good; and then shared the following response: the construction rate of new houses had dropped off dramatically during 1970-1990, and over the years the size of families also declined.

Director Garber mentioned that Ms. Baldauf's comment on limiting square footage for new construction to prevent further mansionization and possibly teardowns also raised a matter of general interest, but there are legal constraints to consider, as well as a variety of opinions.

The Board had a brief discussion regarding mansionization and teardowns and conveyed the following comments:

Chair Cohen suggested limiting the height of houses.

Amy Lloyd asked, in the General Bylaws, what is the construction year before which you need to delay demolition of an existing structure. Ms. Lloyd thought it was around 1945, and then asked if this date ought to be moved up as time goes on.

Mark Sieghenthaler said he believes the reason the General Bylaws state a specific period (1945 or earlier) for demolition delay is because there are a limited number of buildings remaining from that period in Bedford, whereas moving the date forward could affect a large number of properties, which tend to have less distinctive character.

Amy Lloyd debated whether the decision to demolish an existing old structure should be based only on historic preservation reasons.

Lisa Mustapich commented that caution should be used when setting rules that may infringe upon individual property owners' freedom/rights to maximize the value of their property when developing it.

Shawn Hanegan said it's sad to see some small Cape-style homes (or other small homes) torn down and replaced with larger homes instead of remodeling; but in some instances teardowns are necessary and it's important that the economics work.

Sue Baldauf discussed the importance of connectivity and how it relates to developing a Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan. Ms. Baldauf also spoke about seeking DLTA (District Local Technical Assistance) funding and wondered if taking steps toward Bedford becoming a Complete Streets Community might help.

Mark Siegenthaler said he was not familiar with what it would take for Bedford to become a Complete Streets community.

Sandra Hackman said that it might be appropriate for the Selectmen (with Department of Public Works involvement) to pass a resolution to initiate Bedford as a Complete Streets community; and that the town should inquire about getting a Complete Streets toolkit. Ms. Hackman also suggested reviewing the Smart Growth Alliance website to get examples of some Complete Streets communities and a toolkit with suggestions on how to create an ordinance.

Catherine Perry clarified that Complete Streets is not a fixed designation with certain requirements like Green Communities, but the CP uses this term to establish the idea of considering the needs of all users. The action items in the transportation section are designed to apply it in a Bedford context, acknowledging that progress needs to be planned and there may be constraints in some locations.

Sandra Hackman shared that she thought Frances Bigda-Peyton's comments regarding promoting economic resilience by means of supporting small businesses and purchasing locally are insightful and important to Bedford. Ms. Hackman further shared that Ms. Bigda-Peyton's supplemental comment, to promote local food production and provide hands-on coaching is equally important.

Staff commented that it was acknowledged in discussions that Bedford has very little remaining agricultural land but there was interest in community gardens.

Chair Cohen asked Karen Kenney, Chamber of Commerce, if any of their members operate agricultural businesses; and if it were difficult for those businesses to get started in Bedford.

Ms. Kenney commented that currently the agricultural businesses she is aware of in Bedford are Chip-In Farms and Bedford Blueberry Goat Farm. Ms. Kenney explained that in general it's difficult to start a business and that you can't possibly (even if you do a lot of research) learn everything you need to know. Ms. Kenney said after she got her small businesses started in Bedford she eventually joined the Sign Bylaw Committee, which

was a very useful approach in getting to know people and how local government works. Ms. Kenney expressed that the Chamber of Commerce is becoming much more active with both large and small businesses and that the Chamber is very excited about the Economic Development Coordinator position that the town has currently created and is in the process of filling.

Chair Cohen and Ms. Kenney both articulated that they hope the Economic Development Coordinator will play a significant role educating incoming business on best practices to follow when starting a business in Bedford.

Amy Lloyd asked if there's a checklist available for people/companies that are inquiring to do business in Bedford.

Ms. Kenney revealed that the Chamber did provide the Selectmen with a proposed checklist for new businesses inquiring to do business in Bedford and that some Selectmen seemed excited about the checklist while others weren't.

Ms. Kenney informed the Board that the Chamber reviewed other surrounding town checklists and found Burlington and Billerica's to be great examples.

Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, shared that Lincoln's Planning Department compiled a Land Use Permitting Guide with information from a range of departments, including processes and timeframes that would be helpful to incoming small businesses and other inexperienced developers. She noted that permitting requirements vary between towns.

Mark Siegenthaler pointed out that the town currently has on its website a process document/checklist for new businesses, and added that many people are looking forward to having an Economic Development Coordinator.

