

**HAMILTON PLANNING BOARD**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

Via Zoom 823 6883 2731

Passcode: 007635

One tap mobile – 1 929 205 6099 (New York)

February 16, 2021

7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Marnie Crouch, Brian Stein, Rick Mitchell, Corey Beaulieu, Richard Boroff  
Bill Wheaton  
Planning Director: Patrick Reffett  
Others Present: Larry Smith

The meeting was called to order by Brian Stein at 7:02 p.m. with a quorum established via Zoom.

Roll Call: Marnie Crouch – aye; Rick Mitchell – aye, Corey Beaulieu – aye, Richard Boroff and Brian Stein – aye (Bill Wheaton joined after Roll Call).

1. **REVIEW & DISCUSSION OF VARIOUS POTENTIAL CHANGES TO HAMILTON ZONING**

**BYLAW LANGUAGE** – The Board is preparing a text for a “flexible” residential zoning bylaw and is considering its application for the Town of Hamilton. The Board is also considering the potential of creating an open space fund to offset density on development parcels. Additionally, the Board may consider the possibility of amending the Senior Housing Bylaw.

Larry Smith was present to provide input to the Board for the “flexible” residential zoning bylaw. Questions were answered in order:

1. In terms of the financial incentive to build with the new flexible development information, Mr. Smith commented that the price tag was hefty for the type of unit counts that were discussed and agreed that the best way to compensate for those costs would be to raise the price of the units. Mr. Smith also explained that as bonus were acquired, the affordable housing piece would be triggered which would skew the financial models.
2. When asked where this might be appropriate, a zoning district for one versus another, Mr. Smith had not worked extensively with Hamilton but from land searches in other towns it was usually in less dense areas, therefore Hamilton’s RA district would have more opportunities.
3. When asked which density bonuses would you most likely choose or not? Mr. Smith commented that they would have chosen the efficiency because they build highly efficient units. Mr. Smith further commented that for the land set aside, the definition of developable land was not precise because with land available today, wetlands would isolate a section of the property that could be determined as open space. In other

towns, developable land was more often defined as contiguous. When asked which density bonus would you most likely not utilize? For Mr. Smith, small units would most likely not be utilized. In a town like Hamilton they are not marketable, without COVID they be more marketable. Mr. Smith explained that anything less than 1800-2000 square feet is considered small in his market (+55 market). Mr. Smith further commented that the bonus for open space should be higher because the more open land given, the less units could be built and that there might be a bigger opportunity to increase that percentage. When asked about water and energy efficiency Mr. Smith commented that his organization would be in favor of anything efficient. When asked about solar energy Mr. Smith explained that the preservation of trees on lots made solar energy difficult with his market.

4. When asked about the financial impact of the \$50,000 fee, Mr. Smith agreed that they would be palatable if they did not trigger affordable housing. Mr. Reffett explained that the bylaw could be written in a way that the desired bylaw would not have to comply with the affordable housing requirement.
5. Mr. Smith commented that younger buyers were not as interested in a new construction condominium due to the cost being pretty substantial. There is a demand for homes for first time buyers, a cluster of single-family homes that would sell for \$550-650,000 for 1800 square feet (3 bedrooms) and would allow young families the opportunity of a good school system.
6. The question, is there a market for higher density multi-unit market rate residential development allowed by the flexible development bylaw was answered previously.
7. The question, what changes would you make in either the bylaw language or matrix? Mr. Smith answered previously that the affordable housing component is too large a hurdle to get over when open space requirement was included. Mr. Smith also commented that there would be an incentive to have both senior housing and non-age restricted housing. Mr. Smith told the Board that West Newbury had an Open Space Preservation Development Bylaw that he found to be a useful tool.

Mr. Smith signed off at 7:57 p.m.

The Board discussed the possibility of eliminating or rewriting the Affordable Housing Bylaw which would enable a developer to build smaller single-family units by reducing when it is triggered or how it is triggered. Mr. Wheaton suggested that a comparison be made between the 2 laws as to what is more profitable in terms of extra units per dollar paid into a fund between the 2 laws. Mr. Stein commented that if you got 10 units in the Senior Housing Bylaw with no inclusionary, once you had 10, every 7 thereafter would be paid in the inclusionary amount. That would probably be less than what you would pay per unit for the Flexible Bylaw although density would need to be considered as well.

Mr. Reffett told the Board that Alan Barry would attend the next meeting to give input. The Board agreed that the next step would be to summarize the last 2 meetings with key findings and recommendations and then determine whether to make proposed changes and

incorporate them into the language to be sent out to developers again. After meeting with developers, another draft would be created to present the Bylaw to the public.

2. **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE ZONING MAP CHANGE** – The Board is to conceptually review and discuss the possibility of a zoning map change for property associated with the Winthrop School from R1A to Business.

Mr. Reffett reported that he would like to prepare maps that showed land area access existing features and planned to have them done within the next few weeks. Ms. Crouch reported to the Board that there was a new provision of the Housing Choice Law for MBTA communities that required multi-family units and may have an impact on expanding the commercial district.

3. **BOARD BUSINESS** – Review/approve Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021 and February 2, 2021; Liaison reports; Staff reports, Future agenda items; Upcoming preparation of Planning Board 2020 Annual Report; Etc.

Motion made by Bill Wheaton to approve the minutes of February 7, 2021

Second by Richard Boroff

Roll Call Vote: Richard Boroff – aye, Corey Beaulieu – aye, Bill Wheaton – aye, Rick Mitchell – aye, Marnie Crouch – aye, and Brian Stein – aye.

Unanimous in favor.

Motion made by Marnie Crouch to approve the minutes of January 19, 2021

Seconded by Rick Mitchell

Roll Call Vote: Bill Wheaton – aye, Marnie Crouch – aye, Corey Beaulieu – aye, Richard Boroff – aye, Rick Mitchell – aye, and Brian Stein – aye.

Unanimous in favor.

The Board discussed that an adjustment should be made to the rules and regulations of the “flexible” residential zoning bylaw, a mechanism that would modify standards for technological advances without having to rewrite the bylaw.

Mr. Reffett reported that the parking study was ongoing and that the next meeting will be on February 24, 2021 at 2 p.m.

Mr. Reffett also reported that a contract will be signed this week with an environmental firm to evaluate the landfill developable area.

### **Adjournment**

Motion made by Bill Wheaton to adjourn at 8:33 p.m.

Seconded by Richard Boroff

Roll Call Vote: Marnie Crouch – aye, Bill Wheaton – aye, Rick Mitchell – aye, Corey Beaulieu – aye, Richard Boroff – aye, and Brian Stein – aye.

Unanimous in favor of voting members.

**Upcoming Board Meeting(s):** March 2, 2021; March 16, 2021; April 6, 2021; April 20, 2021.

Prepared by:

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Ann Schlecht

2/19/2021

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Attest