

FINAL Regular Session Minutes--approved

**BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD**  
**Regular Session Minutes**  
**Town Hall—Selectmen’s Meeting Room**  
**April 8, 2014**

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

Chair Hanegan convened the meeting at 7:34 PM

**Emergency Evacuation notice** read by Amy Lloyd, Clerk

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

**DEVELOPMENT**

1. **Hartwell Farms/Pulte Homes** –request for performance guarantee reduction--

Chair Hanegan reviewed the following documentation that was submitted in conjunction with a request to reduce the performance bond for Hartwell Farms housing development: **1)** April 3, 2014 memo from Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, providing updated information regarding outstanding work items in relation to a current request for bond reduction; **2)** March 18, 2014 letter from Mark Mastroianni, Pulte Homes Land Project Manager, requesting Board consideration to reduce Hartwell Farms performance guarantee; **3)** April 1, 2014 letter from Michael J. Rosati, Marchionda Project Manager, outlining issues that were addressed and shown on revised as-built plans dated April 1, 2014; **4)** November 20, 2013 letter from Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, sharing information regarding the last bond release the Board approved; and **5)** November 19, 2013 memo from Adrienne St. John, Public Works Engineer, highlighting some of the outstanding work items at Hartwell Farms at that time.

Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, reported that the Hartwell Farms development is close to completion with the exception of installing rails on the handicapped ramp for viewing the ball field and some other minor outstanding items for which funds will be retained. Ms. Perry noted that the developer has provided required as-built plans; and therefore is presently requesting a release of \$22,000 from the performance guarantee, thus reducing the bond from \$35,000 to \$13,000. Ms. Perry recommended approving the developer’s request to reduce the bond by \$22,000 for the submission of the as-built plans.

Jeffrey Cohen asked if completed work on site has been done to DPW’s satisfaction.

Ms. Perry said that there are some minor outstanding work items as identified by DPW staff at the time of the last bond reduction, together with the handicapped access ramp issue which is a Code Enforcement issue. Adrienne St. John is satisfied with the revised as-built plans dated April 1, 2014.

*MOTION: Amy Lloyd moved to approved Pulte Homes request to reduce Hartwell Farms performance guarantee from \$35,000 to \$13,000 for the submission of required as-built plans. (Sandra Hackman seconded the motion)*

*VOTE: 5-0-0*

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN** –First discussion of a series of similar discussions to be held in April and May regarding CP implementation priorities.

Planning staff provided the Board with the following documentation in preparation of this evenings CP implementation priorities discussion: **1)** List of Planning Board Action Items extracted from the CP; **2)** March 25, 2014 (first draft-internal review) memo regarding Mansion Control; **3)** April 4, 2014 memo regarding Data Gathering and Analysis for Large House Control

Chair Hanegan briefly reviewed the above documentation and then asked Board members to individually share their opinions regarding prioritizing the Planning Board’s CP Action Items.

Jeffrey Cohen commented that he would like action items urging economic revitalization to be a priority; and then shared the following list of action items he felt were most important.

- Modify industrial zoning and the Industrial Mixed Use Overlay bylaw
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity
- Reassess the Depot Park overlay district (expressed that the current bylaw may be promoting too many apartments with small amounts of retail)
- Craft a modern Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) Zoning Bylaw

Sandra Hackman mentioned that she likes the order of the Planning Board CP action items as presented; and then offered the following as priorities;

- Craft an OSRD zoning bylaw—Ms. Hackman said this action appears straight forward; and then asked if it were possible to craft something for Special Fall Town Meeting.
- Evaluate industrial zoning— prepare a zoning bylaw amendment potentially for 2015 Annual Town Meeting.
- Amend Mixed Use Overlay Districts—suggested hosting charrettes and seek grant opportunities to promote this action.

Director Garber agreed that the overlay districts need to be revisited; and then suggested working on one area at a time, possibly by means of a charrette. Catherine Perry pointed out that the Town Center one has been built out, so it could be omitted.

Chair Hanegan asked if neighbors in the vicinity of the overlay districts would be invited to attend strategies sessions to improve the overlay. Director Garber replied; absolutely.

Sandra Hackman spoke about the possibilities of having Bedford residents and businesses come together to create a vision for a particular area in town, and then let developers propose to develop it. Ms. Hackman shared that the City of Somerville and some neighborhood residents got together to come up with a redevelopment vision for Union Square before bringing in developers; and that she found this model interesting. Ms. Hackman offered to forward an electronic copy of the Boston Globe editorial she read relating to this matter.

Mr. Garber said that a charrette is one option; however, it is also possible to hire a graduate school studio to assist with a visioning process.

