

*Minutes approved by the Planning & Zoning Board on November 21, 2011 and posted with the Town Clerk on November 29, 2011.*



Town of Easton  
PLANNING & ZONING BOARD

Minutes  
November 7, 2011

The Easton Planning & Zoning Board held a business meeting on Monday, November 7, 2011 at Easton Town Hall, Board of Selectmen's Office, 136 Elm Street, North Easton, Massachusetts.

Present: Gregory Strange, Chair; Christine Santoro, Vice-Chair/Clerk; Peter Deschenes; Dan Smith; Wayne Benson, Jr.; John Varella, Alternate; Brad Washburn, Planning Director

Greg Strange called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**CONTINUED AMENDED SITE PLAN REVIEW**

104 MAIN STREET, File #08-27

Applicant / Owner: Douglas Cardinale

The Planning & Zoning Board has not yet received a plan from Mr. Cardinale with the necessary detail for Site Plan approval. This item will be continued to the next meeting on November 21, 2011.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Unfinished Streets follow-up

The Planning Department sent certified letters to the first five developers on the Unfinished Street Project list requesting the developers attend the Planning & Zoning Board meeting on December 5, 2011 to provide an update on their progress and intentions with finishing the street construction. Greg Strange reviewed the entire list and noted some large discrepancies between road cost estimates and the amount of surety the Town is holding on certain streets. It was concluded that the Road Cost Estimates are out-of-date and need to be updated. Land Use Planner Stephanie Danielson will update the Road Cost Estimates and Street Inspection Reports for the first five streets on the list. The board discussed having developers pay for an outside consultant to do Road Cost Estimates and Street Inspection Reports, as the work is no longer part of Ms. Danielson's job scope. The developer would post a deposit with their application for a subdivision, similar to the deposit for stormwater management review. Board members suggested consolidating unfinished street letters by developer.

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The Board also suggested prioritizing streets that are near completion or where the developer has recently come before the board.

ZBA Requests for Comment

Variance #11-23 / 785 Washington Street

Applicant seeks to allow construction of a sign on an existing steel pylon post to be 32-square feet larger than the allowed 100-square feet. Christine Santoro motioned to recommend to the Board of Appeals. Peter Deschenes seconded. Motion passes 5-0-1. Dan Smith abstains.

Special Permit #11-22 / 11 Hollis Road

Applicant seeks to raze and reconstruct a single family home on a pre-existing non-conforming lot. Brad Washburn spoke with George Collins because no elevations are shown on the plan. Washburn recommends approval so long as the project is compliant with the building height bylaw approved at May 2011 Town Meeting. Greg Strange would like to send a letter to the Board of Appeals asking them to have future proposals include an architectural sketch (preliminary) to make sure intent of the bylaw is carried out. Peter Deschenes motioned to recommend with letter containing comments suggested by Greg Strange. Christine Santoro seconded. Motion passes 6-0-0.

Comprehensive Permit #11-24 / Welsch Woods LLC

Welsch Woods' comprehensive permit lapsed and they had to re-apply to the Board of Appeals for a comprehensive permit under the Massachusetts Comprehensive Permit Act Chapter 40B. The new permit has minor modifications, the most significant of which is that the applicant moved one of the buildings closer to the rear of the site. The Design Review Team and Affordable Housing Trust provided input on a comment letter from the Easton Board of Selectmen to Mass Housing, dated July 15, 2011. Brad Washburn distributed copies of this letter. Dan Smith asked about the "housing development target areas" mentioned in the letter. According to the Affordable Housing Trust, the site is appropriate for a development of the density proposed. Strange confirmed the road is to be private in perpetuity. Town Planner recommends approval. Christine Santoro motioned to recommend approval. Peter Deschenes seconded. Motion passes 6-0-0.

Master Plan discussion

Brad Washburn will go before the Capital Planning Committee on November 8, 2011 to make two requests. The one relevant to the Planning & Zoning Board is a request for funding to update the master plan. Washburn and Strange will meet to discuss the project scope and schedule and will review it with the board at the next Planning & Zoning Board meeting. The proposed schedule is 18-months, starting after May 2012 Town Meeting with a commitment by the Planning Department staff and by an outside consulting firm.

