



Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, MGL Chapter 30 A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk delivered to all Planning Board members, a meeting of the Hamilton Planning Board was posted for April 4, 2023 at 7pm in Memorial Hall. *This meeting was held in hybrid format (in person/Zoom) and recorded by HWCAM.*

Planning Board members: Richard Boroff (2023); Jonathan Poore (2024); Rick Mitchell (2024); Emil Dahlquist (2025); Beth Herr (2025); William Wheaton (2025); Marnie Crouch (2026). Associate: Patrick Norton

**Call to order:** *With a quorum present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03pm, identified the meeting was being recorded and called roll. Present: M. Crouch, Chair; E. Dahlquist, Clerk; B. Herr; W. Wheaton; R. Mitchell; R. Boroff; J. Poore; P. Norton; Also present: Director of Planning & Inspectional Services, Patrick Reffett.*

**DISCUSSION OF TOWN PURSUIT OF STRATEGIC PLAN FOR GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.** *The Board will discuss planning efforts and information relevant to the pursuit of a possible rezoning of the seminary campus and also of a possible companion development agreement.*

The Board is trying to determine the intensity of development on this site.

M. Crouch created an outline of a draft overlay district she wanted to review with the Board. E. Dahlquist and J. Poore discussed maps they had created for this site. E. Dahlquist referenced the zoning map and said the Board would need to have a consensus on this to move forward. The plans were exhibited on the screen for the public and the Board. E. Dahlquist explained the basics of the map and noted concern for this site is the unknown. He surmised the advantage of doing all this planning now is to take away the unknown from what can and can't be built on the site.

M. Crouch said the consultants hired gave the Planning Board a "springboard" for discussions but there was not enough information from the public on the intensity of development. The Board discussed whether the Select Board would have the public weigh in, but that the Planning Board would be the ones doing the public hearings. W. Wheaton opined that the Board can fill in as many details as possible about the zoning indicating that developers may have certain "by right uses" for existing buildings with everything else as a special permit. This was discussed at length.

The Board continued discussing the map and zones of the site. The second map delineated the site into 3 areas based on the geography of the area. J. Poore discussed the different areas and why they differentiated. He opined that it worked well based on the area and what could be done in each location, referencing areas that could fit larger buildings or more buildings and areas for meaningful open spaces. He added that this approach creates different zoning and coding for each zone. Refinements can continue to be made as the Board moves forward. Right now, the estimates for density are 6-10 dwelling units per acre. R. Mitchell said the idea was not to limit the uses in those 3 zones but create an appropriate density/intensity so that it makes sense. The Board discussed figuring out the layout and zoning of the different areas first and whether this was a form-based code; it was suggested it was not as there were illustrative plans, as well as other options that allowed flexibility. If a developer came in, they would not be bound by the illustrative plans.

Dr. Ken Barns, from the Seminary spoke and complimented the Board on all their work. The Seminary's preference between the two maps would be Zoning Map A because it shows the existing roads.

J. Poore responded that the Board would look at the 3 zones independently and suggested it would be best to start with the zone with apartments E and F (AKA NR) as these are the largest areas. W. Wheaton expressed the view that parking should not be behind these buildings due to the slope. He had concerns about removing the buffers in this area. The original buildings were pushed back so neighbors would not see them as much. The buildings as they are on the Map are not how they have to look; these are not set in stone. The numbers on in the illustrative plans are square footage indicators.

The Board discussed the existing units and how only a certain percentage would be available affordable housing at 80% of AMI (Affordable Median Income), noting this would have to be clarified. The Board then discussed the other zones. The Board discussed whether this could be a buffer zone between the two. The Board decided not to talk about the market values

and what could be in these locations at this point, and to finish talking about the zones. The goal is to make sure the sectors make sense and then apply numbers to them.

The Board segued to uses after discussing the zones. They started with apartments E and F and decided to only discuss the uses that would not be permitted. Most of the zoning would most likely be residential. The Board went through the list of uses in the documents it had; this document was also shown on the screen to the public as Board members discussed how to do the coding. These options were discussed at length. The Board decided through discussion that this was the first pass, they can always make changes as they get further into planning.

The Board discussed how any items that were not residential, such as a gym and daycare, could not be in stand-alone buildings. The Board continued to discuss the remaining zones and potential uses, although no decisions were made. The Board discussed the desirability of assisted living facilities but in some cases buildings would need extensive work or demolition.

The Board confirmed that it would continue moving forward with draft illustrative plans along with as of right uses, subject to site plan review, referring to reuse of the existing structures with site plan review and new construction subject to special permit. M. Crouch will continue to edit the draft overlay district she has commenced writing. R. Mitchell wanted to go into more detail with that but not at tonight's meeting. R. Mitchell felt the Board was doing a good job setting up specific zones with specific uses with buffers, with the creation of cohesive neighborhoods. J. Poore said he is working on design standards that grew out of the illustrative plans so developers could understand the "why." M. Crouch wanted to dispel the idea that site plan review was too difficult to complete. P. Reffett explained site plan review, as a rudimentary approach to review projects. It evaluates whether a full application has been rendered. R. Mitchell said it also encourages a cooperative dialogue between the Board and the applicant.

The Board discussed the timetable to have the draft overlay district completed, and it was discussed whether it could have the draft overlay district done in time to make the special town meeting.

Public Comment Via Zoom, No Name: Asked for more information on Browns Hill and the impact on the vista. The Board is very aware of the scenic vistas and want to protect them as much as possible.

Dr. Ken Barnes: Thanked the Board for the work again and felt the Board had completed a tremendous amount of work tonight. He reiterated he would want to have a working group with himself and Myron Walters and some members of the Board as he feels both sides are very close on everything.

**BOARD BUSINESS.** *Staff and Working Group reports; Etc.*

The special town meeting (STM) is scheduled for June 28<sup>th</sup>. The Board discussed the timetable to have the draft overlay district completed, and whether they could have the draft overlay district done in time to make the STM since they also need to have public hearings. M. Crouch did not want to make a commitment to having this item at the special town meeting due to the work still left to be done. There is no information ready for the public. The Board decided that fall town meeting would be better to make sure this could be completed appropriately.

**VOTE TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION; EXECUTIVE SESSION** - *This item was postponed until a later date.*

Pursuant to G.L. c.30A, section 21(a)(3): To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Planning Board and the Chair so declares – Chebacco Hill Capital Partners, LLC v. Planning Board, Massachusetts Land Court C.A. No. 22 MISC 000591 (HPS), and Chebacco Hill Capital Partners, LLC v. Planning Board, Essex Superior Court C.A. No. 2277CV01137.

**Adjournment** – *The Board voted unanimously by roll call to adjourn at 10:24PM*

*Respectfully Submitted By*  
*Jennifer Dionne, Recording Secretary*  
3.9.23

*The minutes were prepared from video and approved by the Board on March 26, 2023; witnessed by*



Meeting Minutes

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