NEEDHAM PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

September 1, 2015

The regular meeting of the Planning Board held in the Charles River Room, Public Services Administration Building, was called to order by Jeanne McKnight, Chairman, on Tuesday, September 1, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. with Messrs. Eisenhut, Alpert and Jacobs as well as Planning Director, Ms. Newman, Assistant Planner, Ms. Clee and Recording Secretary, Ms. Kalinowski.

Correspondence

Ms. McKnight noted the following correspondence for the record: a recent application by the town for a change at the Mills Field recreational facility dated 8/17/15; an email from Town Engineer Anthony DelGaizo, dated 8/27/15, to his staff referencing the attached letter and asking that a speed, type and vehicle count study be undertaken and a notice from the Wellesley Planning Board regarding a subdivision at 135 Great Plain Avenue to divide into 12 lots.

Presentation:

7:00 p.m. – Karen Sunnarborg, Housing Specialist: Housing Strategic Plan.

Karen Sunnarborg, Housing Specialist, made a power point presentation to the Board. She drafted a memo dated 8/25/15 with the housing strategy. Ms. Sunnarborg reviewed the historical context. In 2004 the town applied and received funding from the state to prepare a community development plan. Part of that was a housing element. In 2007 they took the housing component, and updated and augmented it into a document which would meet state requirements that was then called Planned Production. The town decided not to submit it to the state. In 2013 the Needham Housing Authority received some CPA funding to do some preliminary feasibility analysis for the redevelopment of the Linden Chambers development. It also included an updated housing needs assessment. In 2014 the town updated the housing needs assessments. She noted still outstanding are the unmet needs for affordable housing. She reviewed the demographic trends and population change projections from 2010 through 2030.

Ms. Sunnarborg reviewed the economic trends. She noted that of those Needham residents earning at or below 80% of Area Median Income almost half are spending more than half their income on housing. She spoke on the housing trends and the priority housing needs with a focus on rental property. She stated the town needs to target the needs of the most vulnerable residents with limited financial means. The town needs to replenish some rental housing that has been lost. The town should provide options for seniors such as affordable ownership units and priority initiatives. She feels the town should promote mixed income rental housing areas and redevelop the Linden Chambers Street project.

Ms. Sunnarborg spoke on other initiatives. The town should monitor compliance with the Subsidized Housing Inventory Study and make a recommendation for a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust. The town needs to preserve existing rental housing. She did a quick run through of housing strategies. She noted the Board of Selectmen are interested in hearing the Planning Board's ideas and thoughts. Then the Selectmen will have a public hearing. Ms. Newman stated the Board of Selectmen want to discuss it with the Planning Board. Mr. Jacobs asked if Roy Cramer contacted Ms. Newman about the possible rehabilitation of the Bertucci block. Ms. Newman stated they are looking at a mixed use redevelopment through zoning. Mr. Jacobs stated the Board could mention the possible expansion of what the Board did in the center.

Ms. Sunnarborg stated the goal is to have the Planning Board buy in and the Selectmen to say yes, that is their strategy. Mr. Jacobs asked about the list of head entities. He stated the Council of Economic Advisors are not the same as others. The CEA are not equivalent but rather an advisory committee to the Board of Selectmen. He noted under "Other initiatives" is support scattered site housing, with lead entities of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. He asked if she has other ideas for that or just that. Ms. Sunnarborg stated she did not really have other ideas in mind. They will mostly be responding to Special Permits applications. She noted comprehensive permitting is still a really good tool to use.

Mr. Eisenhut stated the town has had the discussion for years about auxiliary or ancillary apartments in their single family districts. Ms. Sunnarborg stated it really makes a lot of sense in this town. Mr. Jacobs asked why that was off the table. Ms. Newman stated there had been resistance from some members of the Board of Selectmen at the time this idea was previously suggested. She noted it is successfully being used in other towns. Mr. Jacobs stated he would support the idea to have the Board of Selectmen think further about this. Mr. Eisenhut reiterated he would like to see some multi-family allowed in some Single Residence Districts.

Mr. Eisenhut stated when he was on the Community Preservation Committee they talked about an entity to do buy downs. He stated other towns do buy downs. He thinks the Board should think about that. Mr. Alpert commented he is new to the Board and does not have the history regarding how far along the Board is. He commented if these are early comments he would love to have a lot of information included. He stated he quickly reviewed and thinks it is a great document. The Housing Trust intrigues him. He asked how far along are they? Ms. Sunnarborg noted that was not an early document. She stated the Board of Selectmen wants more information regarding the Housing Trust and are looking at Housing guidelines. She is happy to provide more information to the Board of Selectmen. She does not know how long it will take for them to review.

