Planning Commission

MINUTES

Regular Meeting

September 2, 2015

7:30 p.m. main level meeting room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Carey, Mr. Frank, Mrs. Jahnke,

Mr. Rimsky

MEMBER ABSENT: Ms. Gager

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mr. Bedini, Ms. Ryland

ALTERNATE ABSENT: Mr. Hileman

STAFF PRESENT: Mrs. Hill

Vice Chairman Frank called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. and seated Members Carey, Frank, Jahnke, and Rimsky and Alternate Ryland for Ms. Gager.

Consideration of the Minutes

MOTION: To accept the 8/5/15 minutes as written. By Mr.

Frank, seconded by Mr. Rimsky, passed 5-0.

Other Business

Bryan Plaza Improvement Update:

Mr. Rimsky reported that TPA had almost completed its survey work and would make a presentation on schedule after Labor Day. When Mr. Frank asked if TPA had the Depot Study to use for background information, Mrs. Hill noted it was the only firm who had come to the Land Use Office to get a copy to prepare for its interview. Mr. Carey noted a problem with the Depot Study was that it had not been done to scale. Mr. Frank asked what TPA had been charged to accomplish. Mr. Rimsky said it had been asked to redesign the Plaza to address parking, traffic, drainage, and beautification.

Parking was discussed. Mr. Rimsky noted that employee parking spaces elsewhere in the Depot would be out of the scope of the new plans for the Plaza. He reviewed some of the issues that had previously been considered such as installing a row of diagonal parking along each side of the Plaza to increase the number of available spaces and making improvements to the entrance/exits near the Supply and to River Road to address safety concerns and to disperse traffic flow. Ms. Ryland wondered if with the close of some of the Depot businesses, parking was still a problem. She asked if a study about how the existing parking spaces were used had been done. Mr. Bedini stated there are 275 parking spaces in the Depot and that they are mostly used. Mr. Rimsky and Mr. Bedini noted many are not convenient parking spaces and Mr. Rimsky stated that events, such as the Farmers Market, cause additional parking problems. Ms. Ryland asked what percentage of the Town’s population lives in the Depot and could use bicycles. Mr. Bedini said not many people live there and that she should consult with Mr. Hileman, who has that data.

Ms. Ryland acknowledged that TPA would draw up plans for the Plaza, but asked if problems in the rest of the Depot would be addressed. It was noted TPA’s charge does include River Road and Mr. Rimsky pointed out that it is hoped that TPA’s recommendations for the Plaza will lead to the use of similar improvements throughout the Depot. Ms. Ryland stated that River Road was not specifically mentioned in the contract and so she questioned how the Town could be sure it would be included in the plans.

Ms. Ryland asked if the voters would have to approve funds for the actual reconstruction of the Plaza. It was thought this funding had already been approved. Mr. Bedini noted that most grants reimburse Towns after the money has been spent.

Upon learning that improvements were planned for the park along River Road, Ms. Ryland said the Garden Club has $35,000 and may be interested in contributing funds for landscaping there.

Ms. Ryland asked if TPA would draft two proposals. Mr. Rimsky said it would and the Plaza subcommittee would choose which direction to take.

Economic Development:

Mr. Bedini noted that the original Economic Development (EDev) subcommittee no longer exists; it will be replaced with the EDev Advisory Board, which will consist of the Selectmen, members from some of the land use commissions, business owners, and interested townspeople. He briefly spoke about issues that he and Mr. Sherr had been working on; layouts for the park along River Road, signage on Rt. 202, branding for the Town, tying the proposed vocational science and agriculture program for the high school to economic development in Town, and meetings with business owners and Town organizations such as the Lions Club and Rotary.

Mr. Bedini reported that Goman and York would soon begin meeting with Washington business owners and had developed a ten initiative plan. People will sign up to work on the initiatives so that in two years when the Goman and York contract is up, there will be experienced people who will continue to work on economic development in Town. He noted there are currently 80 interested people who have signed up for updates. Ms. Ryland asked who Goman and York reports to. Mr. Bedini responded they would report to the board appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Ryland asked if the economic development information was on the Town website. Mr. Bedini said he was working on getting the website up to date and developing a townwide calendar. He spoke about goals to tie in with the calendars of surrounding towns and to put out a monthly newsletter.

Mr. Bedini was not sure whether the First Selectman had yet appointed the EDev Advisory Board. Ms. Ryland was concerned that Goman and York was operating without formal supervision and asked whether the Planning Commission should ask the Selectmen to appoint the Advisory Committee as soon as possible so that it could oversee the work being done and make sure the Town was getting its monies worth. Mr. Bedini stated that the First Selectman and Chairman of the Board of Finance were apprised of all progress. Ms. Ryland stated that for good governance and to avoid future criticism, the Advisory Board must be appointed and she volunteered to speak with the First Selectman. Mr. Bedini thought that Mr. Hileman was to be the Planning Commission’s representative on the Board. Ms. Ryland said she would contact him and if he did not want to serve, she would volunteer. She asked for a copy of the contract, but Mrs. Hill did not have one.

Sustainability Subcommittee Report:

Mrs. Jahnke said the subcommittee had not yet met, but would meet soon.

Traffic Calming Update:

Ms. Ryland pointed out several recommendations from the 2005 Depot Study, but noted the state DOT had not been supportive. Mr. Rimsky stated that the DOT had shifted some of its policies in the ten years since the Study had been done and said that TPA would look into traffic calming measures as part of the work it would be doing. He gave many examples of traffic calming measures such as bumps, roundabouts, brick walks, landscaping, on street parking, etc. that he said were routinely used in Massachusetts communities. It was noted that signs could also be used. Mrs. Hill said that in 2003 when the Commission had been interviewing for the update of the POCD, TPA had been the consultant with the most experience working with the DOT and that this should prove helpful when crafting the plans for the Plaza and the Depot.

Ms. Ryland asked what the next step would be. Mr. Rimsky thought the Commission should wait for TPA’s report so that it did not duplicate the firm’s work, although he said this subcommittee could begin doing background work now. Mr. Bedini suggested the DOT might have a brochure on traffic calming measures.

Communications

Montrose Realty Partners, LLC. and Spiegel Appeal:

Mrs. Hill was asked for an update, but she did not know whether she should report on the outcome of the executive session that the Zoning Commission recently held with its attorney. She will consult with Atty. Olson and report back at the next meeting.

Administrative Business

Revision of the Subdivision Regulations:

A recent draft was circulated so that the Commissioners could review the progress to date. Mr. Frank did not think it was the most recent draft, but would review it and report on it at the next meeting. It was noted that when the Commission has completed work on the revisions, the final draft must be referred to COG and $5000 had been put in the budget so that it would also be referred to the Commission’s attorney for a legal review.

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting. By Mr. Rimsky.

Mr. Frank adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

FILED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Respectfully submitted,

Janet M. Hill

Land Use Administrator