

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
MEETING OF OCTOBER 26, 2005

A regular meeting of the Lexington Planning Board held in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Office Building, was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chairman Manz with members Galaitsis, Hornig, Canale, Harden and planning staff McCall-Taylor, Schilt and Tap present.

***** CENTER INITIATIVE *****

CBD Parking Survey Results: Mr. Schilt reported on the progress of the center parking survey recently sent out by the planning department. The survey had been sent to 250 center business district stakeholders in an effort to discover any trends that might have occurred since a similar survey was conducted in the 1990s. So far, 53 people have responded.

***** 2005 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING *****

Article 2, CB to CD, Battle Green Inn, Proposed Amendment: The Board discussed its position on an amendment proposed by Mr. Julian Bussgang to Mr. Eric Shapiro's Preliminary Site Development and Use Plan (PSDUP) for the rezoning of his property at 1720 Massachusetts Avenue. It has to do with parking requirements. The consensus of the Board was that it would not support the amendment as it tied the PSDUP to the 2005 Zoning By-Law and its effect on the allocation of commercial parking spaces was uncertain.

Ms. Manz said she would draft a statement of the Board's position on the rezoning of the Battle Inn Green and distribute it to Board and staff for comments. She also reported that the Selectmen voted unanimously to support the rezoning. Mr. Galaitsis stated that he would present a minority report at Town Meeting.

***** COORDINATION WITH OTHER TOWN BOARDS & COMMITTEES *****

Tree Committee: Mr. Gerald Paul, Tree Committee chair, was present, along with member John Frey, to outline the committee's goals. It is exploring ways in which the committee's concerns could be addressed as new subdivision proposals begin the permitting process. The group sees its role as one of educating people and heightening their awareness of trees in general. Mr. Paul showed some pictures of center streets where the group feels there is a dearth of trees.

Mr. Frey noted that the committee has been working with the Center Committee and with Mr. Eric Shapiro, owner of the Battle Green Inn. He feels the tree bylaw has been effective but they are now losing ground. The committee members have reviewed 409 sites: 479 trees were approved for removal; 1112 new trees have been planted.

The Board indicated that trees are near the top of its list of important considerations in subdivision review. They welcome the committee's input and noted that the Tree Committee is among those notified of meetings of the town staff's Development Review Team.

Sidewalk Committee: Mr. Craig Weeks, chair of the Sidewalk Committee, said his group would like to establish some rules about sidewalks in right-of-ways. Currently, there is no provision for new sidewalks or sidewalk maintenance in the town budget. They want the Planning Board to consider sidewalks in all development proposals. The committee is particularly interested in the public benefit money in reduced frontage subdivisions as a resource that could be used to further its goals. Mr. Weeks suggested that the Board consult the Sidewalk Committee's web page.

The Planning Board responded that a town sidewalk network is on its radar, but that often abutters to a development do not want to sacrifice existing street trees to sidewalk construction. In addition, some residents believe that sidewalks are too urban looking.

***** ADMINISTRATION OF LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS *****
 SUBDIVISION OF LAND

40 Middleby Road Preliminary Reduced Frontage Subdivision Plan, Davis Property, Public Information Meeting: Present for this item were Mr. Frederick Russell, designing engineer, and Mr. and Mrs. Davis, the property owners. Mr. Russell presented the Davis's preliminary plan for a two-lot subdivision, noting that it was based on the sketch plan that the Planning Board approved in 2003. He showed the Board a proof plan with two lots and a 220' roadway.

He said the plan is to maintain the existing house in front on a 20,000 square foot lot and to build a house on a new Lot 2 in the rear, to be accessed via a new driveway, which will use the existing curb cut. Mr. Russell read the sketch letter from 2003. The new house is proposed to have 2500 square feet of living area. The Davises would prefer to have the public benefit money used in the vicinity of their home.

Board Questions and Comments:

The Board asked that Lot 2 be configured in such a way as to allow Lot 1 building setbacks to conform to the Zoning Bylaw. This may affect the driveway location. In addition, the driveway is too close to the lot line and may be too narrow in terms of public safety. There was considerable discussion about the width of the driveway with Board members expressing a variety of preferences, from Mr. Harden who wanted a 12-foot width with a 2-foot shoulder on each side to Mr. Hornig who wanted an 18-foot width, although he might consider 16'.

The proof plan may not comply with the bylaw in several aspects. Mr. Russell countered that the previous Board had been satisfied. The Board responded that this has no bearing on the current plan.

The Board felt this might be better as a cluster subdivision, which would be possible utilizing the existing accessory apartment as the third unit. The Board indicated that the proposed house is too big and should be no higher than the front house.

No structures may be placed in the sewer easement so the drywell must be moved out of the easement. Mr. Russell stated that it is not really a problem; it happens all the time, and it won't interfere. He felt that DigSafe would ensure that there were no digging accidents. The Board remained unconvinced.

Mr. David Edelman and Ms. Rose Rubin, abutters to the project asked questions about the drainage system and about traffic impacts.

The Board advised the applicant to return with a revised preliminary plan showing, among other things, the first floor elevation, setbacks, and easements on the plans.

DETERMINATION OF GRADE AND CONSTRUCTION OF UNACCEPTED STREETS

20 Estabrook Road, Alla Gordon, Request for Surety Release: Ms. McCall-Taylor reported that the Engineering Division has not yet inspected the roadway at 20 Estabrook Road. Therefore, the Board did not act on the applicant's request for return of surety.

***** REPORTS *****

Staff

Traffic Mitigation Group: Ms. McCall-Taylor reported that the Selectmen are discussing forming a Transportation Mitigation Committee and want to have the Planning Board involved.

Planning Board

Senior Center Siting: Mr. Hornig reported that the Senior Center Siting Committee has seven appointed members and seven liaisons. Its charge is to recommend a site for a new senior center by January 2006.

6-8 Adams Street, Quinn-Perkins: Ms. Manz reported on the recent site walk at the gravel pit, where she learned that the proposed new use would involve less dangerous processes as the containment proposal would be better than what exists on the site now. She felt that the Burlington Board of Health and Conservation Commission are diligent and that the Burlington Planning Board and staff are aware of Lexington residents' concerns.

Regional Groups: Mr. Canale reported on activities of a number of regional bodies' activities including Historic Roads, MAGIC; MAPC, which, at its fall meeting, presented an eye-opening report on municipal finance; and HATS, which advised MA Environmental Protection Agency that it regards the ESPR process for Hanscom Air Force Base as an unnecessary exercise.

***** PLANNING BOARD ORGANIZATION, SCHEDULE *****

Meeting Schedule for November: The Board scheduled regular meetings for November 16 and 30 and pre-Town Meeting sessions on November 7 and 9.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Anthony G. Galaitsis, Clerk