Sandra Hackman spoke about the Pedestrian Master Plan being underway and expressed that Planning should participate in this process. Ms. Hackman suggested that transportation action items #15 (adjust zoning and subdivision control for improved traffic mitigation) and #16, (Make zoning changes related to alternative transportation and trip reduction), and Natural and Cultural Resources action item #10 (provide zoning incentives to market to design in a way that is sensitive to cultural/historic assets and neighborhood scale) be integrated in an OSRD zoning bylaw amendment.

A question was raised regarding the outcome of OSRD zoning bylaws that Director Garber had written in the past for other communities.

Director Garber said, when crafting OSRD zoning bylaws for other communities, concerns weren't raised about density; but were raised about housing types (ex.; attached vs. detached and how close the residential units were situated to each other). Mr. Garber shared that in Westwood they had two distinct regulatory processes when it was passed; and that it's possible to have some development by right and some by special permit.

Jeffrey Cohen, referring to Land Use action item #7 (Task force to examine potential for more efficient communication and regulation, including streamlined or expedited permitting system alternatives) asked who would be responsible.

Director Garber replied; hopefully the Economic Development Coordinator will lead this task force; and then announced that this position was recently filled; and that the new hire is expected to begin employment on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Amy Lloyd offered the following list of action items as priorities:

- Most critical; Land Use action item # 1 (craft a modern Open Space Residential Development 4-step process zoning bylaw, replacing Cluster and Planned Residential Development)
- Amend/update the Subdivision Rules and Regulations—Ms. Lloyd commented that the town has been in reactive mode instead of being proactive when it comes to development, and that she attributes this to antiquated Subdivision Rules and Regulations.
- Promote low energy cottage-style housing with high level design. Create a model that would provide a true neighborhood feel with common open space, trails, connectivity, walkability and be sustainable to Bedford.

A brief discussion took place regarding cottage-style housing and what areas in town could benefit from it. Amy Lloyd referred to the Coast Guard property as a potential site. Catherine Perry mentioned Concord Riverwalk housing (in Concord, MA) as an example of a cottage-style housing model that has parking grouped in an inconspicuous location, shared open space, low impact stormwater features, energy efficiency, and connectivity with sidewalks and a trail.

Sandra Hackman asked if this style housing would be part of the OSRD.

Ms. Perry and Mr. Garber shared that cottage-style housing could be incorporated in the OSRD and in some of the overlay districts.

Ms. Lloyd continued her list of priority action items--

- Modify height regulations (Crosby Drive/priority area)
- Amend parking regulations; revisit the number of required spaces (consider eliminating parking requirement minimums)
- Explore form-based code (Director Garber gave a project in Lowell developed by George Brooks as an example)
- Promote parking to the rear of buildings; Ms. Lloyd gave Blue Ribbon Plaza as an example site where parking should have been located in the rear of the property. Ms. Lloyd also voiced that the town needs to stop regulating private parking; and work more on attaining municipal parking for downtown areas.

Director Garber asked Ms. Lloyd; when inquiring about amending the Subdivision Rules and Regulations, was she referring to roadway widths and design standards? Ms. Lloyd replied; yes and then said she was particularly referring to cluster subdivision.

Catherine Perry pointed out that Transportation Action # 15 (adjust zoning and subdivision control for improved traffic mitigation) will help address some of these roadway changes.

Sandra Hackman suggested meeting with the Selectmen to discuss some action items, such as, housing, complete streets and some regional work.

Amy Lloyd reported that recently, at a Selectmen's meeting, a discussion took place regarding current DPW projects (ex: School Way, the intersection of Spring Road/South Road/Great Road, and signalization at the Fire Station) and how this work is within the scope of the Great Road Master Plan.

Lisa Mustapich shared the following as CP action item priorities:

- Modify Industrial Mixed Use zoning and height limitations (to revitalize business)
- Focus on the Middlesex Turnpike area including developments with housing, and Crosby Drive and Oak Park; determine what the board/town would like to envision for those areas.

Sandra Hackman voiced that amending building heights in that area could be a quick fix.

Director Garber pointed out that the town doesn't have a direct connection with businesses in that area; and that it would be advantageous to discuss things these kinds of issues (building heights being one example) with business representatives in the area who have knowledge of the specific needs. Mr. Garber recommended reviewing base zoning and height change at the same time for this area.

Amy Lloyd suggested that the Middlesex 3 Coalition group may have some opinion regarding zoning changes for this area too.

Sandra Hackman agreed that it's important to listen to the needs of the businesses and see what people have to say; and then suggested involving the newly hired Economic Development Coordinator by inviting her to a future Planning Board meeting.

