



BELLINGHAM PLANNING BOARD

5 COMMON STREET
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June 28, 2007 Meeting Minutes

- **Present at the meeting:**

Brian J. Sutherland (BJS) Chair
Glenn C. Wojcik (GCW), Vice Chair
David Brown (DB) Secretary
Patricia M. Buckley (PMB)
Stephen Bartha (SB)
John Sexton (JS) Associate Member

Other officials: Stacey J. Wetstein, (SJW) Town Planner
Amy Cook, (AC), Commission on Disabilities
Mary Chaves, (MC) Coordinator

BJS opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

DB: Motion to sign minutes of June 14, 2007.

SB: Second.

Vote: 5-0, Approved.

DB: Motion to sign vouchers.

GCW: Second.

Vote: 5-0, Approved.

Sign Planner and Coordinator Contracts

GCW: Motion to sign contracts for Town Planner and Planning Coordinator.

DB: Second.

Vote: 5-0, Approved.

81P, Wright, 81 Mellon Street

SJW advised the Board that this is the same 81P they looked at last week. It involves both Milford and Bellingham. Milford has already signed the plans. BJS had asked that a new plan be created showing the entire lot to be divided; the applicant complied with his request.

DB: Motion to sign 81 P for Country Home Builders at 81 Mellon Street, Bellingham.

SB: Second.

Vote: 5-0, Approved.

Brookfield Estates Water Resource Pre-application Conference

Paul Disimone appeared on behalf of the applicant. He presented the Board with the plan for Brookfield Estates on Locust Street. Their land use is only about 60,000 sq ft. Only 9% is impervious bringing it under the threshold for a Special Permit for a Water Resource Area.

SJW advised the new board members of the policy for projects proposed within the water resource district. There are triggers for a special permit in the water resource district and the purpose of the pre-application conference is to determine if the project meets any of these triggers.

SB: Motion to allow applicant to proceed without special permit for water resource area.

DB: Second.

Vote: 5-0, Approved.

Joint Session Board of Selectmen and Planning Board**Present from BOS:**

Ann Odabashian, (AO) Chairperson

Ronald Picard (RP)

Skip Goodnow (SG)

Dawn Davies (DD)

Town Center Overlay Discussion

Roland Laprade, Chairman and Guy Fluette, Vice-Chair of the Overlay committee appeared before the Boards to update them on the progress for the Town Center overlay. SJW advised the Board that a bit of time was spent in redefining the district before it was realized that there was no sewer capacity for the area. This poses great difficulty in promoting a mixed use in the area. Roland Laprade stated that since the time the Master Plan was written, much of what was called for in the Town Center had been achieved; a new municipal center had been built, a town common had been established and some of the buildings in the area had already undergone redevelopment with the addition of the Ben Franklin Bank and Walgreens. Guy Fluette added that it was the goal of the Master Plan committee to make the area which loops from the center to Blackstone St. via South Main or Mechanic Streets and back to the center more walkable.

SJW stated that she had contact the EOEI, the grant issuing authority, to see if the money for the grant could be redirected to another Smart Growth initiative. She was told that the \$4,000.00 left for FY08 could be used to look at ways to make the Town Center more walkable or public lands more accessible. It could also be used for public outreach for the Pulaski Blvd. Overlay, should the Planning Board bring it back to the

Town Meeting in October or perhaps to develop an overlay for the drive in area on Pulaski Blvd.

BJS suggested that some of the funds be expended on the Town Center to explore some of the other goals of the Master Plan for the town center area and that the balance be used for both public outreach and developing an appropriate bylaw for the drive in property, perhaps including it the Pulaski Blvd. Overlay or perhaps a separate warrant article for the May Town Meeting.

