

PL ANNING BOARD MINUTES

Special Meeting

November 29, 2006

Board members present:

Art Weber, Chairman Ron Wolanski, Town Planner

Jan Eckhart, Secretary Sam Hogan, Assistant Town Planner

Richard Adams

John Tucker

Colleen Aull

Dave Lawrence

Audrey Rearick

Also Present: Dave Westcott and Krista Moravec of the Maguire Group, Will Gates of Gates Leighton, Michael Ahnrud of Statewide Planning, and Dave Martland representing Kyrikides & Kyrikeides.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am.

Art Weber introduced the project team and summarized how they were selected for the Atlantic Beach Master Plan project.

Dave Westcott gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed Master Plan for the Atlantic Beach District.

Discussion ensued about the geographic limits of the project. Dave Lawrence stressed the importance of sidewalk connections to Second Beach and Paradise Ave. There was consensus that improved pedestrian access was important, but designing sidewalks to other areas was outside the scope of this project.

Jan Eckhart stated that the first step would be to determine a vision for the district – whether it be an eclectic village such as Wickenden Street in Providence or Broadway in Newport, an ocean/sea village, or something else entirely. Once the image is chosen, appropriate infrastructure and landscaping improvements could be selected, and then consideration could be given to connections with other areas.

Discussion ensued about the project schedule (as outlined in the Maguire Group's proposal) and tasks in the contract. Mr. Westcott explained that the first step would be to conduct site visits, then conduct both formal meetings and informal discussions with area business owners and neighborhood residents. This would take place in January, ensuring that area residents rather than the transient summer tourist population are consulted. Mr. Westcott also requested information on potential "Key Informants" for this phase of the project.

Discussion ensued about the potential for shared parking agreements between businesses. Dave Martland explained that there are some informal arrangements now, so there is potential; but business

owners with limited parking might have concerns. Mr. Lawrence raised the possibility of utilizing some of the Easton's Beach parking in Newport. Discussion about the potential of working with Newport ensued.

The need to provide businesses with the town's vision for the district through visual materials such as a design guidebook was discussed. The recently approved Commercial Design Standards were brought up, along with the potential to incorporate specific guidelines/standards for the district into the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, as well as the Design Manual (currently being developed).

The underutilized waterview of Easton's Pond was discussed. Although a few businesses capitalize on the views, most do not. Ways to highlight the views were discussed, as well as the potential to create a pedestrian shoreline trail along the reservoir, possibly connecting to the proposed trail from The Valley.

Stormwater impacts to Atlantic and Easton's Beach were discussed, including the economic impact of beach closures and current status of efforts to improve water quality.

The need to improve the visual character of the district's gateways was raised. Potential methods to screen or detract attention from the Wave Avenue Pump Station and the electric substation were discussed.

Mr. Westcott explained that his firm would spend the next month gathering preliminary data for the project, and that another meeting would be held to discuss results.

The need to involve neighborhood residents and associations was brought up.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30am.