ACTON PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of Meeting
November 22, 2005
Acton Memorial Library

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Planning Board members Mr. Greg Niemyski (Chairman), Mr. William King (Clerk), Mr. Gary Sullivan, Mr. Edmund Starzec, Mr. Michael Densen, and Ms. Ruth Martin attended. Also present was Town Planner, Mr. Roland Bartl and Planning Board Secretary, Ms. Kim DelNigro.

Absent were Mr. Christopher Schaffner and associate Mr. Bruce Reichlen.

Mr. Niemyski called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

I. Citizens Concerns

Resident Mr. Pat Murphy, 733 Main Street, was concerned about the development of the Madison Place at 737 and 741 Main Street. Mr. Murphy will be looking forward to future meetings regarding his concerns. The members of the board did indicate to Mr. Murphy that it will be placed on a future agenda to discuss.

II. Discussion – Affordable Housing Overlay District revisions (invited guests)

Highlights of discussions:

Mr. Paul Gaboury, developer, addressed his concerns with the Acton Zoning Bylaws. He stated that his Fort Pond Brook 40B project on River Street worked well for him. He worked with the abutters and showed them what will happen and stayed positive. Mr. Gaboury stated the bylaw is too complex and the overlay district too unsuitable to work with. Any new version of a local affordable housing bylaw, if adopted, should be reaffirmed by the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen annually to keep things predictable. Mr. Gaboury mentioned that the bylaw requires larger parcels of land than what is often available and development at a lower density than what is economical. Potential land plots suitable for affordable housing are very limited. Sewerage becomes a problem with very limited space for the requirements. Mr. Gaboury stated that the 40B approval process takes up to 2 years. There should be a faster approval time under local regulations to make them competitive. Mr. Gaboury would like to see a statement of the goals the Town wishes to achieve from a local bylaw as an alternative to the 40B process.

Mr. Ron Peabody, developer, addressed his concerns with the Acton Zoning Bylaws. He stated that the Method of Providing Affordable Dwelling Units charts are very confusing and should be made simpler. Mr. Peabody stated that it is not feasible to develop a major affordable housing development with 40% affordable. The dwelling units for a handicapped person should read "adaptable for handicapped persons" for flexibility. Mr. Peabody mentioned that a PCRC development sets the base line for the number of units per acre in several zones while the affordable bylaw allows for a density bonus. There should be more flexibility.

Mrs. Nancy Tavernier, Chairman for Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC), stated that Acton needs to set goals:

- Create an incentive for 40B developments
- There needs to be more affordable housing
- Throw out the overlay district
- Go over the Master Plan and set a target area
- Set a standard with units (minor and major)
- Use CPA funds
- Use units that work

Mrs. Tavernier stated that with the comprehensive permit, there are too many items to do, if the development has a small number of units.
The Zoning bylaw should be adaptable, have simplicity, flexibility, predictability, and approval should be an expedient process.

Attendees as well as others who could not attend also provided written statements to the Board.

The Board Chairman thanked Mr. Gaboury, Messrs. Peabody, and Ms. Tavernier for their time and input.

III. Consent Agenda

A. The minutes of 10/11/05 were approved unanimously as drafted.

IV. Reports

CPC: Ed Starzec reported on the 16 CPA project applications that were submitted for funding.
EDC: Ed Starzec stated the meeting was cancelled and rescheduled to December 8.
MAGIC: Mr. Niemyski reported that they discussed what would happen if a disaster struck.
South Acton Commuter Rail Task Force: Gary Sullivan reported that they presented a Commuter Carpool Plan at the 11/14/05 Board of Selectmen meeting and it was approved.

Mr. Niemyski moved to close the meeting, Mr. King 2nd; all voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 PM.