

TOWN OF BARRINGTON PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the April 2, 2013 Meeting
Town Council Chamber, Barrington Town Hall

Reports & Special Items

Item 7.1: Presentation by Save the Bay: Coastal Adaptation Projects

Lacking a quorum, the Chair moved an informational item, the Save the Bay presentation on coastal adaptation projects, to the top of the agenda. Wenley Ferguson of Save the Bay presented a PowerPoint on coastal erosion issues in Barrington and explained ongoing or potential future projects, including ongoing work at Byway Road and planned improvements at Town Beach.

During the presentation, with the arrival of Mr. Dulchinos at 7:39, Mr. McCormick called the meeting to order.

Present: Michael McCormick – Chairman, Michael Carroll, Edgar Adams, Jean Robertson, Paul Dulchinos (arrived at 7:39 p.m.), Lawrence Trim (arrived at 8:05 p.m.)

Also Present: Solicitor Andrew Teitz, Town Planner Philip Hervey, secretary Audra Raleigh

Consent Agenda

Item 3.1: Approve Minutes: March 5, 2013 Regular Business Meeting (CA)

Mr. Carroll moved to approve the consent agenda, which included approval of the minutes of the March 5, 2013 regular business meeting as written. Ms. Robertson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously (6-0).

Public Hearings

Mr. Carroll made a motion to open the public hearing; Mr. Trim seconded, and the motion carried (6-0).

Item 4.1 Town of Barrington Program Year 2013 Community Development Block Grant application

Mr. Hervey began the discussion with the Walker Farm Lane request. West Elmwood Housing Development Corp. of Providence, selected by the Town several years ago to complete the project, is requesting an additional subsidy of \$123,000. There are three remaining unsold units that back up to County Road. The houses, currently priced at \$210,000, have been on the market for quite some time. West Elmwood is requesting the money to offset the cost of reducing the price on the units to a more affordable \$169,000. If approved, this would affect the deed restriction because the units are priced to be affordable to households making up to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). CDBG funding was previously used for paying off the RI Housing Land Bank in 2010, which was holding the property on behalf of the Town. Approximately \$575,000 was used - \$500,000 for the acquisition cost, and the remainder for interest accrued.

Several Planning Board members expressed concern about the request. Comments included:

- West Elmwood made a mistake selling more marketable houses in the interior of the site at 60% and 80% AMI, while assuming three houses, with small back yards built close to County Road, could be sold at 100% AMI.
- The approved plan included a mix of houses at various prices, including five priced at 100% AMI. The mix would change to the mix to two units priced at 100% AMI, and eight 80% AMI units (the house with the accessory apartment is priced at 60% AMI).
- Neighbors to the project and those who had purchased higher-priced units in the development expected a mix of more 100% AMI houses than what would be the case with the additional CDBG funding.

The Board reviewed other proposed activities for a determination of consistency with the Comprehensive Community Plan, a required finding in order for an activity to be included in the CDBG application. The Board found the Cornerstone Adult Services, the Women's Resource Center and Community Housing Land Trust as consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Dulchinos suggested tax incentives for older people to agree to deed-restrict their houses as low-moderate income units. He felt that over 100 existing units would qualify as affordable housing. Doing this would increase inventory as well as help the people who already live here, many for more than 20 years. Mr. Carroll agreed with the deed restriction and added that an additional cash payment tied to renovations on the house could create a sufficient incentive to secure a deed restriction. The current Home Repair Program allows for a five year forgivable loan; most projects are under \$15,000, Mr. Hervey said.

The Board suggested including \$15,000 in planning money in the CDBG application to develop a program to "capture existing affordable houses" – a Comprehensive Community Plan affordable housing strategy.

Mr. Gary Morse approached the Board and handed out a 990 IRS form from West Elmwood, showing net assets for the non-profit. He said the form demonstrates West Elmwood does not need additional subsidy to sell the houses at a lower price if needed. Mr. Morse said he met with the Senior Services Advisory Board to discuss possible use of these grant funds. He suggested that there are over 200 people in the community who need receive heating assistance through the East Bay Community Action Program. He said the Town, by working with EBCAP, could proactively approach people in the community to replace heating systems or deed restrict the land that their homes are on so that they still own their home, but do not own the land.

