



## Town of Middletown Planning Department

350 East Main Rd., Middletown RI 02842 (401) 849-4027

### PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

**DECEMBER 15, 2015**

Town Council Chambers, 350 East Main Rd., Middletown, RI

#### **Board members present:**

Charlene Rose-Cirillo, Chair  
Art Weber, Vice Chair  
Betty Jane Owen, Secretary  
Matthew Sullivan  
Paul Croce  
John Ciummo  
Jan Eckhart

Ron Wolanski, Planning Director  
Drew Pflaumer, Principal Planner  
Peter Regan, Town Solicitor

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

#### **1. Public Workshop – Presentation and discussion of proposed amendments to the Middletown Zoning Map to address required consistency with the Future Land Use Plan of the Middletown Comprehensive Community Plan.**

Ms. Cirillo stated that this meeting is to accept public input on proposed zoning map amendments to provide for consistency between the comprehensive plan's Future Land Use Plan, and the zoning map. The board will accept comments and answer questions, but will not issue its recommendations during this meeting. Mr. Weber brought special attention to the fact that the proposed changes are the result of a 3-4 year process in the development of the Comprehensive Plan with multiple opportunities for public input.

Mr. Wolanski reviewed the purpose of the proposed zone changes, including the need to ensure consistency between the comprehensive plan future land use plan, and the zoning map. He reviewed each of the six proposed changes. He noted the written correspondence that had been received and forwarded to the Planning Board on each of the proposed changes:

Map 1, West Main Rd. – Letter from Rhode Island Airport Corporation dated Dec. 11, 2015 expressing opposition to the proposed change.

Map 2, Boulevard/Tibbets land – No written comments.

Map 3, Forest Ave. – No written comments.

Map 4, Two-mile Corner- email from Lori Tarpinian, 4 Yarnell Ave., received Dec. 14, 2015, expressing opposition to the proposed change.

Map 5, Honeyman Ave. – email from Joseph David Roche, Jr., 178 Honeyman Ave, received Nov. 8, 2015; email from Allen Gray, 242 Honeyman Ave., received November 5, 2015; letter from Frank Campbell, 181 Honeyman Ave., dated November 18, 2015; undated letter from Karen E. Reese, 148 Honeyman Ave., received Dec. 11, 2015. All expressed concern or opposition to the proposed zone change.

Map 6, Paradise Ave. – No written comments.

Following Mr. Wolanski's presentation, on a motion by Ms. Cirillo, seconded by Mr. Eckhart, the meeting was opened for public input.

Regarding the proposed amendment impacting several lots on West Main Rd., Map 1, there were no comments.

Regarding the Boulevard/Tibbetts properties, Map 2, there were no public comments.

Regarding proposed zone changes to properties on Forest Ave., Map 3:

Alice Curran of 429 Forest Ave. stated that she owns two of the subject parcels and supports the rezoning to residential. She stated the town should also address West House, which is currently in residential use, but is zoned office business.

Mr. Wolanski stated that the current proposed zoning amendments are being considered in order to bring the zoning map into conformity with the future land use plan. The West House property is currently designated on both the future land use plan and the zoning map for office business development, so there is no inconsistency. The Planning Board is aware of the situation regarding the current residential use of the property, and it will be discussed at a later time. Mr. Regan, and Ms. Cirillo both noted that discussion of the West House property was not on the agenda for this meeting.

Regarding the proposed rezoning at Two-mile corner, the Bank Newport property, Map 4, there were no public comments.

Regarding the rezoning involving property on Honeyman Ave., Map 5:

Fidalgo Noble of 20 Honeyman Avenue voiced his opposition to the proposed amendment, citing concerns about increased traffic and the loss of the rural character that attracted him to the area three years ago.

Paul Berdy Jr. of 23 Homestead Place voiced his opposition to the proposed amendment, citing concerns about increased traffic, increased sprawl, and the resulting decreased safety for his children and others.

Paul Berdy of 22 Homestead Place voiced his opposition to the proposed amendment, citing concerns about increased traffic and the resultant noise.

Karen Reese of 148 Honeyman Avenue voiced her opposition to the proposed amendment, directing attention to her letter and specifically citing her concern about what would happen to an access restriction if the property were sold in the future. She expressed concerns about kids cutting through on foot to get to Gaudet Middle School (accessed from Aquidneck Avenue), and stating that she views this proposal as helping no one but the business owner.

Antone Silvia of 170 Honeyman Avenue, former owner of the parcel in question, stated that a term of the sale of the parcel was that there was to be no access from Honeyman Avenue and voiced his concerns about the increase in traffic speed and volume.

Joseph Roche of 178 Honeyman Avenue voiced his opposition to the proposed amendment, citing concerns about the area at large becoming commercial rather than remaining residential.

Tim Hench of 11 Homestead Place voiced his opposition to the proposed amendment, stating that Honeyman Avenue should be consistent with itself, not with the desires of a single business owner.

Victoria Lewis of 11 Homestead Place voiced her opposition to the proposed amendment. She questioned when the property was sold to the current owner. Mr. Wolanski stated that he did not have that information. Ms. Lewis then stated her concerns about a reduction in quality of life and that since the parcel proposed for rezoning was purchased as residential it should remain that way.

Kelly Armitage of 31 Homestead Place voiced her opposition to the proposed amendment, citing concerns about increased traffic and sprawl, danger to children walking to school, and danger to families walking pets along Honeyman Avenue.