**BOARD BUSINESS**

Chair Report

Scenic Road Regulation

Strange asked for the Board's feedback on the joint meeting with the Historical Commission. The board thought it was useful to hear the Historic Commissions perspectives on the specific projects. Brad Washburn said that since the Scenic Roads Bylaw is in the Planning Board's Administrative Rules & Regulations, changes need only a public hearing, and do not need to be voted on at Town Meeting. Town Counsel suggested the Board consider re-wording the bylaw to have scenic road designation by recommendation of the Planning & Zoning Board. Town Counsel also confirmed that the designation is

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limited to the public right-of-way. John Varella recommended talking to affected landowners before roads are designated scenic. Designation of a Scenic Road would still require a public hearing and the Board will do public outreach beforehand. The affected areas are only those within the right-of-way, and it is important to educate people that a right-of-way exists and what it means. Strange asked Board members to think about roads and areas that could be considered for designation. Strange suggested the board work on the wording of the regulation at the next meeting.

Zoning Bylaw Discussion

The Planning & Zoning Board will address changes to the Zoning Bylaw through regular meetings; there will not be subcommittee meetings to address the Zoning Bylaw. Greg Strange reviewed the short term and long term goals:

Short term goals:

- Discussion of sign bylaw
- Address home business bylaw
- Site lighting
- Planned business development
- Review flexible developments
- Scenic roads bylaw

Longer term goals / bylaws:

- Look into new residential zones
- Look into new business zones
- Review Special Permit responsibilities w/Zoning Board of Appeals
- Rework the structure / presentation of entire Zoning bylaw

Greg Strange has been working on revisiting special permits that come before the Planning Board: subdivisions, residential compounds, ARD, and OSRD. Wayne Benson has been working on Site Lighting. Benson looked at 15 towns and found one of the better models for a photometric plan at a town in New Jersey. The Board discussed adding photometric review to the site plan review process.

Sign bylaw

The Board talked about grandfathered internally illuminated signs and noted that large plazas like Roche Brothers and Hannaford are isolated areas located on major commercial roads. Wayne Benson noted that there are many types of illuminated signs and there are varying grades of quality, and existing signs could be upgraded. LED lighting is greener but brighter. Other towns restrict the brightness of signs by reviewing wattage or lumens. The board discussed leaving the internally illuminated sign bylaw language as it is versus adding specific regulations around signs and lighting. There was discussion around maintaining consistency of the bylaw's intent with board member turnover. Board's concerns include sign size, light pollution, and sign style. It was agreed to adopt guidelines as they are still at the discretion of the Board but with an informed application. Strange recommended the board review the sign bylaws of the towns of Milton, Canton, and Sharon.

Home Business Bylaw

Last spring there was an application before the Board of Appeals for a small antiques business in an historic barn next to a home on Bay Road in a Residential Zone; the application was denied because such a use was not allowed under Easton's Zoning. It was noted that the concept of retail not being allowed in a residential zone has much to do with parking. The barn on Bay Road is an accessory dwelling and

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has space for parking. Christine Santoro has been looking into home business bylaws and home occupations in other towns. Most examples of the bylaw speak generally to the size of business. Most towns require a special permit which lets the board make sure the location and size of the business are appropriate for the area. The Planning & Zoning Board would need to define the use as-of-right or through special permit and whether the special permit would go before the Board of Appeals or the Planning & Zoning Board. Santoro mentioned restrictive language in other towns' bylaws such as someone who lives in the house has to be part of the business. The board suggested inviting Building Inspector Mark Trivett and Board of Appeals Chair Walter Mirrione to a Planning & Zoning Board meeting to hear their perspectives and to brainstorm universal types that would fit into this category. Washburn will contact Trivett. Strange will contact Mirrione.

Planned Business Development

The Planned Business Development bylaw should address smaller parcels in Easton and older businesses such as Hilliards where the business owner wants to keep their location and expand their business. Washburn will draft language similar to the internally illuminated sign bylaw that allows for planned business developments on smaller parcels at the discretion of the Planning & Zoning Board.

MassWorks Grant

Easton received a \$1.5M grant from MassWorks for assistance with the wastewater treatment plant and sewer project and \$1M for improvements to Main Street. The plan for improvements to Main Street includes widening the sidewalks, resurfacing the Town parking lot behind Main Street, and a streetscape improvement project. The next step is to finalize the design. The Town would be seeking feedback on things such as street furniture, the locations of crosswalks, etc. When the design is finalized it will be sent out to bid. The project is being overseen by the Town and will be presented to the Planning & Zoning Board. The design is slated to be finalized by February 2012.

Route 138 / Queset Commercial District

The Planning Department will be holding a stakeholder meeting at the end of November to discuss the draft zoning overlay and next steps.

**ADJOURN**

Wayne Benson motioned to adjourn at 7:30pm. Christine Santoro seconds. Motion passes 6-0-0.

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