

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES  
MEETING OF JULY 6, 2005

A regular meeting of the Lexington Planning Board held in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Office Building, was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Manz with members Harden, Galatsis, Canale and planning staff McCall-Taylor, Schilt and Tap present. Planning Board member Hornig was absent.

\*\*\*\*\* MINUTES \*\*\*\*\*

Review of Minutes: The Board reviewed and corrected the minutes for the meeting of April 20, 2005. On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to approve the minutes as amended.

The Board reviewed and corrected the minutes for the meeting of June 22, 2005. On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to approve the minutes as amended.

\*\*\*\*\* ADMINISTRATION OF LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS \*\*\*\*\*

DETERMINATION OF GRADE AND CONSTRUCTION OF UNACCEPTED STREETS

Three Candlewick Close, Request for Determination of Adequacy: The Board reviewed the application of Mr. Edward Cain for a determination that a portion of Candlewick Close is of adequate grade and construction.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted 4-0 that Candlewick Close, an unaccepted street, is of adequate grade and construction to provide frontage for the property at 3 Candlewick Close.

\*\*\*\*\* HOUSING \*\*\*\*\*

Supportive Living, Inc., Proposal for 7 Oakland Street, Lexington Press Building: Representatives of the group that wishes to convert the Lexington Press building at 7 Oakland Street were present, along with their architect, to explain to the Board what they plan to do when they purchase the property. Representing Supportive Living, Inc. were Ms. Rachel Dorr, Mr. Robert de Simone, and architect David Buckley. The presentation was intended to be an informational briefing to the Board, as the group does not anticipate seeking approval from the Planning Board for the project, as allowed under the Dover Amendment.

Supportive Living, Inc. provides housing and educational services for survivors of brain injury to help them develop life skills, e.g., domestic and financial, so they can live independently. The facilities provide alternatives other than nursing homes for individuals with special needs, with services for individuals living independently in their own apartment units, with round-the-clock staff to provide care and patient services. Most residents leave the facilities on a daily basis for work or other vocational training programs.

Supportive Living, Inc. has facilities that have been operating in Woburn for 15 years and in North Reading for 8 years. They see the Lexington Press building as a very good location, as most of the residents don't have cars and there is good access to public transportation, and the site is within an easy walk for residents to so many places in Lexington Center. Preserving and refitting the historic Lexington Press building meets their goals of reusing existing structures and providing affordable housing to a population that badly needs it. Redevelopment of the site would also fulfill goals identified in the Town's Comprehensive Plan for providing affordable housing, reuse of commercial buildings, and encouraging redevelopment of buildable sites served by existing infrastructure. Supportive Living has been in contact with the surrounding neighbors, who have shown support for the project given its low scale and minimal traffic impacts.

Mr. Buckley described the proposed mixed-income, 15-unit facility. Staffing of the facilities is on a shift basis, with two staff members on each shift. Nine units would be attainable by persons with low-income;

two units would be attainable by persons with very low incomes; four would be market-rate. The existing building is 10,000 square feet, and Supportive Living will add an additional 8,000 square feet to the lower level for resident community space. All units would be accessible according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. It is hoped that access to van service for the residents could be put on the side of the building near the Meriam Street parking lot. Construction is anticipated to start in the fall of 2006, and given that the rehabilitation is consistent with federal standards, the only board that the group needs to gain approval from is the Historic Districts Commission.

The Board welcomed the group and urged them to work with the neighborhood, some of whom are worried at the prospect of such a facility in the area. The facility representatives noted that other abutters have volunteered to help in the planning process and that the proposed population is not likely to have impulse control problems. Some would move from nursing homes, some are wheelchair bound. The aim of Supportive Living is to help them have a more independent life.

\*\*\*\*\* TOWN BOARDS AND COMMITTEES \*\*\*\*\*

Sidewalk Committee, John Davies: Mr. Davies, the Board's liaison to the Sidewalk Committee, reported on the activities of the relatively new Sidewalk Advisory Committee, whose members are appointed by the Selectmen. He noted that town paths are now included in its purview and a number of sub-committees have formed. Current projects are:

- Conducting a physical inventory of existing sidewalks: curb cuts and trees are particular issues in this area of inquiry. Mr. Wayne Brooks, Superintendent of Roads, will try to provide needed data;
- Conducting public outreach to obtain input on suggestions or complaints, including working with advocates for the handicapped;
- Creating a web page;
- Preparing a map of where sidewalks are located and where improvements are needed;
- Researching and comparing the properties and cost of various sidewalk materials, e.g., concrete, asphalt, including tools to protect trees near sidewalks;
- Coordinating with "safe routes to school" advocates and the school administration, and the pilot program to Bridge School; and,
- Seeking to establish standard procedures for interactions with property owners.

