

# **PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

## **SPECIAL MEETING**

**April 29, 2010**

**Planning Board members present: Staff present:**

**Arthur Weber, Chairman Ron Wolanski, Town Planner  
Jan Eckhart, Vice Chairman Mike Miller, Town Solicitor  
Audrey Rearick Roland Chase, Assistant Solicitor  
Richard Adams Jack Kane, Building/Zoning Official  
B.J. Owen Shawn Brown, Town Administrator  
Charlene Rose-Cirillo**

**Zoning Board of Review members present:**

**Peter Van Steeden  
Gregory Schultz**

**The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm.**

**1. Discussion of potential options for zoning ordinance amendments regarding protection of Middletown's historic resources and landscapes, and scenic view sheds from the impacts of development of new buildings and structures.**

**Mr. Weber stated that the purpose of the meeting was for Planning Board and Zoning Board members to discuss with staff the need for amendments to the newly adopted article in the zoning ordinance**

regarding wind turbines. He stated that additional guidance for the boards to protect scenic views and historic landscapes is needed in the ordinance.

Mr. Wolanski described two options for the board to consider: adopt general guidance and procedure to be used by the planning and zoning boards in reviewing applications on a case-by-case basis; and identifying specific scenic views and landscapes that require protection and amend the ordinance to identify and specifically protect those views.

Mr. Miller suggested that a combination of the two options could be considered.

Mr. Weber asked planning board members if they agreed that additional regulation in the ordinance to protect views is required.

There was consensus that additional regulation is needed.

Mr. Eckhart suggested that the identification of important scenic views and landscapes could be a regional effort.

After discussion there was general agreement that identifying resources on a regional basis is not necessary to implement additional regulation in Middletown.

Mr. Eckhart stated that the identification of particular views is important. The adoption of criteria to assist with the review of applications is needed whether particular views are identified or not.

There was discussion of the need for a committee to identify important scenic views and historic landscapes.

Mr. Miller stated that such a committee would have to be established by the Town Council.

**Mr. Chase stated that he could work on an amendment to the ordinance to implement criteria for the boards to use in reviewing applications.**

**Mr. Wolanski stated that it would be important to have some standards against which applications would be judged.**

**There was general consensus that the Solicitor's office and planning staff would develop a draft amendment to implement criteria and a procedure for consideration of scenic views and landscapes in the review wind turbine applications, and that the Planning Board would send a letter to the Town Council requesting the establishment of a committee to be tasked with identifying specific scenic views and landscapes that require protection.**

**Mr. Adams ask that there be consideration of an amendment regarding the development of wind turbines at the Aquidneck Corporate Park. Current fall zone requirements would preclude the development of larger towers on most lots there.**

**Mr. Wolanski stated that focusing an amendment on the particular area of the Aquidneck Corporate Park could be considered spot zoning. If adopted, such modification should be applied to other office and commercial areas with similar use and zoning requirements. Otherwise the town must explain the rationale for not providing the modification for these similar areas.**

**Mr. Brown suggested that providing for the development of additional turbines in the corporate park could, once turbines are installed, inhibit redevelopment of parcels and the eventual buildout of the park.**

**Mr. Miller stated that the purpose for instituting the fall zone requirement was for the protection of public safety. He questioned the rationale that would be used to defend a reduction of the fall zone requirement in one location but not others.**

**The meeting adjourned at 5:50pm**

**Respectfully submitted:**

**Ronald M. Wolanski**

**Town Planner**