

Approved As Amended 10-22-08
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
September 17, 2008
7:30 PM
Jamestown Town Hall
93 Narragansett Ave.

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. and the following members were present:

Gary Girard	Michael Swistak
Jean Brown	Richard Ventrone
Barry Holland	Alexandra Nickol
Nancy Bennett	

Also present:

Lisa Bryer, AICP – Town Planner

I. Approval of Minutes September 3, 2008

A motion was made by Commissioner Ventrone and seconded by Commissioner Girard to accept the minutes with the following changes:

Page 8, 9th paragraph, first sentence;

Commissioner Girard **asked the** ~~what~~ nature of flora, **what** plants will be used, **Mr. Renzi replied** in general ones that will take more water in the spring than summer, winterberry, perennial berries and plants that are native.

Page 9, 3rd paragraph;

Commissioner Bennett said we are changing parameters, by relaxing parking, increasing lot coverage, adding mixed use by right and reclassifying districts and we should be looking at cumulative impacts of this change. Commissioner Bennett questioned the newspaper article.

Page 9, 5th paragraph, 2nd sentence;

He wants it look similar to the rest of that area. It will be a benefit.

So unanimously voted. Commissioner Brown Abstains.

II. Correspondence

1. CRMC - Residential Assent – Elizabeth Perik Manager, 170 Westfield Dr., East Greenwich RI – to run electric conduit under the dock to access the lift system. Located at 10 High St. Jamestown RI Plat 9 Lot 380. Noted
2. CRMC – Cease & Desist – Duana Hodges, 620 East Shore Rd., Jamestown – 200 ft coastal buffer. Noted
3. CRMC – Notice of Violation – Daniel & Michol O’Leary, 578 East Shore Rd., Jamestown – 200 ft. coastal feature associated with tidal waters or coastal ponds. Noted
4. FYI – Letter to Planning Commission from Donna Cameron – Re: Traffic Concerns. Received

III. Citizen’s Non Agenda Item – nothing at this time

None

IV. Reports

1. Town Planner's Report
2. Chairpersons report
3. Town Committees
 - a. Harbor
 - b. Fort Getty – The Committee met last week and will meet again tomorrow to discuss the sailing center.
 - c. Buildings and Facilities – The Committee will be meeting on September 19 and 26 to continue the facilities tours for the inventory.
 - d. Tree – The Committee had a picnic at Ft. Getty for appreciation of the highway workers.
 - e. Others
4. Sub Committees

V. Old Business

1. Furtado Subdivision – Luther Street, AP 8 Lots 318 and 753 – Extension of Preliminary Approval

Attorney Kenneth Littman represented the application and went over the history of the application and its approval, appeal and request for extension. The costs of constructing the road are expensive and they are looking for financing options and want to further assess what they want to do in terms of constructing the road and utilities. They are requesting a year extension. Commissioner Girard made a motion to extend the Preliminary Approval for 1 year. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Ventrone. So unanimously voted.

2. Jamestown Zoning Ordinance Update – Jamestown Village Special Development District - Continued

Town Planner Lisa Bryer went over the goals, policies and actions of the Comprehensive Plan including the Affordable Housing Plan as they relate to the Update of the Zoning Ordinance in the Village. Also in the packet was an example Memo to the Town Council from Planning when the High Groundwater Table Ordinance was recommended to the Town Council. It demonstrates consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and the State Zoning Enabling Legislation. We will have to demonstrate similar findings.

