

MINUTES

WARREN PLANNING BOARD MARCH 28, 2011

Meeting was called to order at 7:04PM. Those present were Chairman J. MacDougall, E. Stanley, A. Asselin, M. Jamiel, and M. Heald (left at 8:45PM). C. Thibaudeau arrived at 7:20PM. Atty S. Paul Ryan and Planner, C. Wells were in attendance. F. Massie, R. Mello, and J. Piepowski were absent. W. Nash was at a conference, and Board Secretary P. Costa was absent.

Minutes:

The Board discussed the minutes of the February 28 meeting. Because there were several details missing from the minutes, and since Atty. Ryan has cautioned the Board that minutes should be very detailed, the Chair stated that she would discuss revisions with the secretary for next month's meeting. A motion was made by M. Jamiel, seconded by A. Asselin to put off voting on the minutes until the April meeting. All were in favor.

Special Item:

Presentation by Roger Williams University grad students on Historic Preservation in Warren. Prof. Arnold Robinson and graduate students in Historic Architecture have been surveying the historic buildings in Warren, meeting with an advisory committee of residents and are formulating suggestions that the Planning Board might use in writing the Comp Plan. This work is being done free of charge to Warren and is part of the students' study course. The presentation was given to bring the Planning Board up to date with the work that has been done so far. The group will be making a final presentation in May.

Old Business:

Metacom Avenue Corridor Study Report -

M. Heald reported on discussions of the Metacom Avenue Corridor study group. In her report to the Board she indicated that RI DOT has looked at the Planning Board's request to Stop & Shop to create a service road connecting the proposed gas station in Ocean State Plaza with the rest of the block that extends from Vernon St. to Seymour St. Martha stated that DOT feels a service road into the plaza is physically feasible, and that loss of parking spaces is not good justification for not establishing the service road since the plaza has more parking spaces than it needs.

In conjunction with that idea, DOT has recommended that Planning look at reducing the number of parking spaces in the plaza and elsewhere along Metacom Ave. and adding more green space, particularly as a buffer between the parking area and the roadway. Heald reported that according to DOT, once an area such as Metacom Ave, in proximity to the Kickemuit River, has more than 10% impervious surfaces, the quality of the watershed starts to be degraded. Current research shows that the Metacom Corridor contains 92% impervious surface.

M. Heald also reported that whenever a developer requests a curb cut from DOT, that the Planning Board can, and should, advise DOT if there are any concerns with the developer's request, since the Planning Board's concerns will be considered by DOT when granting the application. Chairman MacDougall pointed out that there have been instances where the applicant has applied to DOT before the Planning Board has made a decision as to what they would like to see for a curb cut, thus making Planning Board input to DOT's decision impossible, and that it should be a DOT policy not to accept such applications from developers until the developer has Planning Board approval.

It is expected that DOT will be at the Town Council's May meeting to present an update of their study.

C. Wells suggested that we invite DOT to our TRC meetings when there are curb cut or traffic issues. It was determined that Ms. Wells would be the person to contact DOT (or any State agency) whenever the Planning Board had need to communicate..

Old Business:

Letter to Tree Commission-

M. Jamiel presented a draft letter to be sent to the Tree Commission with suggestions for issues they might address. Since there were several people absent, in addition to our liason to the Tree Commission, and no one had been able to thoroughly review the letter prior to the meeting, a motion as made by A. Asselin, seconded by C. Thibaudeau to put off any action until the April meeting. All were in favor.

New Business:

Chairman MacDougall reminded members that there would be a special workshop meeting on April 14th, between the Planning Board and the Economic Development Board to review the proposed amendments to the Economic Development section of the Comp Plan which is in the process of being adopted by the Town Council.

Reports:

R. Mello was absent so there was no report from activities of the Tree Commission.

Administrative Officer Report:

W. Nash was absent so there was no Administrative Officer report.

Administrative Matters:

1. Atty. Ryan addressed the need for making agenda items detailed enough that any interested parties would know when a subject in which they have an concern would be discussed. In the same vein, minutes of meetings should be even more detailed than the agenda, since the minutes are what a court looks at in the event of an appeal.

2, Atty. Ryan stated that he thought that the terms 'light assembly' and 'manufacturing' as used for zoning purposes could be, as suggested by A. Asselin, taken from the IRS definitions of same. Otherwise, courts rely on the Webster's Dictionary for definitions.

3. Atty. Ryan proposed that the Planning Board revise both its Policies & Procedures and Regulations to better specify how they want changes between Preliminary Plan and Final Plan to be administered. There should be guidelines in the ordinances defining when the Administrative Officer can approve Final Plan, and when plans need to be reviewed again by the Planning Board.

Chairman MacDougall will be forming a committee to review these issues.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 on a motion by A. Asselin, seconded by C. Thibaudeau.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane R. MacDougall
Chairman