



**TOWN OF EASTON**  
**Planning & Zoning Board**  
136 Elm Street  
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**Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, November 22, 2010**

Present: **Christine Santoro, Chair; Walter Johnson, Clerk; Dan Smith; Gregory Strange; Peter Deschenes; Wayne Benson, Jr.; Brad Washburn, Planning Director**

Christine Santoro called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN REVIEW DISCUSSION**

108 Washington Street, Martin Auto Sales

Present: Bill VanLaarhoven owner Martin Auto Sales

Mr. VanLaarhoven came before the board to find out if the Planning Board would accept an a plot plan for site plan review which does not show topography, a requirement on site plans submitted for site plan approval. Mr. VanLaarhoven has not yet submitted the site plan application; he is seeking a waiver of the topographical requirements on the site plan map. Martin Auto Sales plans to increase the number of display parking spaces from 17 to 30-some by adding display parking spaces on an existing parking area which was paved in 1980 and has since been used for storage and customer parking. There will be no additional changes. Mr. VanLaarhoven went before the Board of Selectmen who requested Planning Board approval before licensing the additional parking spaces. Mr. VanLaarhoven stated he last came before the Planning Board on April 10, 2006, and the board accepted a plan that had been done in 1990. The most recent plan he showed to the board was done by Outback Engineering on 8.5x11" paper and does not show elevation. There was discussion around site plan applications' showing what is proposed, not what is existing. There was comment that topography is irrelevant because the area is paved and there won't be any changes made to the site outside of reconfiguring the parking spaces. Mr. VanLaarhoven leases the property, he does not own it.

**FORM A: 414 CENTER STREET / EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
(10-30)**

Craig Higgins, Owner; and George Sullivan, Chairman of Trustees, Evangelical  
Congregational Church of Easton, Owner

Present: Bruce Pilling, Pilling Engineering

Mr. Pilling presented a Form A plan dividing two different lots. The existing lot at 414 Center Street is being divided to create two lots 1A and 1B, each with sufficient frontage and sufficient contiguous upland to be buildable parcels with the note that in order for Lot 1B to have the required area for a buildable lot, Mr. Higgins plans to purchase a piece of land from the Evangelical Congregational Church of Easton (Lot 2B). Once Higgins owns Lot 2B (sale is

scheduled to take place before the end of November 2011 pending Planning Board approval), then Lot 1B will have sufficient area to be a buildable parcel. The Planning Board Chair expressed concern about the presented single plan, that it represents a two-step process and perhaps should be represented with two plans (one the sale transaction from the Church to Higgins and the other the dividing of the Higgins' property). Mr. Pilling countered that the plan as proposed conforms to Form A requirements and that once the sale is completed the deeds will reflect the process. Gregory Strange's motion to approve plan pending submission of a second plan conveying the two-step process was not seconded. Mr. Strange asked if there is a limit on the number of subdivisions in an ANR. Walter Johnson motioned that the Board seek advice of Town Counsel to get direction in this matter. Peter Deschenes seconded. Motion passes 4-1-0 (Gregory Strange opposes).

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING GUIDELINES**

Tim Harrigan, Community Housing Planner provided an update on the Affordable Housing Guidelines being developed by the Affordable Housing Trust. The Affordable Housing Trust is in the process of designing guidelines for the town's Zoning Bylaws and once completed will make a recommendation that the Planning Board adopt the Affordable Housing Guidelines. Mr. Harrigan explained that towns have taken many different approaches to affordable housing and that the guidelines are relatively new. The Affordable Housing Inclusionary Guidelines for Easton are being patterned after the Town of Brookline, MA, whose system includes an option for the developer to pay a portion of the sales price of a unit, and the percentage increases with the size of the development. Easton is preparing a similar opt-out system to allow the developer to make a payment towards the Affordable Housing Trust in lieu of providing units of housing. The amount of the payment will be established in the Affordable Housing Guidelines. The Affordable Housing Trust will meet next week to discuss the proposed guidelines and will present the Planning Board with formal guidelines to consider at the Planning Board meeting in late December. The Trust will recommend the Guidelines and the Planning Board will decide whether or not to adopt them. Mr. Harrigan explained how affordable housing works, that for Easton the Towns of Easton and Raynham are combined in a formula to establish median income and that the town must have a stock of housing affordable to those who live on 80% of that median income. The State requires 10% of a town's housing stock be affordable and Easton is currently at approximately 3%. However, if the town is below 10% but increasing its stock of affordable housing by a rate of 0.5-1.0% per year, then the Zoning Board of Appeals can deny 40B projects. The Shovel Shop project will likely increase Easton's affordable housing to approximately 5% and therefore increase the rate at which Easton is building its affordable housing stock. Some towns such as Brookline accept cash payment towards the town's Affordable Housing goals in lieu of housing units although housing units are preferable because they work directly toward increasing the town's affordable housing stock. Discussion ensued around affordable housing in Easton. Gregory Strange inquired about the amount of the payment option and raised the point that developers will shy away from special permit projects in Easton if they are required to pay a significant cash payment towards the town's affordable housing goals. Mr. Harrigan explained that other towns more comparable to Easton require either housing units or a payment equal to full-market price of the units. Easton's payment option is not intended to be onerous to the developer. Mr. Harrigan will return on December 6 to present

the Planning Board with the Trust's recommended approach after he meets with the Affordable Housing Trust in the upcoming weeks.

