

BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD

**Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Hall
July 8, 2014**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Amy Lloyd, Clerk

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Garber, Planning Director and Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner

STAFF ABSENT: Cathy Silvestrone, Planning A.A.

OTHERS PRESENT: See Attached

Chair Hanegan convened the Planning Board meeting at 7:30 PM

Emergency Evacuation notice read by Jeffrey Cohen.

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

DEVELOPMENT SESSION:

Hartwell Farms bond release request

Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, reported that Pulte Homes, the developer of the Hartwell Farms condominium project off Hartwell Road (built under a Planning Board special permit), has requested final release of the bond. The bond is in the form of an insurance-type document. Ms. Perry referred to items included in the Board's packet:

- Letter of request from Pulte Homes dated June 16, 2014, attaching documentation of the last bond reduction to \$13,000
- Memo from Catherine Perry to Planning Board dated July 2, 2014, commenting on the request and incorporating input from other town departments.

Ms Perry related that the bond amount currently stands at \$13,000 which was intended to cover trees, rails on the ramp for handicapped access for viewing the ballfield, and some small miscellaneous items identified by the Public Works engineer. The Code Enforcement Director has inspected the handicap ramp and is satisfied with the installation of the rails. The Public Works Engineer, Adrienne St John, has identified seven trees that have died and need replacement, but has reported that the other minor items are complete. A small issue has arisen over stop signs at a roundabout/ T intersection within the development; if signs are used there should be painted stop lines to accompany them. However the signs which have appeared intermittently are understood to have been introduced by the homeowners and are not a responsibility of the developer.

Ms Perry reported that the developer is agreeable to having \$2,450 retained in the bond to cover replacement of the failed trees during the fall planting season, and this is what she recommends.

MOTION: Lisa Mustapich proposed a motion to approve a reduction in the bond from \$13,000 to \$2,450 (Jeffrey Cohen seconded the motion)

VOTE: 4-0-0

TIME: 7:40 PM

BUSINESS SESSION:

General Update on Industrial Zoning Research

The Planning Director and Assistant Planner presented to the Board the work that staff has done so far to analyze Bedford's major industrial/ office areas. This work is aimed at informing discussion of potential zoning amendments. A Westfield State University intern, Patrick Burns, is assisting staff with gathering and organizing data, and the Assessor and the DPW's GIS Analyst have also helped with the exercise.

Glenn Garber reviewed a set of tables that have been compiled, setting out key characteristics of each land parcel in the three areas being studied: Route 3 (Crosby Drive/ Middlesex Turnpike/ Burlington Road area), Wiggins Avenue, and Depot area (including DeAngelo Drive). Catherine Perry showed how these study areas have been defined on a base map of current zoning, and noted that a single non-federal industrial parcel on Hartwell Road (Instrumentation Labs) is also being included in the study. The characteristics identified in the tables include ownership, land use category (as used for property tax assessment), age of buildings and a variety of dimensional measures such as site and building area, height and setbacks, that relate to zoning. The floor area ratio (FAR) and lot coverage have been calculated for each parcel. Summary statistics for each of the three areas have been tabulated on a single sheet for comparison.

Director Garber commented on some interesting points that emerge from this comparison, and supplied a summary note. While each of the three areas contains a variety of lot sizes, building footprints and heights, some characteristics suggest a functional hierarchy from the Depot area to the Route 3 area with Wiggins in between; there are big differences in the median lot area, frontage and setbacks, and also some difference in the median age of buildings (with Depot oldest and Route 3 newest), although all areas began to be built in the same era. However, the median FARs are almost identical, close to 0.24. Median lot coverage is lower in the Route 3 area at 12% but similar in the other two areas at 21%.

The Board discussed some of the statistics and noted that the high landscape area requirement in Bedford's zoning bylaw – 50% in industrial districts - together with the need for parking, are likely to shape lot coverage, as well as the bylaw's relatively low maximum FARs (0.25 in Industrial B and Industrial Park A and 0.35 in Industrial C). Jeff Cohen asked if there is a landscape buffer requirement along Route 3, but Ms. Perry responded that she thinks the trees are mostly within the highway Right of Way; certainly Bedford Business Park has parking up to the rear lot line.

Ms. Perry then outlined the results of research she has done to compare Bedford's zoning provisions to other towns, again focusing on dimensions. She supplied a table of dimensional requirements in nine other towns, which identifies relevant zoning districts (major industrial and office areas) and their maximum FAR, lot coverage and height where applicable. Her work also examined overlay districts and other special provisions in towns' zoning that sometimes allow higher FARs etc., and she supplied notes outlining these, although she noted that in many cases the wording in the bylaw is flexible and therefore details of actual developments would need to be obtained separately. She reviewed a summary note identifying interesting patterns in the data, and also summarized a useful discussion with her counterpart in Lexington. In the Hartwell Avenue area, Lexington increased the maximum FAR from 0.15 to 0.35, and the town also has a Planned Development District provision which it has used in several locations.

