

# NORTH SMITHFIELD INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2008

PRESENT: Michael R. Dowling; Robert E. Nault; Kenneth L. Peloquin; Alfred S. Puccetti;  
Bernice F. Salzberg

ALSO: Robert B. Lowe, Town Administrator; Michael Phillips, Town Planner; Scott A.  
Gibbs and Michelle M. Godin of New England Economic Development Services,  
Inc.

ABSENT: None

## Call to Order

Peloquin called the meeting to order at 5:39 PM.

## Public Comment

There was no public comment.

## Discussion: Planned Corporate Zone

Peloquin indicated that the draft Planned Corporate Zone, as well as the draft Mixed-Use Branch Village Zone, was provided for comparative review and reference. Phillips stated that there was a meeting with the Town's zoning consultant to discuss the proposed floating zone. Phillips said the floating zone, when desired for a specific parcel, would have to be presented to both the Planning Board and the Town Council.

Gibbs recalled the history from which the floating zone is being proposed. Gibbs explained a previous effort to zone an area referred to as Whortleberry Hill for commercial/industrial development. Gibbs said the Town Council denied the rezoning due to lack of specific information. Gibbs stated that this concern will be relevant wherever a proposal surfaces for a masterplanned park. Gibbs emphasized that the proposed floating zone is not being suggested specifically for Whortleberry Hill. Gibbs said the proposed Planned Corporate Zone is an attempt to respond to the Town Council's concerns by establishing criteria for a commercial/industrial park development. The floating zone could be applied to any land area in the Town that meets the criteria established in the Planned Corporate Zone. And, such a project would proceed through the usual public process via submission to the Planning Board and Town Council. Lastly, Gibbs said such a project would require Town participation.

Phillips indicated that the Ordinance Review Committee would be meeting at 7 PM on Wednesday, May 7, 2008 at the Primrose Fire Department to review and discuss the draft Planned Corporate Zone, and invited Commission participation at the meeting. Phillips noted that he would like the "Design Parameters" to be amended to state "Access must be via a functionally classified State road and must be within three-quarter (.75) mile of a limited access highway versus one-half (.5). Gibbs said the draft zone could also be amended to incorporate green initiatives in light of the fact that the Commission attempts to promote quality development.

Gibbs explained that the Highland Corporate Park will soon be unveiling its own green initiatives. In particular, Gibbs mentioned the issues of renewal energy and LEED certification. Peloquin inquired about LEED. Gibbs said LEED means Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. Furthermore, Gibbs stated that Rhode Island has only one (1), private LEED certified building, but offers no incentive for such commercial investment. According to Gibbs, Rhode Island has enabling legislation that allows

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communities to forego assessments on renewable energy investments for residential properties only. Gibbs said he would like the legislation to be amended to include commercial real estate.

Peloquin noted that Thomas Friedman, the author of "The World is Flat", is presenting a free lecture at Brown University on Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## Update: Branch Village District

Peloquin reported that the Branch Village Task Force met with its consultant, Pare Corporation, recently to discuss desired build out. Peloquin stated that Pare will also be considering improved traffic flow at the intersection of Route 146A and St. Paul Street. Peloquin noted that the "Branch Village District" was never a village; therefore, it may be difficult to create a village in an area that has existing structures and has served as a thoroughfare.

Lowe mentioned that the Town is seeking federal funding for infrastructure in the Branch Village District. According to Lowe, both Kennedy and Reed will be invited to tour the area and asked to pursue funding for the project. Lowe said the Town should know if the funding is possible by July 2008.

## Update: Commercial Developments

Lowe recalled that the Stop & Shop project on Route 102 is scheduled to commence in spring of 2009. Nault concurred that the project is slated to move forward. Lowe then mentioned that the Jehovah Witnesses are seeking to locate a facility on the same side of Route 102 as Stop & Shop. There was also brief discussion about The Homestead Group ceasing activities at Homestead Gardens and possibly the St. Paul Street facility. Lowe said that The Homestead Gardens has been re-evaluating its leased space due to reductions in State funding. Phillips mentioned that the owner of the Homestead Gardens property is considering an indoor soccer complex for the site. Phillips also mentioned that Bob Branchaud is having difficulty in arranging an easement for the back parcel on Industrial Drive, formerly owned by Hasbro.

Gibbs inquired about the status of the Dowling Village project. Phillips said the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management has not yet made a decision as to whether the Dowling Village project receives preliminary determination or requires a formal request. Peloquin mentioned that the landscape improvements are very attractive and the area, overall, as been significantly improved.

## Review and Comment: Web Site

Gibbs apologized for not making the site available to the Commission earlier and requested that the members review the site and provide comments via email or phone at their convenience.

## Adjournment

Prior to adjourning the meeting, Gibbs suggested that the Commission consider conducting their meetings at The Halstead at Slatersville Mill. The Commission concurred. Peloquin reminded the Commission about the tour of Banneker's facility at 4:30 PM on Wednesday, May 7, 2008. The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. Peloquin  
Chairman