

# April 2, 2013

7:30, Upper Level Mtg Room

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

**Members Absent:** Ms. Jahnke

**Alternates Present:** Mr. Carey

**Alternates Absent:** Mr. Osborne, Ms. Bishop-Wrabel

**Staff Present:** Ms. Hill, Ms. White

**Also Present:** Mr. Bedini

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

Seated: Ms. Roberts, Mr. Frank, Mr. Rimsky, Mr. Carey, Alt.

## **REGULAR MEETING**

### Privilege of the Floor

Ms. Roberts stated that she would like to change the format of the Planning Commission meetings to allow Privilege of the Floor at the beginning of the meetings. She feels that the meetings can be lengthy and this would allow the members of the public who may not be able to stay for the entire length of the meeting to be heard by the Commission.

Ms. Roberts encouraged the Commissioners to listen to what the public has to say and hold on to their comments until later.

Mr. Frank stated that he feels the public should be invited to speak toward the end of the meeting as well. Ms. Roberts suggested that they could request that a member of the public submit a statement or question(s) in writing to the Commission if they cannot stay for the meeting. Mr. Frank stated that he is concerned about closing off public comments or questions on issues that are discussed during the meeting.

It was noted that opportunity for Public Comment has been and will be included as an agenda item before Adjournment.

*7:35 pm Ms. Gager arrives and is seated.*

## **Consideration of the Minutes**

The Planning Commission considered the minutes from the 3-5-13 regular meeting.

Motion:

To accept the March 5, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Planning Commission as submitted, by Ms. Gager, seconded by Mr. Rimsky, passed by 5-0 vote.

## **New Applications**

There were no new applications to discuss.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### Plan of Conservation and Development

#### Revised Drafts:

Ms. Gager stated that she found the revised format easier to read. Mr. Looney said that they revamped the format of the Demographics & Housing, Economic Development, and Village Centers drafts based on the feedback the consultants received from the Commission. He stated that they put the goals, objectives and strategies at the beginning, and placed the underlying data and discussion sections in as added an appendix at the back of each report. The revised reports also include more specific comments.

The Commissioners and Mr. Looney discussed the inclusion of an “action agenda” at the end of the POCD that would list the proposed actions, who is responsible for them, and the time periods in which they should be accomplished.

Mr. Looney stated that he removed the proposed zoning maps from the Village Center draft and would like to go over them with the Commission to determine which parcels should be proposed as residential or business.

Mr. Looney said that they have received feedback for the Sustainability, Natural Resources, and Community Facilities drafts and would have the revised drafts ready for discussion at the May 7, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting.

The Commissioners and Mr. Looney reviewed the status of discussions with local business owners.

The Commissioners next reviewed the Demographics and Housing draft with Mr. Looney.

There was a discussion regarding housing statistics as reported in census data, particularly with regard to the significant number of “second homes” in town designated “vacant” for census purposes.

Mr. Frank feels that the Commission needs to be very specific in terms of the recommendations that are included in the POCD rather than making general proposals, for example, that the zoning regulations be examined to see what changes might be made to achieve a particular result..

Mr. Looney explained the difficulties in making specific recommendations for the Demographics and Housing portion of the POCD.

The Commissioners and Mr. Looney discussed the issue of housing diversity.

It was recommended that technical terms and abbreviations used in the POCD be explained in a glossary.

Among the subjects discussed by the Commission were the interrelationship of the status of the Region 12 school system with the need for, and availability of, diverse housing choices, matters

relating to the Affordable Housing Appeals Act (including the significance of, and the difficulty of obtaining, deed restrictions for accessory apartments), and the growing interest in meeting the housing needs of our aging population.

If LEED and Smart Growth development is to be proposed as part of a strategy, these concepts should be described and specific recommendations made. Mr. Carey stated that it is his understanding that most LEED and Smart Growth development is predicated on a municipal sewer and water system. Mr. Looney responded that there are ways that it could be done without municipal water and sewer systems and he would look into the infrastructure requirements a bit further.

The Commissioners and Mr. Looney next reviewed the Economic Development draft. The need to be very specific in recommendations made was again stressed. The consultants were requested to identify specific government and other programs that could be utilized to assist existing local businesses and attract new ones.

Mr. Rimsky suggested that some of the language be streamlined to avoid redundancy.

There was a brief discussion regarding the topography of the town and the influence it has on the zoning of certain parcels.

The "Journey to Work" section, and the census data in the related tables were discussed. Mr. Frank stated that he believed that this data required further research and explanation. He noted that the POCD should not contain data, which the Commission cannot explain.

The importance of telecommunications infrastructure to the economic development of the town was discussed.

There was a discussion of light industrial uses along the Route 202 corridor and elsewhere. The feasibility of providing tax deferments to new or expanded businesses was discussed.

There was a lengthy discussion of the consultants' recommendation that the town employ a part-time economic development staff officer, or create an economic development group or commission and how that might be financed. In response to the recommendation that the town conduct a public opinion survey concerning economic development, Ms. Gager suggested that the use of social media be considered as an alternative way to bring economic development ideas to the town from residents and business owners.

There was a discussion regarding the suitability of recommending the designation of Village/Business Improvement Districts for Washington Depot and possibly other areas. Mr. Looney will investigate further.

The Commissioners also discussed open space in the town and the possibility of promoting increased agricultural uses.

The Commission deferred the review of the Village Centers draft until the May 7, 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

### 3/7/13 Memo re: Depot Study and Plaza Improvements:

The Commissioners briefly discussed the status of the Depot Study. Ms. Roberts stated the study

was referred to the Selectmen, but was never formally adopted or acted upon by the town.

### **Communications**

There were no communications to discuss.

### **Public Comment**

No one from the public was present at this time.

### **Adjournment**

Motion:

to adjourn by Ms. Gager, seconded by Mr. Rimsky.

Ms. Roberts adjourned the meeting at 9:50 pm.

SUBMITTED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL:

Shelley White, Land Use Clerk