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TOWN OF JOHNSTON
PLANNING BOARD

100 IRONS AVENUE, JOHNSTON, RI 02919
TEL.: (401) 231-4000 FAX: (401) 231-4181

MEMBERS
Christine M. Cunneen
John Laurito
Peggy A. Passarelli
Mohamad Y. Sasa
SOLICITOR
Joseph R. Ballirano, Esq.

MINUTES

DECEMBER 6, 2011

The Planning Board of the Town of Johnston held its regular monthly meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 6, 2011, at the Johnston Senior Center, 1291 Hartford Ave.

I. **Call to Order**

II. **Roll Call & Determination of Quorum**

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present for the Planning Board (quorum): Michael A. Campagnone/*Vice Chair*; Christine Cunneen, Lauren A. Garzone/*Secretary*, John Laurito, Mohamad Y. Sasa, and Anthony Verardo/*Chair*. Also present for the Town: Joseph R. Ballirano, Esq., *Planning Board Solicitor*; Pamela M. Sherrill, AICP, *Administrative Officer/Town Planner*; Rian Smith, *Assistant Planner*, and Dianne Edson, stenographer.

III. **Minutes**

Motions to accept November 6 meeting minutes (by L. Garzone, 2nd by M. Campagnone—discussion, none) carried, 6-0.

IV. **Public Hearings** — none

V. **New Business**

Advisory opinion on proposed conveyance of town lots on **River Drive** (on Pocasset River)—A.P. 6/Lots 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, + 144—purchased with NRCS funding to **Municipal Land Trust**. (PB 11-27)

Town Planner reviewed Town purchase of seven houses on River Drive/Street (funded by \$1.8 million federal grant through NRCS). Lots are to be transferred to Municipal Land Trust (MLT) as open space and wildlife habitat. House demolition anticipated in Jan. or Feb. after utilities cut off. To establish buffer for neighborhood, DPW to stabilize with loam and seed in spring and mow front 10-12'; rear of lots to revert to natural state. Re stormwater management to Pocasset River, hay bales and silt fences to be installed, monitored by Planner, and stormwater pollution prevention (SWPP) plan to be prepared according to DEM requirements. She described MLT criteria, adopted by Town Council, for guiding acquisition and protection based on ecological values, use needs and location concerns. Proposed signage to acknowledge federal funding and town support.



Judy Kawa, MLT chair, cited River Drive as positive addition to neighborhood and to recent MLT acquisitions. She reiterated plan to leave River Drive as natural as possible. Open space generally expected to add value to surrounding properties, with less congestion and increased access to river. Lots are never to be sold; preserved in perpetuity. Current lot divisions retained to avoid surveying costs. MLT constitutes autonomous body associated with Town.

Abutters expressed concern with location of lot lines and potential upstream flooding after demolition. Also with proximity to proposed SWAT practice and Fire Department training in vacant houses prior to demolition. They questioned particulars of proposed Town maintenance. Chairperson focused discussion on conveyance of lots.

Jean Lynch, Northern RI Conservation District, explained larger NRCS purpose of alleviating flooding in floodplain through wetland restoration.

*Motion to send **positive advisory opinion** to Town Council—by L. Garzone, 2nd by C. Cunneen; discussion, none—carried, 6-0.*

VI. Old Business

Workshop on proposed amendments to Subdivision Regulations in re “Character of Land” (§ III. A-2). (PB '11 -26)

Planner suggested Board review 2007 rewrite of Subdivision Regulations. She outlined changes to general requirements and design standards. These included sustainable development/low impact design; right of site access; process for submitting waiver requests; lot area calculations to exclude wetlands, buffers, steep slopes (>15%), outcrops/ledge; traveled way for pavement width from 34' to 24'; granite curbing; and storm drainage, privately maintained. Character of land renamed to “land suitable for development” based on natural characteristics and suitability for development; and identification and definition of critical resource areas; Boulder Drive used as model for calculating maximum number of dwelling units (minus steep slopes). Discussion of stone wall.

Planner concluded workshop by suggesting subcommittee with two Board members to review Regs section by section.

VII. Administrative Report & Special Items

Planner cited expected January hearings of Sims Metal Processing Facility master plan and Putnam Pike—CVS preliminary plan. Detail pending on Stop & Shop landscape plan. Planner cited high school boiler, Mill Street bridge, Town Council approval of Planned District amendments, and zoning online (code 360) version. Pocasset Mills purchased adjacent lot at 1284 Plainfield Street, and Rich Box operation has moved there.

EPA Centerdale Manor Super Fund hearing to consider DPW, 100 Irons Avenue, as prospective site for confined disposal facility (CDF) with potential redevelopment as ball fields, bike path extension, parking area, and stormwater management. Workshop scheduled after Board meeting Jan. 11 at Barnes Elementary School on subject.

Town Solicitor recommended staff/Planning/Zoning meeting on wireless telecom prior to full Board review.



VIII. General Business

*2012 calendar of meetings **adopted** subject to change to November 13 (to avoid general elections)—motion by M. Campagnone, 2nd by J. Laurito; discussion, none—carried, 6–0.*

IX. Adjournment

December 6, 2011, Planning Board meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Lauren A. Garzone, SECRETARY