Commissioner Bennett is very concerned that the Planning Commission is not following the goals of the Comprehensive Plan or the Vision from the Charrette. She also questioned whether the parking proposed is consistent with the parking studies that have been completed and stated that the Comprehensive Plan states that a comprehensive parking plan should be done. ~~Commissioner Bennett also stated that the board is made up of lay people and we should not be making some of these decisions. It should be left up to the professionals.~~ Commissioner Bennett wants to talk about the goals for changing the zoning. She prepared and handed out several pages of her synopsis of objectives and impact of changing the Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioner Girard noted that we will not know the impacts of what we are proposing until we decide what to do. Commissioner Girard also directed the Board to contact Lisa Bryer if they have questions about if certain actions have been addressed. Commissioner Bennett asked the Planning Commission to have a detailed discussion of what the goals should be for the Zoning Ordinance

Update that we are currently doing. She feels that we are discussing only opinions in a piecemeal fashion is concerned that we are not tying some of the things we are doing to goals we are trying to achieve. She would like the Commission to be clearer about what specific goals we have for changing the zoning and then when we make a change what goal we are trying to achieve and what would be the projected impacts

It (the Vision statement) says protect the village character of downtown and yet we're putting something in – the maximum setback – that will not allow downtown to be what it is any more than the current zoning would if everything were destroyed (by a hurricane). So what is the character we're trying to preserve?

Another example, are we protecting or changing the character of the street environment? Look at Vision statement picture of Vets Office which has a setback of 18'. The caption says "pedestrians walk along cherished portion of Narragansett Ave. which is well defined...". But we're saying 18' is not OK, it has to be 12'. She is confused by that. What goal are we trying to achieve?

Another concern is mixed use by right. Mixed use by right is something we could project numbers for. Mixed Use by Right could encourage X number more units. What are our goals? If we want more units, that should be one of our goals. Action plan is very general. We have to come down to a more specific realm. Why are we even changing our zoning? This particular action is to achieve that goal. That would be helpful instead of getting everything piece meal and then just giving opinions.

Commissioner Ventrone said that we are trying to preserve the small town character of our commercial district. The character is dictated by the building architecture, its presence on the street and its relationship with the street. Those are all the things that we should be looking at and it is stated as a goal of the Charrette. Our consultant came in and identified Jamestown's character and what makes it so and the vision is clearly discussed in the Vision Report.

Commissioner Holland wants to address Commissioner Bennett's concern about process. It has been very comprehensive and it is noted in the vision report including their recommendations in the vision plan which is a culmination of the Charrette process. The process has not been haphazard.

Commissioner Swistak addressed Commissioner Bennett's concern about needing a parking study. The Town and the Chamber of Commerce did a comprehensive Parking Study in 2004 that was approved by the Planning Commission. We do not need to do another parking study.

Commissioner Brown is concerned and asked Commissioner Bennett what the Planning Commission can do to help get her up to speed because we need to all be on the same page going forward.

Commissioner Bennett replied she saw a lot of changes were not just translating current zoning into new zoning but were intensifying the downtown area by a considerable amount. If that is one of the goals to greatly intensify downtown – then it needs to be more clearly stated.

Commissioner Girard stated in response to Commissioner Bennett's concern of the boards being made up of non professionals, relative to the composition of boards, that the whole idea of having a Board made up of residents is to get diverse input on how the town should be developed. We do need to make some decisions and they may be difficult.

The Planning Commission discussed Section 1113 – Natural Drainage Standards. Chair Girard noted that although there are some cases of severe drainage problems in the village, he did not agree that they should regulate drainage in the residential areas. The board agreed that it should only apply to the commercial districts.

The Board discussed what should be regulated besides what is listed in the ordinance. They agreed roof pitch, fencing, siding and landscaping in the commercial district.

The Planner will make a recommendation on sections 1112-1115

VI. New Business

1. Comprehensive Permit for Affordable Housing – Discussion

The Town Planner discussed the information provided in the packet: the State Law on affordable housing; the Town law on affordable housing, and; the application form. She informed the Planning Commission that our first comprehensive permit application will most likely be heard in October and we need to be familiar with the regulations. The board had no questions for the Solicitor on this issue.

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Swistak and seconded by Commissioner Girard at 9:50 p.m. So unanimously voted.

Attest:

Lisa Bryer
Town Planner

This meeting was recorded