

February 5, 2013

7:30, Upper Level Mtg Room

Members Present: Ms. Roberts, Mr. Rimsky, Ms. Gager, Mr. Frank, Ms. Jahnke

Alternates Present: Mr. Osborne, Mr. Carey

Alternates Absent: Ms. Bishop-Wrabel

Staff Present: Ms. Hill, Ms. White

Also Present: Mr. Looney, Consultant, Mr. Fitzherbert, Mr. Bedini, First Selectman Lyon, Mr. Charles, Mr. Talbot

Ms. Roberts called the Meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Seated: Ms. Roberts, Ms. Jahnke, Mr. Frank, Mr. Rimsky, Mr. Osborne (for Ms. Gager)

Consideration of the Minutes

The Planning Commission considered the minutes from the 1-8-13 meeting.

Motion:

To accept the January 8, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Planning Commission as submitted,

by Mr. Frank, seconded by Ms. Jahnke, passed by 5-0 vote.

New Applications

There were no new applications to discuss.

OTHER BUSINESS

Referral from Board of Selectmen/8-24/Cell Tower at 10 Blackville Road :

First Selectman Lyon distributed copies of a sheet that has highlights of the proposed Option and Lease Agreement between the Town and Homeland Towers LLC, Site Plan, Compound Plan, Southern Elevation, cellular coverage maps and photos of what the proposed tower would look like. Representatives of the Planning Commission had previously had an opportunity to review the terms of the proposed agreement, had attended the Town Informational Meeting on February 2 and had an opportunity to review the balloon float on that date.

7:50 pm - Ms. Gager arrives and is seated.

First Selectman Lyon explained the highlights of the lease and discussed the other documentation. He stated that if the Town chose a "tree" shape for the proposed cell tower, then from the majority of the viewsheds the tower would look like a tree amongst trees. The Commission looked at the maps and discussed telecommunication coverage to be afforded by the tower

Mr. Frank stated that Homeland Towers was also in negotiation with the Town of Morris for a tower

to be erected at the Morris Transfer Station. Homeland representatives had explained that the Morris Tower should be able to communicate with this proposed Washington tower ,which would add to the area of coverage.

Mr. Frank noted that the Planning Commission had been dealing with potential lease arrangements for a cell tower at this site for two years and had made a site visit. He noted that a lease of town property required a report from the Commission, and asked whether the Commission was prepared to make such report at this meeting. It was the consensus of the Commission that they would move forward with a resolution.

There was a brief discussion regarding letters of support for the proposed tower as well as expressions of concern.

Mr Frank proposed the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission approves the leasing by the Town of Washington of a portion of the grounds of the Town Highway Department Facility at 10 Blackville Road to Homeland Towers LLC for the purpose of erecting a radio transmission tower and related facilities under terms substantially in accordance with those set forth in the proposed Option and Lease Agreement between the Town and Homeland presented to this Commission, with such changes therein as are acceptable to the Board of Selectmen and any other town governmental entities having jurisdiction. The Planning Commission finds that such project at such location, as presented, is consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development in that it will enhance a village center by bringing wireless telephone and related communications coverage to the Washington Depot area, including the Town Hall government center, police, fire and emergency services, and the business and residential communities located there. This resolution constitutes the report of the Planning Commission required under Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Motion:

to adopt the resolution

by Mr. Frank, seconded by Ms. Gager, passed by 5-0 vote.

Plan of Conservation and Development

Comments on Previous Drafts:

The Commissioners had a lengthy discussion regarding the contents of the drafts. It was the consensus of the Commission that they would like to schedule a special meeting to go through the drafts in depth.

The Planning Commission scheduled a special meeting for February 19, 2013 at 7:30 pm at Bryan Memorial Town Hall in the Upper Level Meeting Room to review the Demographics and Housing, Economic Development, and Village Centers Drafts in depth.

Mr. Fitzherbert stated that he has read the drafts and agrees with the Planning Commission that the documents should be more specific and forthright.

Mr. Bedini feels that the Commissioners would have been able to write any of the drafts and that a

lot of effort has been put into stating the obvious. He suggested the POCD concentrate on a few specific things and provide solutions to the specific problems. Mr. Bedini stated that he attended the August Town Information Meeting and asked if any of the Commissioners heard anything from the public that they had not heard before.

Ms. Gager responded that she did not hear any new issues from the public.

Mr. Rimsky stated that there has been a shift in what the residents view as important issues. He stated that 10 years ago it was "rural character" and now people are interested in discussing housing and the population changes.