### **ZBA REQUEST FOR COMMENT**

#### 180 Sheridan Street

Brad Washburn explained that in Easton's traditional neighborhoods, developers have demolished homes and rebuilt structures that comply with setbacks and height requirements yet are out-of-scale with the neighborhood. It was clarified that in current versus existing setbacks, that current setbacks comply with current Zoning Bylaws. The application complies with the current Zoning Bylaws and staff recommends approval. Walter Johnson motioned recommendation of the Planner. Dan Smith seconded. Motion passes 5-0-0.

#### 343R Bay Road

Brad Washburn explained that the Welch Woods petitioner is seeking to change from condominium-style housing to single-family townhouses and is requesting to create a homeowners association to manage the common areas only, the residences would be located on separately deeded lots. The footprint is the same but there will be a slight reduction in impervious area. Duplex units need more waivers because they are considered single-family homes. This project is meeting the affordability requirement. Walter Johnson motioned for no recommendation. Peter Deschenes seconded. Motion passes 5-0-0.

### **ZONING BYLAW DISCUSSION**

Brad Washburn outlined a list he developed of proposed town Zoning Bylaw changes, open to edits and Planning Board discussion.

- Address building heights in residential zone. Current maximum height is 35 feet and there is a need to address how the Bylaw defines it. Bylaw says height measured from post-construction grade. Westwood, Milton, and Canton measure from preconstruction grade (based on fill, etc.) and Easton should consider same.
- Address requests to convert single-family homes into two-family homes. Planning Board had provision in bylaw to consider accessory dwelling units. Or these can be addressed via Special Permit.
- New zoning on Rt. 138 corridor developed with help from South Coast Rail technical assistance grant program. The Town received a grant for station visualization for north Easton station near Roche Bros and was recently awarded another \$30k technical assistance grant to perform a traffic study in North Easton Village. The grant will also allow the Town to look at potentially rezoning a portion of Rt. 138 to allow higher densities, mix of uses, improved streetscape, updated parking standards and ways to increase transportation choices (walking, biking, public transit, etc.).
- Re-address Zoning Bylaw prohibition on internally illuminated signage based on business/ community feedback? Address in future through commercial design review.
- Renewable energy and green construction is not addressed in Zoning Bylaw. Easton has application to be designated as a green community. Where renewable energy is not mentioned, it's prohibited.

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- Are Special Permits functioning as intended? Review past experience to see what is working and what is not.
- There are administrative edits that need to be made to current version of Zoning Bylaw.

It was suggested to work in subcommittees to streamline the process; different members could attend those that address their interest/expertise areas. The board prioritized the list and discussed which should come before Town Meeting in spring 2011:

- 1) Building height
- 2) New zoning on Rt. 138 corridor
- 3) Conversion of single family homes to two-family.

Renewable energy to be addressed at Fall 2011 Town Meeting (Dan Smith). Gregory Strange expressed interest in joining the subcommittees and suggested addressing the Master Plan that was last updated in 1973. Discussion ensued around community visioning and the Master Plan.

## **BOARD BUSINESS**

### 2011 Planning Board meeting schedule

The Board reviewed the prospective dates for Planning Board meetings in 2011. The February 14<sup>th</sup> meeting was changed to February 15<sup>th</sup>. The April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting was changed to April 25<sup>th</sup>. The board added a meeting on Monday, December 19, 2011. Locations of those three meetings to be announced.

### Meeting Minutes

Walter Johnson motioned to approve the October 12, 2010 Planning Board meeting minutes as presented. Peter Deschenes seconded. Motion passes 4-0-0 (Dan Smith abstained.)

Peter Deschenes motioned to approve the October 25, 2010 Planning Board meeting minutes with the addition of Wayne Benson's name to the list of board members present. Walter Johnson seconded. Motion passes 5-0-0.

Gregory Strange motioned to approve the November 8, 2010 Planning Board meeting minutes. Dan Smith seconded. Motions passes 5-0-0.

## **ADJOURN**

Walter Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm. Motion passes 5-0-0.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Randi L. Graham, Recording Secretary.