Director Garber spoke about the commercial overlay district at the eastern end of Great Road and suggested the following: (covering Shawsheen Plaza to Hillside/Bacon Road area)

- Review minimum setbacks
- Provide incentives to have different layouts

- Include amenities such as; trails, sidewalk connections and outdoor dining
- Revisit parcel size to promote creativity
- Regulatory amendments (revisit list of uses and allow more as-of-right uses)
- Consider density bonuses for businesses; however, there could be potential for traffic problems)

Jeffrey Cohen conveyed that if the Bedford is trying to remain competitive with abutting towns for business, then it's important to revisit our parking requirements so we don't lose business. Mr. Cohen gave 201 Burlington Road as a recent example. The developer of this site expressed that it's difficult for tenants in Bedford to stay competitive when nearby properties (ex. former Sun Microsystems Campus site and Northwest Park in Burlington) allow much higher parking ratios than Bedford.

Catherine Perry suggested that we should research the facts, as some of the developer's statements seemed selective or qualified.

Mr. Garber commented that developers and lenders would have data/information that could be helpful to Bedford when comparing our requirements to other communities.

Amy Lloyd expressed that the Board should also be able to have more input regarding parking design.

Sandra Hackman voiced that Bedford doesn't want to become Burlington; and that she is concerned with the future expansion of North West Park in Burlington. Ms. Hackman also voiced that she's not sure if widening the Middlesex Turnpike actually helped traffic issues in that area; and then pointed out that around 5:00 pm the traffic in that area is a nightmare. Ms. Hackman said she would like to see more shared parking arrangements with abutting properties, and then provided Bedford High School and Saint Michael's church as an example of where shared parking should have been explored.

Jeffrey Cohen commented that one way for businesses in the Middlesex Turnpike area to address traffic congestion could be to stagger their working hours.

Amy Lloyd stated that she agrees with Director Garber that a vision is needed for the Shawsheen Plaza and Hotel area, as this area is tired and requires revitalization.

Lisa Mustapich verbalized that Bedford has architectural guidelines, but also asked how to use them to create more aesthetically pleasing and innovative architectural designs for developers to follow.

Chair Hanegan agreed that creating a vision for an area first, (especially where developer may be looking to develop) and then approach developers is good.

Director Garber suggested targeting certain areas and groups in town to begin discussing multiple options to revitalize specific areas (such as Great Road, Rte. 3 corridor, Crosby Drive and Middlesex Turnpike); and then consider height, dimensions, parcel size, landscaping, open space, parking requirements etc. at the same time.

Director Garber and Amy Lloyd spoke of the potential to consider structured shared parking arrangements for abutting businesses.

Jeffrey Cohen asked what CP action items would be attainable for Fall Town Meeting.

Director Garber said there is potential to propose height change for now, OSRD, and possibly amend the Industrial Mixed Use zoning bylaw (mainly focusing on the residential/commercial piece not working) for Special Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Garber said he is also determined to bring the change to the greenbelt provision

he is currently working on to Special Fall town meeting, as well as a change to reflect an upcoming amendment to the Federal Telecommunication Act.

Sandra Hackman said, when considering height change, traffic also needs to be considered; and then gave Hartwell Avenue in Lexington as an example of where the height requirement and density limits were raised. Lexington accompanied those changes with a long-range plan to address traffic challenges in the area.

Sandra Hackman said traditionally Special Fall Town Meeting has been for housekeeping items; and therefore suggested waiting until Annual Town Meeting 2015 to bring forth a cluster/cottage-style housing provision, and in the meantime explore other sites that could benefit from this type of zoning change.

Director Garber commented that there is a huge interest in cottage house zoning; and pointed out that there are different ways to explore this concept. Cottage housing could be accepted as an alternative housing choice and it can be potentially connected to the empty-nest market, which is currently untapped. Mr. Garber said he would like to start exploring potential sites where this concept could be used; and then gave the Coast Guard Housing parcel as a possibility.

Jeffrey Cohen said another option to consider is reviewing/amending the accessory apartments bylaw.

Director Garber said the Board would need to consider restricting the size of a proposed accessory unit to an existing property and also revealed that an average size accessory unit is typically around 700 sq. ft.

Mr. Garber informed the Board that he would like to promote working at home opportunities by liberalizing section 4.2.7 (Home Occupation) in the Zoning Bylaws. Mr. Garber conveyed that there's potential to reduce auto trips if it were more flexible for people to operate their business from home.

Sandra Hackman suggested that Planners (Glenn and Catherine) review the priorities discussed and then figure out what's attainable to present at upcoming Fall and Spring Town Meetings.