Mr. Talbot was hoping that the Consultants would have some sense of the past POCDs of the Town and that there would be an opportunity for them to inspire the residents and the stakeholders in this community to address the issues holistically.

Mr. Charles asked why future energy needs of the Town are not being addressed.

Mr. Frank stated that it is important that the public has access to these drafts and is able to provide input. He stated that the drafts are available online but it has not been explained that these are draft memoranda for discussion and there has been no request for the public to provide feedback.

The Commission discussed how they could encourage more feedback from the public.

Blackville Town Garage site/Retain for Town Garage or Investigate Possibility of Relocating:

First Selectman Lyon stated that the Town needs to make a decision now on what it will be done with this site. This short term issue should not be addressed in the 10 year plan, but consideration should be given there to long term Highway Department needs.

Mr. Frank stated that adequacy of the Town Facilities must be addressed in the POCD.

Mr. Charles asked how a complete build-out of the Town would impact the Town Highway Department.

Mr. Lyon responded that it would be a huge impact but he doesn't feel that the ten year plan is looking at having 4700 residences in Town. He stated that the POCD should address the long term needs of the Town and the replacement of the burned building at the Town Garage Facility would be a decision that would be made in the short term.

Mr. Charles feels that it is important that the Town does soil testing in the Depot to determine septic capacity and building potential. He stated that without this information the Town does not know how important the Town Garage property or any of the properties in the Depot are.

Mr. Talbot asked if the Commissioners and the Consultants had come to any conclusions regarding the memo he sent them following up on a meeting he had with the Board of Selectmen regarding the Town Garage property at 10 Blackville Road.

Ms. Gager responded that some of the concerns of the Planning Commission regarding the 10 Blackville Road property were the density at that location, sight lines with traffic, whether or not we

could economically support moving the facility and whether there is a piece of property available for a new Highway Department Facility.

Mr. Talbot asked if the Planning Commission would even consider another use for the site or if they have already made the decision.

Ms. Gager responded that the Commission did not have an in depth discussion as to whether the Commission supported Mr. Talbot's proposal or not.

Mr. Talbot stated that in terms of village center enhancements, 10 Blackville Road is the only viable piece of property in the Depot. He feels that a decision has been made because of the proposed cell tower. He asked if the Commission is considering the notion of light industrial business and whether it is important to the Town's future development. He stated that businesses such as this could be a viable use for the 10 Blackville Road property. Mr. Talbot stated that this is a time sensitive issue.

Ms. Roberts stated that she felt that the Board of Finance did not seem receptive to the idea of moving the Town Garage to another location.

There was a brief discussion regarding the cost of relocating the Town Garage Facilities.

Mr. Looney explained that the Economic Development portion of the POCD would focus on promoting locally grown entrepreneurship and building upon the strengths of the villages.

Mr. Charles feels that it would be irresponsible not to consider the ideas brought forth by Mr. Talbot.

Ms. Roberts stated that she feels that there are important points that are being made and it becomes more complicated to get everyone to agree on the priorities and actions to take.

Mr. Carey stated that the State mandates that the POCD be updated every ten years. He doubts that the Legislature ever considered all the factors, such as the economic and sociological forces of today that would be involved. He stated that the Town has to deal with the issues of Regional School District 12, its failing infrastructure and the lack of support from the other towns within the region. Mr. Carey stated that the Planning Commission is trying to put together a document that meets the requirements of the State and input is valuable during this process. He feels that input that requires them to "think and bemoan what might have been" is not helping the process.

Mr. Talbot stated that he would like to talk about future plans for Bryan Memorial Plaza as it relates to economic development. He stated that he is now the Vice President of the Art Association and he would love the opportunity for an examination of additional septic capacity for the Depot to allow for future expansion of the Art Association and the Fire House (now the Washington Police Building) and other uses. He stated that even if expansion of the septic is not possible he hopes that the recommendations for the Plaza in the 2005 Depot Study would be carried out.

Mr. Lyon stated that a meeting with the DOT was scheduled in March and the plan for Bryan Memorial Plaza would be discussed.

Marbledale-New Preston-Woodville Meeting:

The Commission discussed the proposed meeting with representatives of the villages.

Meeting with Heads of Schools:

Mr. Looney stated that he has contacted several of the heads of schools and believes that a meeting at the end of February may be planned but he is waiting to hear back from a couple of people.

Adjournment

Motion: to adjourn by Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Rimsky.

Ms. Roberts adjourned the meeting at 10:15 pm.

SUBMITTED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL:

Shelley White, Land Use Clerk