Mr. Alpert stated he is fully in favor of having a Housing Trust. He noted the Conservation Commission has a trust of its own and it is very useful. Ms. McKnight stated this is a historical document. She asked if the Board received 2013, 2014 and 2015 documents. Ms. Sunnarborg stated she has drafted demographic housing profiles. Ms. Newman stated the Board did have a public forum. She will dig it up and give it to the Board members. Ms. Sunnarborg stated she will do an update when the 2014 census is released.

Ms. McKnight stated she would hesitate to impose more rigorous inclusionary zoning requirements on developers. There are not enough incentives to require multi-family market developers to increase the required percentage of affordable units above 10%. She does not want to make it stricter or stronger to discourage applicants. With auxiliary apartments, her one concern is that accessory apartments be added to the affordable count and be income restricted. Applicants have to go through state eligibility requirements and that discourages them. Ms. Sunnarborg noted the state changed the rules and it makes accessory apartments very difficult.

Ms. McKnight noted the buy down and asked if they worked. It was noted they worked when there was a smaller price gap between market-price and affordable units. Mr. Eisenhut stated the bigger picture is how you define your goals. Ms. McKnight noted towns can have a Housing Trust but a Housing Trust is only as powerful as towns want it to be. It is a useful tool. Ms. McKnight noted the strong emphasis on rental in the draft Strategic Plan. There are only 2 large condo developments in town that have elevators. She feels the Board needs to say something about senior owner housing and the next step. Ms. Sunnarborg stated she will provide notes to Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick and she will pass them along to the Board of Selectmen.

<u>Informal Discussion:</u>

<u>7:30 p.m. – Paul Caminiti – Needham Driving School possible expansion.</u>

Ms. Newman noted a letter from Robert Smart, dated 8/31/15, as representative for the applicant. He noted this is a third generation driving school. The property is at 902-910 Highland Avenue. It is 600+ square feet on the second floor. Curves had a 2007 Special Permit and is now gone from the second floor. The applicant would like to take over the space. The driving school got a Special Permit in 2010 with a limit of 15 students. The applicant would like to increase to 50 students. He noted most of the students walk and 80% are Needham kids. He noted the kids come on Saturdays. He would like Saturday classes, in blocks of five Saturdays each, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and February, March and April vacation programs

There will be 5-day sessions during the summer and Tuesday and Thursday evening sessions. There will be 25 Saturdays a year from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. During the 3 school vacations, classes will be Monday through

Friday and eight 5-day sessions in the summer. There will be four 7-week programs. Paul Caminiti stated the kids need 30 hours. There are three different options for students to accommodate all schedules. Mr. Jacobs asked if they were all High School students and was informed they were. Mr. Caminiti noted 95% of students are Needham High School students and the driving school picks up more than 50% of the students.

Mr. Smart reviewed the site plan. There are four7 on-site spaces and 3 spaces on the street. He reviewed the parking supply, the parking demand required and the parking waivers. He stated the applicant will not need 25 spaces for students coming to the school as they cannot drive. There will be 2 employees. He noted the applicant needs the same parking waiver as prior. He wants to get a sense of what the Board wants for an application and what the Board thinks.

Mr. Eisenhut noted he would like some form of traffic study with 50 students coming in. His issue is traffic. Mr. Smart stated his studies show huge numbers of cars on Highland Avenue each day. Fifty is a very small number. The school is increasing from 15 to 50 and taking away all the Curves customers who were coming and going all day long. Mr. Jacobs stated classes will be Saturday, evenings and school vacations. He noted most of these periods are not likely an issue.

Ms. McKnight asked the time of each session. Mr. Caminiti stated 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Ms. Newman noted a level of service study was done when the Senior Center went in. Mr. Eisenhut stated he would like someone to look at it and say there will be a minimal impact. Ms. McKnight asked if Finagle A Bagel was gone and was informed it was. She stated the Board needs to make sure the lease does not give the owner of the other mall rights to park on this property. Mr. Caminiti stated it is the same owner. Mr. Jacobs noted for the record that the Micozzi representative agrees.

Discuss zoning amendments for the Special Town Meeting.

Ms. Newman noted the original proposal created an overlay to the Mixed Use District. This is over the entire Mixed Use 128 and Highland Commercial Districts and caps the number of residential units. It creates more flexibility where it can be utilized. This is a Planning Board article and the purpose is to start the process. This enables all underlying uses and allows uses on top of that. Ms. McKnight stated she wants to make sure it is the entire Mixed Use 128 District. Ms. Newman stated it is and also the north side of the Highland Avenue 128 District.