The Board asked about the selection of comparison towns. They are a mixture of towns that are nearby and ones that have geographic similarities in their land use character and their location relative to Route 128 and/or are known to have updated their zoning. The Board was particularly interested in the nearby "competition".

Director Garber reported that he has been thinking further about the Industrial Mixed Use bylaw following the Board's recent discussion and he feels that if the housing element is to be removed, the bylaw will need a new vision. The outcome may be either a new overlay or an adjustment to the base zoning. This subject can be further discussed at the next meeting.

Sandra Hackman suggested that input from property owners and businesses in the industrial areas would be helpful, perhaps through a discussion or a survey. Staff mentioned that Alyssa Sandoval, the Economic Development Coordinator, has held a discussion with the Wiggins Avenue businesses. They encouraged her to seek feedback on any zoning issues or other planning-related matters and she has passed on some comments. She is likely to be having discussions with the Route 3 businesses also.

Jeffrey Cohen suggested inviting the Chamber of Commerce to have a discussion with the Board.

Returning to the discussion on dimensional zoning, Ms. Hackman said she would prefer businesses to expand upwards rather than outwards i.e. increased height rather than lot coverage.

Development Update

Catherine Perry reported that two preliminary cluster subdivision plans are in the process of filing:

- 2 Irene Road (off Pine Hill Road)
- 57 & 75 Hartwell Road and an unbuilt parcel on Beacon Street.

If complete packets are received, staff will schedule these items for July 22 and notify abutters. The preliminary review is intended to give feedback on a conceptual layout and does not result in a formal decision.

Reports by Board Members

1) Jeffrey Cohen reported on the **Selectmen's meeting and Railroad Avenue site** walk that he attended on June 30, and referred to a summary that he circulated to Planning Board members by email. The site walk was to view the preliminary options for the Minuteman bikeway extension (connecting the current terminus at Depot Park to the available Reformatory Branch rail bed via Railroad Avenue). The Board received copies of letters to the Selectmen from a neighbors' group and from John Premack of the Friends of Minuteman Bikeway. The Planning Board discussed whether or not they should have any input into the Selectmen's deliberations. Catherine Perry suggested that the Board might draw attention to the references in the Comprehensive Plan to the bikeway, its significance and needs for connectivity, without necessarily commenting on specific options. Mark Siegenthaler confirmed that the Selectmen will be holding a meeting for public input and discussion on August 4.

Terry Gleason drew attention to the high status of the Minuteman bikeway at regional and national level. Planning Board members wished to draw attention to the significance attached to the bikeway in the Comprehensive Plan, recognizing the rarity of continuous off-road routes and the high ridership of the existing paved portion. They noted that the Plan points to the multiple benefits of developing a more extensive, connected network of bicycle and pedestrian routes, and also to potential synergy between the bikeway and desirable developments in the Depot area. They felt that the project should include attention to the details of how people get across South Road and continue in their desired directions. John Premack informed the Board that the consultants indicated they were beginning to think about this. Mr. Cohen undertook to draft a letter to the Selectmen reflecting the Board's thoughts.

Mr. Cohen also reported that the Selectmen reviewed the proposed **Bedford Marketplace upgrade**, from the standpoint of Traffic Commissioners, and voted 3-2 to approve the plans with a signalized left turn in from The Great Road at the main entrance. There may be further discussions between the developer and DPW engineers concerning pedestrian and bicycle accommodations along the frontage. The developer suggested that the

previously proposed \$25,000 contribution to upgrading the Springs Road intersection could be repurposed. Sandra Hackman asked to see the approved architectural elevations and renderings for the development. Some architectural designs were referenced in the 2008 Planning Board recommendation. Glenn Garber commented that a site plan review has little legal control over architecture but said he will continue to try to obtain the whole set of renderings from 2008.

2) Sandra Hackman reported from a forum she attended recently on Green Towns, hosted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission. She provided a written summary of ideas from the various speakers. Ms. Hackman asked if we are doing enough to encourage Low Impact Development (LID). Staff commented that they examine subdivision and site plans for issues such as road widths and parking to ensure there isn't an excessive amount of impervious surface, and are strong advocates for LID stormwater techniques in nearly all development permitting cases. Also, the town's introduction of a stormwater bylaw provides the regulatory framework for responding to state and federal clean water laws. One possible further action would be to revise the Subdivision Rules and Regulations to make desired features, such as narrower roads in small developments, the standard requirement rather than using waivers. This would involve an interdepartmental discussion. Rules and Regulations under both Subdivision and Zoning Bylaws could possibly also be used to require developers to consider LID to the extent practicable.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Lisa Mustapich proposed a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jeffrey Cohen.

VOTE: 4-0-0

TIME: 9:35 PM.

Minutes submitted by Catherine Perry

Approved 7-22-14