Planning Director Garber, returning to the discussion regarding Ms. Bigda-Peyton's comments on long term economic, environmental and social issues related there's a place for this type of thinking. Director Garber said although resilience and local sourcing principles did not emerge during the public process, and when drafting the CP, some areas of the CP do touch upon policies that would be compatible with these principles. Director Garber gave complete streets, alternative infrastructure, and renewable energy generation as examples.

Sandra Hackman inquired about ways to encourage and educate people regarding how to grow their own food; and then suggested creating a link between Planning and Transition Town Bedford webpages to further promote economic resilience and sustainability within the community.

Amy Lloyd briefly discussed current uses for open space and emphasized that uses other than just untouched conservation land, including agriculture as a potential additional use, would be beneficial. Ms. Lloyd said it would be economically beneficial to the community if the Town would allow some of its acquired open space land to be used for agricultural purpose and be willing to lease that land to a producer. Ms. Lloyd said other surrounding towns have done this and it appears to be working. Catherine Perry commented that these are usually areas that have maintained continuous agricultural use; it would be difficult with land that had reverted to woodland, for example.

Sandra Hackman asked Mark Siegenthaler if the Selectmen (not including Mr. Moonan's personal written comments) had any comments to share with the Board regarding the CP.

Mr. Siegenthaler reported that the Selectmen have not discussed the CP as a group; however, he would mention to them that Planning would like to know their thoughts.

Amy Lloyd expressed that it would be good to have the Selectmen's feedback on the CP; and it would be especially good to have Selectmen support.

Mr. Siegenthaler said, in his opinion, he believes the Selectmen are more interested in the implementation/action process post adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

Board members shared that they were anxious to know what the Selectmen's thoughts are regarding implementation and wondered how the Selectmen prioritize their goals in relation to implementation of the CP.

Mr. Siegenthaler said that the Selectmen discussed priority goals for the year and noted the CP wasn't really referenced. Mr. Siegenthaler mentioned that in the past, the Selectmen usually refrained from supporting Transportation Management Association initiatives; however, they seem to be in a different place now that the Middlesex 3 Coalition has evolved.

Sue Baldauf suggested asking the Selectmen to review all action items and suggest priorities, for a joint meeting with the Planning Board to discuss moving forward with implementing these actions.

The Board discussed comments submitted by Michael Barbehenn regarding the importance of promoting pedestrian access through or adjacent to new development. Board members agreed that it's important to ensure that maximum connectivity is considered when reviewing subdivisions, special permits and site plans; and that they will consider whether changes are needed to the subdivision rules and regulations, the zoning bylaws or the process in which plans are reviewed to achieve this.

Director Garber suggested requiring developers to seek ways to create maximum connectivity to/from the site in which they are proposing to develop.

Amy Lloyd pointed out various examples of constructed sidewalks in town that don't appear to meet any standard. The Board agreed that proper standards for sidewalks should be implemented.

The Board discussed written comments received from Carol Amick and William Moonan. Chair Cohen asked if some of the acronyms provided in these comments need to be better defined in the glossary. Board members felt that wouldn't be necessary.

Board members had a brief discussion regarding staff's replies to written comments and agreed that some responses may need to be curtailed because they could be construed as being defensive whereas others were clearly informative.

Staff asked Board members to share their individual thoughts/recommendations (via email) regarding responses that need to be cut back.

Mark Siegenthaler asked if any of the substantial written comments provided would be incorporated in the relevant section of the CP.

Director Garber said the short answer is no, and then explained that making any changes to the existing plan, besides referencing the compilation of comments and corrections in Volume 3, would cause a ripple effect. Mr. Garber further explained that there are some technical issues, as well as cost factors involved if changes to the existing plan were required.

Amy Lloyd pointed out that there are very few, if any, substantial errors in the CP and therefore it wouldn't be worth opening the plan up to make these changes.

Director Garber stated that staff will go through the comments received and reference them to the relevant sections of the plan as far as possible to maintain clarity.

Board members agreed to begin discussing implementation of the CP and Planning Board priorities at the next scheduled meeting if there is nobody present to share any further public comment.

#### STAFF REPORT/CONTINUED BUSINESS

1) Pending meeting with school officials to discuss matters of residential growth and school impact— Chair Cohen reported that a February 6 meeting is set for Planning staff and himself to meet with school officials Edward Pierce, School Committee Chair, Jon Sills, Superintendent, and possibly David Coelho, Director of Bedford Public Schools Finance to ensure that Planning has the same knowledge of student enrollment numbers, socio-economic factors affecting programmatic space needs, and any insights into the relationship between housing types and student numbers. Chair Cohen also reported that Planning staff forwarded a copy of the **Fact Sheet** they created and distributed to the public recently as a response to questions and concerns raised by residents in regards to housing growth, types of housing, population increases and resultant impacts, to school officials in advance of this meeting.