Mr. Alpert clarified that the proposed overlay will extend from Highland Avenue to the railroad tracks. Ms. Newman stated the Board has allowed the Planning Director to transfer the article to the Board of Selectmen who will transfer it back to the Board for a hearing. She wants to get it on the November Town Meeting. Mr. Eisenhut commented he wants to bring it to the Board's attention that for new districts the requirement for 10% 7 multi-family units to be affordable is a little modest.

Ms. McKnight noted page 1 (i) and asked what is the N2Corridor. This needs to be defined. Under Scope of Authority, MSP is not defined. This should be spelled out or defined below. Ms. McKnight noted after "Special Permit is required for development" the Board should add "whether permitted by any other authority." Ms. Newman noted this is only for the Planning Board. Ms. McKnight added "under the MUOD." Mr. Eisenhut clarified "permitted in the MUOD." Mr. Alpert stated (i) needs work.

Ms. McKnight noted on page 3, Master Special Permit, 4th line specifies public amenities. She asked if the Board needs to reference public utilities. All Board members agreed with amenities. Ms. McKnight noted 2nd paragraph at the end defines multi-family dwellings. She stated as defined it could be one dwelling unit or 4 or more. This needs to be specified. Mr. Alpert noted a small building may only be able to get one unit. Ms. McKnight suggested the Board say "one or more dwelling units above commercial." All agreed.

Ms. McKnight noted on page 4, Special Permit Decision should have Criteria after it and remove the paragraph above it. Under Special Permit Conditions (c), add delivery "and waste removal" times. On page 5, under Dimensional Requirements (e) it should be "spaces" not "cars" and the next line should be "spaces" also. Ms.

Newman noted under Residential Development she needs to get interpretations. She noted "multi-family units" should be "residential units."

Ms. McKnight stated on page 6, Massing, it says "visual relief." She asked if this was clear. There is no mix of occupants so she does not know what this means. Ms. Newman was not sure. Mr. Eisenhut stated that language should be removed. Mr. Alpert and Mr. Jacobs agreed. Ms. McKnight stated under Roadways, it complies with what By-Law? Ms. Newman noted is the reference should be to the Subdivision Control Law.

Mr. Alpert suggested "the roadways served by the MUOD Project" section and remove the capital A from "An." He noted parking load standards, 4th line, at-grade, the 6th line should be "not more than" and on the last page (a) he asked if lien should be added. Mr. Jacobs stated the Board needs to work on the language.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Eisenhut, and seconded by Mr. Jacobs, it was by the four members present unanimously:
VOTED: to refer Articles 1 and 2 to the Board of Selectmen with revisions discussed.

Review of Planning Board Goals.

This is off the agenda.

Request to Release Surety: Major Project Site Plan Special Permit No. 2012-04: Needham Bank, 1063 Great Plain Avenue, Needham, MA, Petitioner (Property located at 1055 & 1063 Great Plain Avenue, 10 Eaton Square, 232 and 244 Garden Street, 0 Garden Street, 0 Eaton Square, Needham, MA).

Ms. Newman noted some trees died in the plaza. The Town has agreed the bank would take them down and the bank would replace them. She is waiting for an As-built and some electrical connections. The Town is holding about $25,000.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Eisenhut, and seconded by Mr. Jacobs, it was by the four members present unanimously:
VOTED: to release the surety when the Planning Director is satisfied with the points mentioned.

Review of Policy regarding release of project surety.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jacobs, and seconded by Mr. Eisenhut, it was by the four members present unanimously:
VOTED: to accept the draft regarding release of project surety as the Planning Board's written policy.

Minutes

The Board members will give comments and revisions to Assistant Planner Clee. Ms. McKnight noted on the minutes of 5/6/15, page 2, take out the 2 comments made by Ms. Grimes regarding Trader Joe's. Mr. Alpert noted on the 6/8 minutes, 2nd paragraph, regarding accepting a check from Normandy, the discussion should be removed or rewritten. On the minutes of 6/23/15, page 1, Mr. Jacobs noted "she" should be changed to "he".

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jacobs, and seconded by Mr. Alpert, it was by the four members present unanimously:
VOTED: to approve the minutes of 5/6/15 with deleting the last 2 sentences.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jacobs, and seconded by Mr. Alpert, it was by the four members present unanimously:
VOTED: to approve the minutes of 5/4/15.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jacobs, and seconded by Mr. Alpert, it was by the four members present unanimously:
VOTED: to approve the minutes of 6/23/15 with the one change discussed.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jacobs, and seconded by Mr. Alpert, it was by the four members present unanimously:
VOTED: to approve the minutes of 6/8/15.

Mr. Eisenhut left the meeting.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jacobs, and seconded by Mr. Alpert, it was by the three members present unanimously:
VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna J. Kalinowski, Notetaker

Elizabeth Grimes, Vice-Chairman and Clerk