Board members asked questions and made a variety of comments, including:

- The need to identify standards for design and maintenance, especially around obstacles or trees. It was suggested the Committee look into the new Massachusetts Highway Context Sensitive Design standards;
- If the committee contemplates any Town Meeting article initiatives, be sure that finance committees are apprised of and support the potential actions for appropriations;
- Priority should be given to schools and transit users. Hartwell Avenue would benefit from having sidewalks and other improvements, such as bike lanes and facilities to improve access to public transit; and,
- Do the provisions of the Lexington Zoning Bylaw support desirable changes?

Relative to keeping financial bodies informed Mr. Davies indicated that Selectmen Chair Jeanne Krieger is involved with the Committee. The Planning Board stated its appreciation for the work being done, and asked for ongoing advice from the Committee and for input on where improvements may be needed.

## \*\*\*\*\* LEXINGTON CENTER INITIATIVES \*\*\*\*\*

Planning Board Joint Meeting with Selectmen: The Board discussed when they might meet with the Selectmen to go over the results of the June 11 one-day design charrette sponsored by the Lexington Center Collaborative. It was agreed that the joint meeting should be held prior to the Selectmen's annual goal setting meeting in September. The August 17, 2005 Planning Board meeting was proposed, and Ms. Manz will consult with Jeanne Krieger and the Collaborative to confirm whether that date would work with their schedules.

Parking Alternatives: Mr. Schilt distributed copies of an inventory he is creating of the current parking spaces in the center business district, referring to it as a work in progress. It factors in existing uses and their area in square feet as much as possible, as well as the parking requirements that would be needed under present zoning. So far Mr. Schilt said he has identified 1,553 existing public and private parking spaces, whereas the number required under the Zoning By-Law is 1,869 spaces. He said that the VHB parking study of 2001 concluded that there was only an 85% use rate of existing spaces in the center and urged further initiatives for making sure they are all used.

The Board commented that the inventory was a great start and would provide good data for decision-making and determining future revisions to regulations or definition of Planning Board policies. Further analysis should consider an evaluation of specific times of greatest demand, and mapping of locations where demand significantly exceeds supply. It was suggested that the inventory include a wider area, such as areas outside of the business district that are within a 5-minute walk. Forming a joint committee to evaluate measures that are beyond the Planning Board's control was suggested, and also to investigate additional sources of parking spaces on private lots.

Items suggested for potential actions included identifying all streets that have parking meters, working with residents, especially on Sherman Street, to get an idea of who is parking on residential streets and for how long, working with neighborhood associations, and evaluating signage and parking allowances in adjacent neighborhoods.

Mr. Jerry Michelson commented that shoppers park on edge streets. He stated that using some of the strategies VHB suggested could promote the economical use of existing spaces. The Board acknowledged the necessity of identifying its goals for the center and forming policies to bring them about, in coordination with the Board of Selectmen.

It was noted by the Board that the zoning regulations for parking have two significant aspects for consideration: the requirements governing parking for restaurants, and the broader changes for eliminating the regulations in the CBD altogether, except for new development. It is unclear which options will have political support, as well as changes other boards or committees might make, and it is important to determine what support will come from the Selectmen with regard to policy changes. Mr. Galaitis noted that there will be a fine balance between relaxing policies to support economic initiatives in the Center with the interests of protecting surrounding neighborhoods. He added that enforcement needs to be improved. Mr. Canale stated the Board should articulate its vision for the Center as a whole; parking will be impacted by what is also being discussed for changing building heights and density requirements.

## \*\*\*\*\* PLANNING BOARD ORGANIZATION, SCHEDULE \*\*\*\*\*

Ms. McCall-Taylor reported that the agenda of July 27 would include the Rowland Avenue Extension definitive subdivision plan and a request for determination of adequacy of a portion of Clelland Road. The public hearing on the 31 Fletcher Avenue application for a special permit with site plan review would continue on August 3.

Mr. Canale suggested discussion among the Board of height-density-scale issues related to the center business district before the Oaktree development team files another petition for rezoning the Battle Green Inn property. This should also include a discussion on the role of the Historic Districts Commission in their approval process. The Board agreed to discuss its goals and policies at their August meetings.

Mass Highway, Waltham Street Marrett Road Intersection: After a brief discussion, the Board agreed that it will be critical for the Selectmen to get behind the proposed modifications to the Marrett-Spring-Bridge intersection if they hope to take advantage of the Massachusetts Highway Department study and design of the Waltham Street-Marrett Road intersection.

#### BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATIONS

27 Muzzey Street: Ms McCall-Taylor described the application for a special permit for modification of a change of use from a dental lab to a hair salon and bridal shop at 27 Muzzey Street. The Board asked staff to continue to bring to its attention Board of Appeals petitions that involve issues of relevance to the Planning Board and its areas of concern.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:10 p.m.

Anthony G. Galaitsis, Clerk