The Board had a further, but brief discussion regarding the feasibility of analyzing student enrolment numbers by types of housing, in order to make more informed decisions when reviewing future housing development proposals. Planning Director Garber informed the Board that he spoke with David Coelho and Richard Jones, former Facilities Director, and they said that the schools' system is not setup to give information on student generation by address.

2) MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) matters regarding population and housing projections, and regional transportation initiatives— the Board discussed information provided by MAPC on population and housing demand projections to the year 2040 for Metro Boston and its municipalities, together with a related press release, cover letter and Boston Globe article.

Sandra Hackman pointed out that MAPC's population projection for Bedford for 2020 was 13,934, and then stated that Bedford is already around that number in 2014. Ms. Hackman also noted that MAPC indicated that more multi-family housing is needed in the region, but she wondered what this meant for Bedford, as the table showed no number in the multi-family housing unit demand column for Bedford.

Lisa Mustapich said she assumed no number in that column meant Bedford is all set; and that other communities in the region needed to catch up in that area of housing demand. Catherine Perry advised that the blanks in the table were probably because the projections simply did not go down to that level of detail.

Chair Cohen said that Bedford has done a lot over the years to encourage different forms of housing and noted that is admirable; however, he does not wish to see Bedford turn into an apartment town.

Lisa Mustapich said she would like to see more focus on business rather than housing.

Chair Cohen expressed that developers are implying that housing is still needed to get businesses interested in coming to Bedford.

Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, said there needs to be a balance between business and housing development; and then advised the Board to look at regional features more than focusing on just Bedford when reviewing these projections. Ms. Perry drew the Board's attention to an overview that she had prepared, dated 1-28-14, of

the housing items found in this evening's package. While various interpretations can result from these types of studies, it is important to recognize the demographic forces at play. At the local level, the projections may be overly influenced by recent levels of development in each town.

Director Garber added that because many of the projections are based on trends, the results can be skewed.

Board members agreed to postpone the Transportation discussion until February 11.

3) Development Updates: (verbal report by Catherine Perry)

- a. **10 DeAngelo Drive**—potential site plan review (Formulatrix, currently in Waltham)
- b. **16 Charles Street**—may come before the Planning Board as repetitive petition for an appeal to ZBA of denial for a shed in the greenbelt
- c. **VA Hospital** (Additional Housing); **18 North Road** (Mixed Use Overlay District development project); **Irene Road/Pine Hill Road** (potential subdivision)—still no word
- d. **Isabella Lane**—subdivision plans still need endorsement; Attorney Brown is preparing requested documentation.
- e. **285 Great Road**—ZBA gave approval for the construction of a non-conforming structure (a bank and small retail unit) to be built on site. Traffic issues in this area of Great Road still remain a concern and are being reviewed by MassDOT.
- f. Planning staff met with two developers this week—Planning Director Garber reported that he would provide more details of these meetings at a later date.

4) Street Acceptances: (verbal report by Catherine Perry)

The following five streets will be presented to Annual Town Meeting in March 2014 for street acceptance: 1) Copeland; 2) Buehler; 3) Ellingson; 4) Donovan; and 5) Hartwell Road

Ms. Perry stated that she is helping Adrienne St. John, Public Works Engineer, with language for Street Acceptance Articles for these five roads and they will be presented to the Board for recommendations during the February 11 meeting.

5) Other:

a. FACT SHEET—Planning Staff prepared a fact sheet in response to issues raised by some residents about growth in housing, population increases and resultant impacts. This fact sheet was shared with the public via social media: Town website, Planning website, Planning Facebook page, The Bedford Citizen and The Bedford Minuteman.

b. Solarize Mass—FYI; Lexington-Bedford hosting a session on January 29, 2014 providing an overview of how solar electric systems work, an explanation on how Federal and State incentives can save you money and how you can go solar with the new community based program. This meeting was posted on Planning's Facebook and Town website pages.

c. Chamber of Commerce—Chair Cohen reported that he recently attended a Chamber meeting and then shared the following: 1) Ralph Hammond presented a handout on Bedford Circuit Trails. (Mr. Cohen shared a copy of this handout with Planning staff and Board members); 2) Bedford Business Directory is now available on the Chamber's website; and 3) Chamber has been working with SCORE (a counseling service that will provide assistance to businesses in Bedford, Concord and other areas); and 4) Chamber shared their enthusiasm about the Economic Development Coordinator position.

d. Medical Marijuana Bylaw—Planning Director Garber commented that so far Bedford has not addressed medical marijuana; and that the Selectmen previously voiced they would take the role on this. Director Garber said he believes Planning should be involved in this process and board members agreed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*MOTION: Shawn Hanegan moved to adjourn the meeting (Amy Lloyd seconded the motion)*

*VOTE: 5-0-0*

*TIME 10:25 PM*