

Joint Meeting
Hamilton Planning Board and Select Board
Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2023
Memorial Room, Town Hall
577 Bay Rd., Hamilton, MA

This meeting was held in person for Board members and by Zoom webinar for all other participants and interested parties.

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Members Present:

Select Board: Jamie Knudsen, Shawn Farrell (Chair), Tom Myers

Planning Board: Jonathan Poore, Bill Wheaton, Rick Mitchell, Richard Boroff, Marnie Crouch (Chair)

Others Present: Patrick Reffett, David Gamble

On Zoom: Caroline Beaulieu, Beth Herr, Matthew Hamill (Associate Member Planning Board), John Witten, Ken Barnes

Handouts: Power Point from the Seminary; Process Timeline with maps, Overview of Development Agreements

1. Discussion of Town Pursuit of Strategic Plan for Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary

The Chair of the Planning Board gave a brief overview of the powers and duties of the Board as set forth in section 10.5 of the Hamilton Zoning Bylaw. The Chair also referenced the principles and recommendations set forth in the 2004 Master Plan that was overseen by Judy Barrett, which stated that good planning can be thought of as a three-legged stool, where economic, social, and environmental needs are balanced. The Chair then turned the meeting over to Jonathan Poore who summarized the work of the Planning Board to date and covered in the process timeline hand out.

Attorney John Witten spoke to the new zoning overlay district and bylaw provisions and the contract between the Town and the Seminary. While both the new zoning overlay district and the contract can be worked on simultaneously, zoning has to precede the contract. Mr. Witten stated that the Seminary needs to articulate how it wants the property to be used under the new zoning regime.

Mr. Barnes from the Seminary outlined the elements where he thought there was agreement between the Seminary and the town; the Seminary's thinking on the permitting process, especially in terms of what would be by right and what would be special permit; and property usages that the Seminary envisions, including managed access, buffer zones, and no-build areas

or additional conservation restrictions. Mr. Barnes supported the concept of the property being laid out in three zones and the work the Planning Board did in identifying what would be protected, the buffer areas, and the buildable areas. Chief area of concern was the sector plan which detailed roads that don't currently exist. He would like to see a more generic treatment which would indicate what an area was zoned for with appropriate ceilings and floors. He ended by pointing out that the town and the Seminary were close, and if the town and the Seminary can agree on what the numbers look like, Mr. Barnes thinks we have a plan.

Mr. Barnes presentation was followed by a general discussion which covered the following:

- The relationship between the zoning bylaw and the development agreement.
- The Dover amendment and any overlay district zoning bylaws.
- The tension between how to represent the ambitions and intentions of all parties in a way that both allows for flexibility and some certainty.

Next steps:

- Select Board Chair pointed to the meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 9, at 3:15 where the lawyers for both the Select Board and the Seminary will come together to discuss the development agreement.
- Jonathan Witten stated that the Thursday discussion will help illuminate the zoning and the zoning will help illuminate the development agreement. After the Thursday meeting, he stated he would be able to help the Planning Board put something to paper in terms of the development agreement.
- The Planning Board chair suggested that everyone take a look at a Emil Dahlquist's calculation that 1/3 of the Seminary site is within the GPOD. If more than 1/3 of the site is within the GPOD, then the entire parcel is within the GPOD and that would need to be addressed before we can move forward.
- Ensure handouts are available enough in advance so they can be online for those who want to attend the meeting online.

Chairs of the Planning Board and Select Board asked for motions to adjourn, which were made, seconded, and approved unanimously by each Board members.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted as approved at the 07-25-2023 meeting.

Marnie Crouch