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TOWN OF JOHNSTON PLANNING BOARD

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Tuesday, October 1, 2013, 6:00 p.m.

Johnston Senior Center, 1291 Hartford Ave., Johnston, RI 02919

MINUTES

The Planning Board of the Town of Johnston held their regular meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 1, 2013, at the Johnston Senior Center, 1291 Hartford Ave.

I. **Call to Order & Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Quorum present for the Board: Lauren Garzone, Chair; John Laurito, Vice-Chair; Peggy Passarelli, Albert Cournoyer and Christine Cunneen. Absent: Mohamad Sasa and Lori Pezzullo.

Also present for the Town: Joseph R. Ballirano, Planning Board Solicitor; Pamela Sherrill, Town Planner and Administrative Officer; and Susan Leonardi, Planning Clerk.

II. **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Cournoyer requested a motion to accept the minutes. Ms. Passarelli seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken; all in favor.

III. **Old Business**

Johnston Comprehensive Plan Rewrite

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Review department head questionnaire on status of Services and Facilities, Recreation and Circulation elements since 2007

Pamela Sherrill, Town Planner presented information to the Board. She stated that questionnaires had been sent to all department heads regarding changes since 2007, accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses. Additional comments/information was also requested from the mayor regarding town hall and welfare services, two areas addressed in the prior plan.

The Police Department and the DPW both reported that back-up generators have been installed and are operational at Town buildings. The Hazard Mitigation Plan must be updated again for 2016. The Police, School and Recreation Departments all reported the same challenge to provide afterschool activities for teens ages 12-15 to reduce delinquency. Departments are working collaboratively for programs at Ferri Middle School but there is a need for continued funding.

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Fire Department stated that their strengths were new equipment, new station on Hartford Avenue, and all stations are now staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. Their challenges are that Station 3 needs renovation and that western Johnston needs additional water pressure.

The DPW reported that the Mill Street Bridge was replaced at no cost to the town. Morgan Avenue Bridge, scheduled for replacement by RIDOT in 2013-14, will be replaced without using taxpayer funds or raising taxes. RIDOT LEAP program repaved 8 roads at no cost to the Town. CDBG funds are increasing; NRCS purchased 7 flooded dwellings and also plans to reconstruct the culvert at LaFazia Drive and So. Bennett Drive. CDBG-DR funds will be used to relocate two pump stations at LaFazia Drive and So. Bennett Drive outside of flooded areas. The boiler was replaced at the High School.

The DPW reported challenges of storage space for records and vehicles; a salt storage shed is needed. Another challenge is that due to budget constraints, less people are doing more work. C. Cunneen questioned electronic storage of records. P. Sherrill stated that it was not feasible at this time, but something to think about for the future.

Sewer construction, such as Memorial Plat sewer project were made at no cost to the Town. The 2010 Wastewater Facility Plan was written by NBC, also at no cost to the Town. Sewer maintenance fees are now being assessed and collected. RIRRC is relocating the booster water pump station at Central Avenue and Vinagro has constructed a water pump station at Green Hill Road that will service the C & D facility as well as Broadrock's gas plant. Record keeping has improved. Future goals include the potential to privatize the municipal water service and cleaning and painting the Golden View Drive water tank. Sewer line extension according to town standards, would be the responsibility of developers. Construction of a water storage tank in the vicinity of RIRRC could be an investment that would attract industrial developers in the low pressure water portion of the Johnston Water District.

Parks & Recreation reports that staffing is up and they have good rapport with the School Department. They are in need of more play structures and passive recreation areas. As proposed by the Planning Board in the Capital Improvement Program, a regional recreation facility, possibly located at Memorial Park would benefit many people in and around Johnston. Memorial Park is not large enough for this type of facility. J. Laurito indicated that although this doesn't have administration support, it might be more attractive if a user fee structure were implemented. C. Cunneen mentioned that a Public Safety complex housing the fire and police departments could be considered within the 20 year planning period. Long range consolidation of facilities might be appropriate as a separate Services and Facilities item.

School department states that the modular classrooms at Barnes, Thornton and Winsor Hill are outdated. The schools themselves need to be larger with potential consideration of one large centrally located elementary school for possible consideration within the twenty year planning period. The existing school buildings would be re-used, possibly as the regional recreation center previously discussed. Video surveillance has been installed in the schools and a new bus depot has been built. There are approximately 3800 students from the Town of Johnston, 3100 in Johnston schools and 700 enrolled in private schools. J. Laurito indicated that if school facilities were better, there is the potential that higher caliber students could be retained in the public school system.

The Senior Center has received national accreditation and is already outgrowing its space, particularly the parking lot and the fitness center.

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The Mohr Library is located in a new building and needs more programs for middle school youth and need their acquisitions to keep pace with growth. That concludes discussion of the Services and Facilities Element.

Circulation Element– no changes have been made to date.

IV. Administrative Report

GIS mapping for the 99 assessor's plans has been delivered by AppGeo. Future land use map was shown to the Planning Board. This was developed by Mary Hutchinson, a subconsultant to APPGeo. The online version coming next and it is very detailed.

There are 1.8 acres on Bishop Hill Road that is currently owned by the State. An abutter is interested in purchasing and it is appropriate for a single family dwelling. It may be appropriate for affordable housing. The abutter was referred to the Mayor.

The planner and town engineer prepared a memo to Town Council with the following conditions of approval for consideration for sale of town owned lots at Ashley Estates:

- The description of Lot 17 to include the wetlands
- Lot 17 building permit to include DEM approved stormwater maintenance facility for the existing Ashley Court drainage area
- Any subdivision of Lot 17 requires approval of the Planning Board

The Town Council approved the Zone Change for Pick n Pull.

Summary of the 2013 Legislative Session:

- The Tolling period was extended until 6/30/15
- Regulations regarding slope of land were amended so that the slope of land cannot be excluded in calculations and new definitions were given for slope of land. Conservation Development regulations currently allow development on slopes up to 8%. This will require amendment and should be included in the Comprehensive Plan rewrite of the Land Use Element.

Morgan Health Center parking lot construction and facility upgrade will not be coming before the Planning Board; only appearing before the Zoning Board.

Motion to adjourn was made by P. Passarelli. Seconded by Mr. Cournoyer. A voice vote was taken; all in favor.

Adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Peggy A. Passarelli
SECRETARY