

Topsfield Planning Board

January 15, 2008

Chairman Morrison called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Board members present were Martha Morrison, Janice Ablon, Gregor Smith, Ian deBuy Wenniger, Robert Winship. Roberta Knight, Community Development Coordinator was also present.

Visitors: Master Planning Members Heidi Fox, Joseph Geller, Katherine Carlson, Holger Luther, Selectman Dick Gandt

Minutes: Member Gregor Smith made the motion to approve the minutes of December 18, 2007 as amended; seconded by Ian DeBuy Wenniger; so voted 5-0.

45 Bare Hill Road: The Board reviewed the draft response to the Selectmen's memo concerning the acceptance of the Rytman property located at 45 Bare Hill Road. The members discussed the possible use of the property as a walking path leading to the back end of Pye Brook Park and the topography of the parcel which is mainly wetlands. It was the consensus of the Board to recommend the acceptance of the land. This property most likely would be deemed conservation land due to the extensive wetlands situated on the property as well as steep contours that would prevent recreational development.

Bills: Member Bob Winship made the motion to approve the BSC invoice in the amount of \$1,275.40 for 37 Gail Street engineering peer review; seconded Jan Ablon; so voted 5-0.

FY2009 Budget: The approval of the FY2009 budget was deferred to the next scheduled meeting.

2008 Expo: Chairman Morrison noted that the Main Street Foundation was coordinating an Expo scheduled for Saturday, March 29. The members discussed the exhibit presentation for the 2008 Expo, and it was the consensus of the Board that the emphasis this year would be to provide information to the residents concerning the proposed zoning changes for town meeting action. The zoning changes would include the two Elderly Housing District proposals and the proposed Business Highway North mixed use commercial zone consisting of properties located at the intersection of Route 1 and Ipswich Road. Conceptual designs for the housing developments, zoning maps for the proposed districts and informational materials would be available for viewing.

Parking And Traffic: Chairman Morrison informed the members that a discussion has commenced relative to parking and traffic issues surrounding the downtown area that included the intersection of Route 97, High Street Extension and Main Streets. Parking has also become a bigger issue due to the redevelopment of properties within the Business-Village. The Route 97 intersection had approximately 10K vehicles passing on a daily basis some ten years ago, and now the estimated traffic flow is approximately 12K vehicles. Planning and circulation by statute is under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board. At this time, both the Fire and Police Chiefs, the Highway Superintendent, Nancy

Luther, the former Executive Director of Highway Safety have volunteered to participate as a working group to identify the issues and submit solutions both short and long term. Member Gregor Smith volunteered to represent the Planning Board. Chairman Morrison volunteered to schedule an organizational meeting.

Public Meeting/Hearing Schedule: The Board reviewed and approved the following schedule for the Planning Board's review of proposed zoning amendments for action at the May 6, 2008 Annual Town Meeting:

February 19: Elderly Housing District Informational Meeting (12 Boston Street & New Meadows Golf Course)

February 25: New Business District Highway North Information Meeting

March 18: Public Hearing for Elderly Housing District Proposals

April 1: Public Hearing for General Zoning Amendments including BHN District

Joint Meeting of Planning Board and Master Planning Committee

At 8:00PM, Chairman Martha Morrison called the joint meeting to order. The members of both committees commenced the review of the List of Zoning Amendments dated January 15, 2008, and as part of the process reviewed and updated Version 4 of the proposed zoning amendments for Section 3.11 "Uses in the Business Highway North District" and Section 3.12" Uses in the Business Highway District in the Zoning By-law, and Version 2 of the Table of Density And Dimensional Regulations.

See the Attachments for specific changes that resulted from the joint review as noted above and delineated in draft Version 5 relative to Sections 3.11 and 3.12 and Version 3 of the Table of Density And Dimensional Regulations; both dated January 15, 2008.

Elderly Housing District: The members discussed the "concept plan" option recommended by Town Counsel relative to limiting the development of the two proposed senior housing developments to the proposed conceptual plans. It was the consensus of the Board that such a by-law would cause a review by town meeting rather than allow the planning process take its course through the special permitting and site plan review process under the authority of the Planning Board. The members upon further discussion requested Ms. Knight to contact Town Counsel relative to tweaking the site plan review process to limit the number of units or providing a "sunset" automatic expiration of the overlay district within two years, if an application had not been filed with the Planning Board.

Description of the BHN Zone: Master Planning member Holger Luther volunteered to draft a legal description of the zone.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta M. Knight
Community Development Coordinator