



**Town of Hamilton Planning Board
PO Box 429, 577 Bay Road
Hamilton, MA 01936
978-468-5584**

MINUTES

November 5, 2013

Welcome – AT 7:30 PM, Chairman Ed Howard opened the meeting of the Hamilton Planning Board. Board members Rob McKean, Claudia Woods, Jeffrey Melick, Rick Mitchell, Brian Stein and Peter Clark were present. Kristine Cheetham, Planning Coordinator was also present.

Planning and Zoning Discussion

1. Planning Functions – Chairman E. Howard shared copies of materials from the Mass General Laws and the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative relative to planning boards. The Board had an open discussion about the role of the Hamilton Planning Board, general planning and use of sub-committees within the town. E. Howard felt that the Board had objective component of their roles; specifically, permit reviews. However, he also felt that the Board had a subjective role to “plan for the future of the town.” He interprets plan to be inclusive of all matters.
P. Clark noted that the Board worked on the Master Plan extensively and it was a well written document. He stated that the Planning Board had implemented many of the recommendations in the Plan. He also noted that the town makes use of sub-committees to resolve specific issues. Many members of the Board serve on those sub-committees.
R. McKean did not feel that there was enough of a full circle of communication from the sub-committees back to the planning board.
K. Cheetham asked the Board if this was resolved in their minds with the “policy on committees” that was adopted last year by the Board of Selectmen. This policy called for a representative of the Board of Selectmen to attend or oversee each of the subcommittees so that there was a full circle of communication back to their Board. Several members of the Board would like more frequent updates from sub-committees.

The Board then discussed the relationship of planning and sub-committees with the Pirie property as an example. C. Woods participated in the sub-committee for the right of first refusal process. However, she felt as if the planning board was reactive and not proactive with respect to planning for land use. The Board agreed that having priorities for properties in town would be beneficial. Some also noted that the Board was limited in their discussion on the Pirie property because of the legal process and their potential regulatory responsibilities. K. Cheetham suggested that the Open Space and Recreation Plan as well as the Housing Production Plan and/or work of the Affordable Housing Trust were possible areas to review and assess land use priorities.

2. Regulatory Responsibility – R. Mitchell reported back to the Board on his meeting with Bill Bowler, Chair of the ZBA. They discussed the authority of site plan review. Mr. Bowler stated that he enjoyed reviewing site plans as it gave the ZBA a chance to shape projects within the town. The Planning Board still felt that the site plan review is a natural function of a planning board and wished to continue to research options to amend the bylaw. The next step would be to prepare a memo on the transfer of authority and to meet with the zoning board of appeals, at one of their meetings, to discuss it. R. Mitchell agreed to work with K. Cheetham on this effort.
3. The Board pondered what were its official roles? Are they defined in the town laws, state laws? If the roles are not clearly defined – how can that be resolved?
ACTION: J. Melick made a motion to request a determination from town council that would clarify what the official role(s) and responsibilities of the Planning Board were. P. Clark seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

New/Old Business

1. The Board confirmed that they would like all future meetings, not just meetings where permits are reviewed, tape recorded. K. Cheetham agreed to secure a tape recorder for the meetings.
2. Building Inspector – E. Howard requested that the building inspector attend a future meeting of the Planning Board to discuss how he implements the zoning bylaw.
3. Scenic Roads – E. Howard noticed a discrepancy with the scenic roads listing and the zoning map. K. Cheetham will research the roads files with the Town Clerk.
4. Downtown Planning – K. Cheetham reminded the Board that the next public workshop on the downtown would be Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013 from 6-8 PM at the Public Library. All were invited to attend. E. Howard shared with the Board his concerns that there may be potential redevelopment at the Cumberland Farms gas station. He felt that someone in the community should reach out to the owners to share the plans for downtown. R. Mitchell and B. Stein also sit on the Hamilton Development Corporation (HDC) and agreed that the HDC was a more appropriate entity to reach out to a property

owner/developer. P. Clark agreed that sub-committees that are focused on particular issues should take the lead. C. Woods asked for clarification about the role of the HDC, its authority and its plans. B. Stein and R. Mitchell agreed to provide more updates as the activity of this group advanced.

5. New Business – Tosh Blake, a resident, addressed the Board with his concerns about development. He shared some paperwork on sustainable development that is happening at the federal and state levels. He was unsure about the goals of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council such as Metro Futures and other regional plans. He asked if the Board could review the materials and then discuss them at an upcoming meeting.

Approval of Minutes

ACTION: R. Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes of previous meetings: 9/3/13, 9/24/13m, 10/1/13, and 10/15/13. J. Melick seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Adjourn – At 9:45 PM B. Stein made a motion to adjourn. P. Clark seconded. All voted in favor.