Kevin Behan of 110 Honeyman Avenue voiced his opposition to the proposed amendment, citing that he and his five children use the street recreationally and would be concerned for their safety with increased traffic. He also cited concerns about property values diminishing and referenced his repeated trips before the planning and zoning boards attempting to protect his property rights and values. He stated that he does not desire commercial uses encroaching from Aquidneck, again citing concerns about increased traffic volume and speed.

Ruth Miles of 142 Honeyman Avenue voiced her opposition to the proposed amendment, citing concerns about the increase in traffic and noise, specifically calling to attention that when she moved there 32 years ago the area was full of cows and cornfields on a dead-end street.

Rita Finn of 209 Corey Lane voiced her opposition to the proposed amendment, stating that she wants the area to remain quiet and a family-friendly neighborhood. She also cited concerns about the sprawl of business.

Edward Silvia of 232 Honeyman Avenue voiced his opposition to the proposed amendment, stating that he wants the area to remain residential rather than becoming more commercial space.

Frank Campbell of 181 Honeyman Avenue again voiced his opposition to the proposed amendment, this time specifically stating that this amendment was included solely for the benefit of one businessman.

Richard Finn of 209 Corey Lane applauded the work done to create the Comprehensive Plan and voiced his opposition to the proposed amendment, objecting to compromising the residential character and high quality of life that attracted him to the area.

David Martland Esq., representing Middletown Self Storage (owner of the parcel proposed for rezoning), spoke to address some concerns that had been voiced up to this point. Specifically, he pointed out the agreement recorded with the Town restricting access to the parcel to Aquidneck Avenue and acknowledging the ability of the Planning Board to impose further restrictions and Middletown Self Storage's willingness to cooperate on these matters. Mr. Martland also explained the long-term intent of Middletown Self Storage to merge the two lots and restrict all access to the existing entrance on Aquidneck Avenue. He brought to everyone's attention the significant review process necessary between the rezoning of the parcel and the construction of any expansion of Middletown Self Storage.

Antone Silvia again spoke to voice his concern about a driveway being created off of Honeyman Avenue to access an apartment he states he has been informed of Middletown Self Storage's intention to build.

Joan Campbell of 181 Honeyman Avenue voiced her opposition to the proposed amendment, citing concerns about setting precedent for the expansion of commercial uses from Aquidneck Avenue to Honeyman Avenue and pointing to the increase in light and noise that would come from both increased traffic and the expansion of the existing Middletown Self Storage facility, were it to occur.

Janet Hawkins of 228 Honeyman Avenue voiced her opposition to the proposed amendment, stating she does not believe the existing structure should be altered and citing concerns about construction noise and construction traffic.

Town Councilman Antone Viveiros asked if the board was in favor of the proposed zoning amendments, and stated that he has sought support for a joint meeting of the Planning Board, Zoning Board and Town Council to discuss how to achieve consistency between the zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan. Mr. Regan advised Mr. Viveiros that this meeting was not the proper venue for that discussion. Mr. Viveiros asked if the proposed amendments were voted on by the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC). Mr. Wolanski stated that not all of the items resulting in the proposed zoning changes were voted by the CPUC, since some proposals, including the Honeyman Ave. proposal, were presented following transfer of the draft plan to the Planning Board. Further revisions to the draft were made during the Planning Board's review and public input process. Councilman Viveiros stated his belief that the CPUC should have seen and voted on any proposed amendments and expressed his desire to argue against their adoption. Ms. Cirillo stated that this concern should have been addressed at an earlier stage, prior to the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town Council.

Town Councilwoman Theresa Santos voiced her concerns about allowing any entrance onto Honeyman Avenue, citing, anecdotally, a past case of a restricted entrance being opened to allow through traffic. She also voiced concerns about losing the rural character of the area.

At this point, with no additional comments on the proposed Honeyman Avenue zoning amendment, Ms. Cirillo stated that no decisions would be made regarding the proposed zoning amendments at this meeting.

Regarding the proposed rezoning on Paradise Ave., Map 6:

Kathleen Greenman of 300 Paradise Ave asked if her question regarding impact on property value had been addressed. Mr. Wolanski stated that the Tax Assessor had provided a response. A copy was provided to Ms. Greenman. Mr. Wolanski stated that the assessor advised that the assessed value of property would not change as a result of the zoning change, but market value for larger lots with potential for subdivision would be impacted. Ms. Greenman expressed her desire to know the exact formula used in determining the tax assessment and how zoning is incorporated, at which point both Mr. Wolanski and Ms. Cirillo advised her to speak directly with the Tax Assessor regarding this inquiry. Ms. Greenman then suggested that both sides Paradise Avenue should be rezoned to R-40 rather than seeing the east side rezoned to R-60, making the area internally consistent.

There being no one else wishing to speak, **motion** by Ms. Owen, seconded by Mr. Ciummo, to close the public input portion of the meeting. **Vote:** 7-0-0.

Ms. Cirillo reiterated that the Planning Board will not take action during this meeting, but that the matter will be discussed again during its next regular meeting, which is scheduled for January 13, 2016.

**Motion** to adjourn by Mr. Weber, seconded by Ms. Owen. **Vote:** 7-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted:  
Ronald Wolanski  
Planning Director