



## ACTON PLANNING BOARD

**Minutes of Meeting  
October 09, 2007  
Acton Memorial Library**

Planning Board members Mr. Greg Niemyski (Chairman), Mr. Christopher Schaffner (Vice Chairman), Mr. Edmund Starzec (Clerk), Mr. Bruce Reichlen, Mr. Michael Densen, Mr. Alan Mertz and Associate Mr. Roland Bourdon attended. Also present was Town Planner, Mr. Roland Bartl and Secretary, Ms. Kim DelNigro.

Absent was Ms. Ruth Martin.

Mr. Niemyski called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM.

### **I. Citizens Concerns**

None raised.

### **II. Consent Agenda**

Item A - Minutes of 9/25/07 approved by unanimous vote.

### **III. Reports**

CPC: Mr. Starzec reported the next meeting will be October 11, 2007 for the Question & Answer session.

CWRMP: Mr. Schaffner reported the committee has finalized their Rapid Infiltration Basin (RIB) water disposal plans. Capacity and the disposal limit could be increased up to 3%.

Fire & EMS Advisory Task Group: Mr. Densen reported the committee is not ready to go to the Town Meeting for a vote this Fall. The latest test results showed issues with septic disposal. There are ongoing revisions to the plans, the square footage has decreased and rooms have been cut or reduced in size. Mr. Densen stated that part of the plan right now is that the Central Station Fire will be closed once the new North Acton station is online, but that it will be retained so that it can reopen when needed.

WCF Study Committee: Mr. Reichlen stated progress has been made with drafting the bylaw, and the committee is moving forward.

### **IV. Avalon – consultation on project changes**

Mr. Niemyski explained the project as originally approved to new Board members.

Mr. Tom Hardy, of Avalon Bay, and Mr. Tom House, of O'Sullivan Architects were present. Mr. Hardy explained the revised plan which will create more open space and explained the new design of the buildings to comprise town houses and one larger apartment style building. They have connected the sidewalks throughout the neighborhood. The development will offer a broader range of pricing and unit styles. The start of the development will begin next spring. Mr. Niemyski suggested they discuss some ideas with the Design Review Board. Mr. Bartl noted that the proposed increase in unit numbers appears to exceed what is allowed under zoning. The Board Chairman thanked them for their work and time spend on the project.

### **V. Design Review Board – Discussion on Acton's Bylaw (3 items)**

Ann Sussman and members of the DRB explained that the DRB acts as an advisory board to the Selectmen on building and site plan design of commercial properties. They review all projects that fall under site plan review or site plan special permit criteria and would also be available to give informal review of other plans upon the request of the Selectmen or other parties. The committee explained and reviewed their goals and would like to promote co-ordination of design guidelines and the zoning

bylaws, would like to be involved with the Master Plan and would like to encourage form-based initiatives. One of their specific concerns is changing the zoning bylaw to promote outdoor dining. The committee would like to see it encouraged throughout the town. The committee is approaching the Planning Board for input and for advice on how to implement it. The Board supports their efforts and would like to receive feedback from the Board of Selectmen in moving forward. Ms. Sussman also briefed the Board on the DRB's experience reviewing the North Acton Fire Station Plans. As a result, she suggested the Town should explore a zoning exemption for municipal building projects. Mr. Bartl suggested that municipal projects are unique and unlike any commercial project and that a zoning exemption is therefore appropriate as is the case in many other towns. Furthermore, municipal projects receive much greater and in-depth public review. The Board Chairman suggested that this conversation might be better had with a Selectman present. He thanked Ms. Sussman and members for their work and time.

#### **VI. Brief Zoning Changes - Discussion**

Board members discussed and reviewed the staff memo regarding possible zoning changes that could be prepared for 2008 Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Bartl explained:

- Industrial property owners at Post Office Square district have approached the EDC to see if several zoning limitation could be eased to help retain companies and encourage reinvestment and expansion. EDC recommendation is expected this Fall.
- Insert an off-site affordable senior housing contribution as an alternative for the requirement of affordable age-restricted units in senior residence developments.
- Clean-Up Items: allow two-family buildings in North Acton Village.

The Planning Board directed staff to draft articles for warrant submission and discussion at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.