The Board discussed a recommendation to modify the CDBG proposal by adding \$60,000 for the Home Repair Program, and \$15,000 for the capture existing affordable houses planning study.

Mr. Hervey noted that Walker Farm was initiated as a Town project, as part of the plan to comply with State law requiring 10 percent of housing stock to qualify as affordable housing. The Planning Board is being asked to determine whether the proposed activities are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. McCormick asked for a motion to recommend modifying the CDBG application. Mr. Dulchinos made a motion recommending the addition of \$15,000 for planning and \$60,000 for the Home Repair Program. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion, and the motion carried (6-0).

Mr. Carroll made a motion to find all of the activities, including the two additional items, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Mr. Adams seconded the motion, and the motion carried (6-0).

Mr. Dulchinos made a motion to recommend the priorities and amounts as previously discussed, with Home Repair Program at Priority #1, Planning as #2, Cornerstone as #3, the Land Trust as #4, the Women's Resource Center as #5, and Walker Farm Lane as #6. The motion also stated that the Board recommends no funding for Walker Farm Lane, and that, should the Council include funding for the activity, that West Elmwood be required to improve the buffer on County Road. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion and the motion carried (6-0).

The public hearing was closed at 9:28p.m.

Old Business

There was no old business scheduled.

New Business

Item 6.1: Pre-Application Review: Proposal to subdivide 5.10-acre lot into two lots, including one with an existing house at 54 South Meadow Lane, R-40 zone

Present: Eric Prive, DiPrete Engineering
Stephanie Federico, Anthony DeSisto's office

Ms. Federico noted that the owner is willing to remove garage so there would be no problem with setbacks. There is minimal traffic, as the property is located at the end of a street, South Meadow Lane. Mr. Prive said the old "Sprague Lane" right of way was abandoned to the property owner; he has a document he can provide on this. The proposed private road would widen existing pavement, and be privately maintained.

Mr. McCormick said the plan needs to provide a public turnaround given the fact that one is not available on South Meadow, a long dead-end street. He added the Board will need additional information on the previous abandonment of the right of way.

Item 6.2: Review and Form Subcommittee: Request for Proposals for Streetscape/Wayfinding Signage consultant services

Mr. Hervey described the content of the draft Request for Proposal for the Streetscape/Wayfinding Signage consultant services. Board members asked for some minor changes, including pushing the due date back to mid-May.

A subcommittee was formed to review the proposals for Streetscape/Wayfinding Signage consultant services. Mr. Trim and Mr. Adams, who are also on the TRC, and Ms. Robertson volunteered to the

subcommittee. The Board also will be asking for volunteers from the TRC as well as a representative from the Barrington Business Association.

Item 6.3: Schedule special meeting for Palmer Pointe Master Plan Public Information Meeting.

The Board scheduled two special meetings for the Palmer Pointe master plan public informational meeting: May 13 and May 30, due to the anticipated large public attendance. The May 13 meeting will be held in the Library Auditorium; the May 30 meeting will be held in Council Chamber. Both meetings will start at 7 p.m.

Reports from Planning Board Members

CREB

Mr. Carroll mentioned CREB's recent report that noted a 20% reduction in energy usage from 2009-2012.

Police Cove Park Committee

Mr. Trim described recent work of the Committee, including the issuance of a press release asking for ideas from the public on renaming the park. The Committee also has discussed soliciting public art proposals and food vendors. An ongoing item is a request for a recommendation on whether floating dock storage should be permitted in the area in front of the park next to the bridge and seawall. The next meeting will be on May 29.

Technical Review Committee

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 4.

Comments - Board Members, Council Liaison & Town Planner

No additional comments.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Mr. Carroll, with a second by Ms. Robertson, the Board unanimously (6-0) voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:18 p.m.