

# **PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

**AUGUST 20, 2014 - PUBLIC HEARING**

**Council Chambers**

**Board members present: Others Present:**

**Gladys Lavine, Chair**

**Betty Jane Owen Ron Wolanski, Planning Director**

**Pete Marnane Alison Ring, Principal Planner**

**Charlene Rose-Cirillo Frank Holbrook, Assistant Solicitor**

**Matthew Sullivan**

**Arthur Weber**

**John Ciummo**

**The meeting was called to order by Ms. Lavine at 6:00pm.**

**1. Public Hearing on the Draft Middletown Comprehensive Community Plan.**

**Motion to open the public hearing by Mr. Marnane, seconded by Ms. Owen. Mr. Weber urged that the board look at the big picture when evaluating requested changes. Ms. Lavine invited those who wish to speak to the podium.**

**Ms. Roberta Duffy, 280 Forest Avenue, there are many notable positive changes within the plan and she commended the effort. Her**

one concern was the proposed overlay zoning for the airport. She read her submitted letter to the Planning Board which summarized her concern that the overlay zoning could negatively impact property values. There is currently in place an airport height restriction ordinance which she believes is enough regulation.

Ms. Kathleen Davis, 500 Mitchell's Lane, is concerned about the sports complex proposed for the Boulevard and Tibbitts properties. She read her submitted letter to the Planning Board, citing proposed language on page 55 of the draft plan which states that an objective would be to divert traffic away from East Main Road. She suggested that diverting traffic to Mitchell's Lane, a residential neighborhood, would be inappropriate and a safety issue and requests that that language be removed. She would not like to see the Tibbitts property developed into ballfields because it is used now for the quiet enjoyment of equestrians and families.

Ms. Sarah Poirier, 127 Mitchell's Lane, is concerned about the traffic on Mitchell's Lane and how the proposed sports complex would increase the amount of traffic. She requests that the town not allow access from Mitchell's Lane to the proposed ballfields. She has observed that the soccer fields at Wyatt Road are often unused in the summer. Currently her family can't ride bicycles on Mitchell's Lane. She suggested that bicycle lanes and accessibility by bike to open space properties such as the beaches should be encouraged in the plan. Ms. Poirier asked how much the sports complex is going to

cost including annual maintenance and suggested that the town budget that money instead for bicycle improvements so children can ride their bicycles to the beach and school. Ms. Poirier is also concerned about the development of ballfields and their potential light pollution could have on wildlife.

Ms. Alice Curran, 1 Oak View Terrace, questioned how this plan would change the zoning of Bay Ridge. Mr. Wolanski explained that the draft plan does not propose any changes to the future land use designation or zoning for BayRidge.

Ms. Gayle Greenwood, 308 Forest Avenue, was happy to see language strengthened restricting big box development by placing a strict 35,000sf limit on the footprint. She is also in favor of the mixed-use in commercial areas concept. She has concerns regarding the airport overlay hazard zone and mentioned that town already has a height restriction ordinance in place which should be enough.

Mr. Robert Silva, Esq., Law Office of Silva, Martland, Offenber, was present on behalf of David Bakarsky, property owner of the Polo Center. Nancy Letendre, Esq., Mason & Associates, was also present, on behalf of the property owner. A letter was sent to Planning Board and Town Planner including an analysis completed by Ms. Letendre. Mr. Silva asked that those documents become part of the official record. Mr. Bazarsky has planned to expand the Polo Center on Aquidneck Avenue south to lots designated 108 and 109

which are currently undeveloped. Mr. Bazarsky would like to change the designation from residential to limited & office business in order to allow for a mix of office business and medical offices on the site. Mr. Silva pointed out that the draft plan had the change proposed for some time, however, it was reverted back to residential in the most recent draft. Mr. Silva said from a planning perspective having 6 or 8 single family homes there does not make sense. If there is concern about residential continuing to move south along Aquidneck Avenue, Mr. Silva said the board could make a decision to stop at the Bazarsky property. Mr. Marnane asked what would keep it high end stores, as the proposal described. Mr. Bazarsky said it just makes business sense, otherwise other tenants would leave. Mr. Weber said that traffic getting in and out of the new residential subdivision off Green End Avenue may be difficult and asked if Mr. Bazarsky would allow access through his property to Aquidneck Avenue from the paper road. Mr. Bazarsky said he did not know and was concerned about creating a cut through.

Mr. Robert Silva, Esq., representing Mr. William Gill and Mr. David Lawrence, property owners of Plat 111, lots 23B and 23 off of West Main Road, expressed their interest in maintaining high density residential designation for their properties. The current draft comprehensive plan has proposed medium density residential for the properties. The properties have a combined size of approximately 12 acres with two accesses including one on Thelma Lane. The property is about to be under contract with a developer who is interested in

constructing a “BayRidge-like” development of approximately 40 units. The property owners/ developers will be requesting a zone change from R-20 to R-10 in order to pursue this development. Mr. Silva said he understands why the plan is proposing the change in order to make the land use designation consistent with current zoning, however, if the zoning were to change as is being proposed, it would then require a Comprehensive Plan amendment. Mr. Weber asked if a “BayRidge-like” development meant an over 55 age community. Mr. Silva said yes, little to no impact on school system.

Mr. David Martland, Esq., was present to represent Mr. Bob Reed owner of Aquidneck Self Storage on Aquidneck Avenue. A letter and map had been submitted to the Planning Board. The property south of the current self storage business, 114 747, has been acquired by the Reed’s for expansion purposes to pursue a mixed concept of business plus a caretaker apartment. It is currently designated as medium density residential on the Future Land Use Plan and they request that a portion of the lot be changed to Limited & Office Business. The Planning Board was invited to visit the site if that would help in their determination.

Ms. M Theresa Santos, 214 Morrison Avenue, said that this is an aging community and would like to see the Town pursue affordable senior apartments. She said many seniors in the community struggle to afford the cost of living in a single family home on their own. Small one bedroom rental apartments would meet their needs better and

**allow them to stay in Middletown.**

**There were no further comments and Ms. Lavine said the board would like to take some time to consider the comments that have been received. Motion to continue the public hearing until September 4, 2014 at 6pm was made by Mr. Marnane, seconded by Ms. Owen. Motion to adjourn by Ms. Owen, seconded by Mr. Marnane.**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.**

**Respectfully submitted:**

**Alison Ring**

**Principal Planner**