BJS opened the floor to the audience. Ron Lussier, an opponent to the proposed Pulaski Blvd. Overlay, addressed the group at length on his thoughts on what was needed for Pulaski Blvd. He spoke of possible contaminated soil on some sites, brownfields, for which there are government assistance programs for cleanup. He suggested that the town make this information available to property owners. BJS stated that these programs were state and federal programs and not under the jurisdiction of the town. MC suggested that informational links to the proper website from the town web site might be a solution. Mr. Lussier went on to say that the reason the area has not been developed was that so many sites were contaminated. BJS pointed out to him that this was speculation on his part and no brownfields had been identified in the area. Mr. Lussier asked that the area be considered for state programs which offer tax incentives to developers, Denis Fraine responded that that program was for large scale developments which brought living wage jobs or affordable housing to an area, not small businesses.

Mr. Lussier went on to speak about the condition of the boulevard itself and asked that the town not wait for state funding and pay to reconstruct the roadway to benefit the local businessmen. He also stated that he felt that residents don't belong on Pulaski Blvd. and that he has been buying residential properties and tearing them down. He suggested that the business zone be extended to be 300 feet back from the Boulevard instead of the current 200 feet. Guy Fluette responded that the Pulaski Blvd. Overlay extends the zone to the current property lines. RRL added that the Pulaski Blvd. Overlay was step one in a process to revitalize the area. Once a district was formerly created it would be up to property owners and businesses to work with the residents and develop ideas to further enhance the area. AO reminded Mr. Lussier that mixed use was already in the area and the overlay was in keeping with the character of the area.

Mr. Lussier said that in his opinion the overlay doesn't help existing businesses and that only 10% of the area could be redeveloped under the overlay as the area lies today. AO responded that it was a good start and the overlay doesn't hurt any property owner.

Andy Bissanti, a real estate developer with property in the area stated that he had spent the last 52 minutes listening to Mr. Lussier go on and on presenting what he wanted for the area. He stated that people should realize that the overlay is an option to provide more ways to develop a property and that he could not understand the arguments against it. He further stated that in his experiences that this type of development was the trend for the future and that he hoped it would pass at town meeting.

Wayne Poitros stated that he felt the overlay would be a good thing for the area and mentioned the success of a similar district on Front Street in Woonsocket. He felt that the area would be safer and better if developed under the overlay.

Jeff Allaire questioned the impact of the overlay of property owners in the B1 district. He was advised that their rights to develop under the B1 zoning would remain intact. He also questioned the appropriateness of residents along the Blvd.

MC reminded the audience that mixed use is only a part of the bylaw and that professional offices could just as easily be developed on the top of retail or commercial businesses.

Jerry Mayhew stated that as with any development the market will dictate what will be built. He stated that perhaps streamlining the process without involvement of multiple boards and red tape is a solution.

John Murray, business owner and resident of Pulaski Blvd. stated that he could not do what he wished to with his property because of the zoning restrictions and the potential complaints of area residents. He said that he had an architect looking at his property for potential redevelopment of his pool business. MC suggested that the architect look at the proposed overlay and see what could be done within the overlay regulations.

Mr. Murray stated that people who live on Pulaski Blvd. and raise their families there must be crazy and that residents are the natural enemies of businesses and that nobody wanted the overlay to pass.

Katie Quinn objected to Mr. Murray's statements saying that she was raising her family in the area and liked the busyness as it was more of a town center.

Ed Fraine corrected Mr. Murray saying that he did want the overlay to pass and was sorry that it had not been passed at the last town meeting.

Neil Standley lives in the area and likes the ability to walk to walk to local services. He said that he hoped to see some creative ideas come from the use of the overlay.

SB stated that the developments will vary. SG added that no matter what the allowed use, let the market dictate it.

GCW added that current development may be difficult and that mixed use may be more valuable and provide more opportunity.

BJS stated that he would like to see the Pulaski Blvd. overlay back on the warrant for the next Town Meeting and polled the members of the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board for their opinions. All members were for bringing the overlay article back to Town Meeting in October.

The joint session was adjourned

Planner's Report

SJW advised the Board on upcoming agenda items and outside meetings that may be of interest.

GCW: Motion to adjourn.

DB: Second.

Vote: 5-0, Approved.

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Minutes Accepted on:

(date)

(prepared by: Mary Chaves)

Stephen Bartha

Brian J. Sutherland

David Brown

Glenn Wojcik

Patricia M. Buckley