Mr. Garber agreed that the next step for Planning staff is to review priorities discussed; and then refine into digestible bites so the Board can begin to narrow down its options based on fact.

The Board went on to discuss implementation and monitoring of the Comprehensive Plan as a whole.

Sandra Hackman asked if an implementation committee or ad hoc committee is needed.

Chair Hanegan expressed that it may be difficult to get volunteers.

Director Garber commented that an implementation/ad hoc committee could be established and its responsibility be to motivate town boards, committees, and staff to move forward with their respective actions.

Sandra Hackman suggested that the Planning Board liaisons work with other committee/boards to pursue recommended actions.

Board members seemed favorable to Ms. Hackman's suggestion to use Planning Board liaisons as the motivators.

## **STAFF REPORT**

### 1) Development Updates—by Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner

- **213 Burlington Road/Flatbread**—a potential Special Permit modification to create an outdoor patio area with approximately 40-50 seats.
- **Coast Guard Housing site**—Planning staff is currently assisting the Affordable Housing and Community Preservation Committees with a technical assessment of the site.
- **Irene Road**—potential cluster subdivision; no additional news to report
- **Isabella Lane**—documentation to finalize previously approved definitive subdivision plans has been submitted and is being reviewed. Ms. Perry informed the Board that she is waiting for the final version of the subdivision plans in preparation of Planning Board endorsement.

### 2) Other Work

- **Pedestrian Master Plan/Bicycle Plan**—Director Garber assisted with the preparation of a RFP/RFQ for the Pedestrian Master Plan; he later learned that DPW combined both Pedestrian and Bicycle plans; and therefore he re-wrote the RFP/RFQ to reflect that change. Mr. Garber reported that the task force may look for a planning staff member to be on an AdHoc committee throughout the Pedestrian/Bicycle plan process.
- **Greenbelt provision**—Director Garber informed the Board that the greenbelt provision memo he has been working on is almost complete and that he plans to send it to them for review by the end of the week.

## **OTHER REPORTS**

Parking Summit Update—Amy Lloyd attended a Parking Summit in Boston sponsored by MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) with Donald Shoup being the keynote speaker and author of “The High Cost of Free Parking”. The purpose of this parking summit was to discuss the impact that parking has on transportation, land use, public health and the bottom line. Board members asked Ms. Lloyd provide a write-up highlighting some key points she learned from the summit. Ms. Lloyd agreed to this task.

Coast Guard Housing Charette—Board and staff members who attended the first public session to discuss the potential future of the Coast Guard Housing site shared their thoughts and concerns. The Board discussed the potential of the property. Jeffrey Cohen voiced that some residents may take issue and questioned the economic viability if the town decides to purchase this property and develop it. Amy Lloyd commented that although it may not seem desirable to purchase this property in the near future; it’s important for the town to think of its long-term vision and need for alternative housing choices. Jeffrey Cohen communicated that residents are looking for something tangible. Ms. Lloyd mentioned that demographic trends in the long-run would favor more economical housing.

In addition to the above comments, board members/planning observed that there were too many images in the presentation; and therefore it was easy for people to get lost in viewing images rather than focusing on the concept. Nevertheless, the discussion brought out many relevant points.

Other—Chair Hanegan mentioned that he was unable to attend the Chamber of Commerce meeting on Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 am, and then asked if any staff or board member could attend. Director Garber stated that he would attend.

**BUSINESS SESSION**

Minutes—

a. **February 25, 2014** Zoning Amendment—Flood Plain Public Hearing Minutes & Regular Session

*MOTION: Lisa Mustapich moved to approve February 25, 2014 Minutes with minor edits. (Jeffrey Cohen seconded the motion)*

*VOTE: 4-0-1 (Amy Lloyd abstained—wasn't present for the 2/25/14 meeting)*

b. **March 11, 2014** Regular Session Minutes

*MOTION: Lisa Mustapich moved to approve March 11, 2014 Regular Session Minutes with minor edits. (Amy Lloyd seconded the motion)*

*VOTE: 4-0-1 (Sandra Hackman abstained—wasn't present for the 3/11/14 meeting)*

c. **March 24, 2014** Regular Session Minutes

*MOTION: Lisa Mustapich moved to approve March 24, 2014 Regular Session Minutes with a minor edit. (Amy Lloyd seconded the motion)*

*VOTE: 4-0-1 (Jeffrey Cohen abstained—wasn't present for the 3/24/14 meeting)*

**ADJOURNMENT**

*MOTION: Lisa Mustapich moved to adjourn the meeting. (Jeffrey Cohen seconded the motion)*

*VOTE: 5-0-0*

*TIME: 9:49PM*