



**TOWN OF ACTON**  
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**Planning Department**

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**INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION**

**To:** Don P. Johnson, Town Manager **Date:** March 5, 2004  
**From:** Roland Bartl, AICP, Town Planner *R.B.*  
**Subject:** Rezoning Petition – Melon; for land at Piper Road and Route 2

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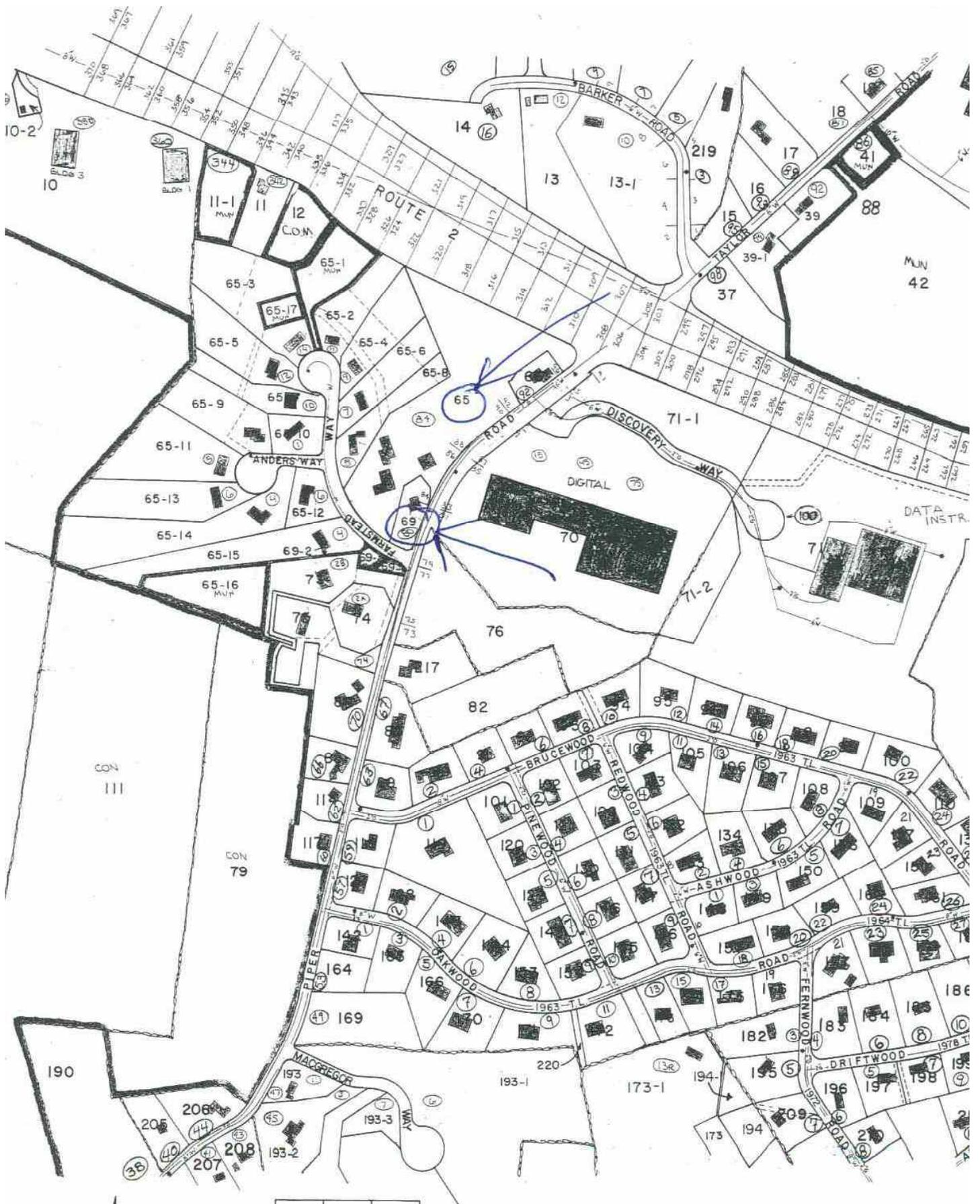
The following attempts to address the questions at Wednesday's staff meeting regarding this petition:

- 1. Location and Description** – Located in the southwest corner of Piper Road and Route 2. Farmstead Way bounds the land in the south. Addresses are 80 and 84 Piper Road. Town Atlas plate G-3, parcels 65 and 69.  
Parcel 65 (84 Piper) measures 5.46 acres, has one residence and two outbuildings (barns) on it, and has 414 feet of contiguous frontage on Piper Road and 239 feet of contiguous frontage on Farmstead Way. About 2 acres of parcel 65 is wetlands and flood plain.  
Parcel 69 (80 Piper) measures 0.47 acres, has one residence on it, and has 235 feet of contiguous frontage on Piper Road and 70 feet of contiguous frontage on Farmstead Way. All land on this parcel is dry.  
The residences and outbuildings are clustered towards the southerly side of the property where the elevation is the highest.  
The property surrounds a small parcel with a residence or a duplex near the Route 2 intersection – 92 Piper Road, parcel 66, on town atlas map G-3. The Melons do not own this property and it is not included in the rezoning petition.
- 2. Zoning History** – In the mid-90s as part of the Kelley's Corner Phase 1 zoning implementation, Town Meeting rezoned the subject parcels and much of the surrounding land (including all residential lots now on Farmstead Way and Anders Way, and several smaller parcels on Route 2 and on Piper Road) from 'Residence 2' (R-2) to 'Office Park 2' (OP-2). This area was considered the last remaining, largely vacant land with prime commercial potential along Route 2. Simultaneously, but not necessarily in reaction to the rezoning, NorthWest as developer and the Melons as owners filed the Piper Ridge subdivision plan covering much of the area. Because its filing predates the effective date of the zoning change, the plan froze the R-2 zoning for the subdivision in accordance with State zoning law. The 'Piper Ridge' subdivision was built and is now known as Farmstead and Anders Ways. However, the subdivision did not include the two parcels that are now subject of the petition.  
In the early 00's, the Town voted to reverse zoning of the Piper Ridge subdivision back to R-2, acknowledging the established residential use there. This action included a small lot beside the Route 111 to Route 2 on-ramp, where a single family home had been built in the mid-90', also under the operation of State zoning protection (the building permit predated the effective date of the zoning change). However, the two subject parcels of the petition remained in OP-2 zoning.

3. **Commercial Build-Out** – The OP-2 district allows office-type uses, some services, commercial recreation, and industrial uses. Of these, office is the most vehicle intensive use. Retail is not allowed. The maximum FAR in OP-2 is 0.20. Minimum frontage is 200 feet and minimum lot area is 80,000 square feet.  
It can be assumed that under continued OP-2 zoning the parcels would be merged, and the existing residences on the parcels would be converted to commercial use replaced with new commercial buildings. Using FAR calculations, the theoretical maximum commercial net floor area on the parcels' combined upland area of +/-3.93 acres would be 34,238 square feet. A three-story office building would occupy not more than 0.34 acres (+/-15,000 square feet) of land area, and the parking lot for the required 137 spaces would occupy approximately 1.2 acres. The minimum required upland open space is approximately 1.5 acres. That leaves nearly one more upland acre unclaimed.  
Practical aspects of the property may constrain the theoretical maximum somewhat. Especially, Acton's wetlands bylaw creates an extensive no-disturb zone on the property. Nevertheless, commercial build-out to 20-25,000 square feet seems rather realistic. A sub-scenario or interim scenario of commercial build-out could be the retention of the two existing residence on half-acre lots each. This would reduce the commercial building size from 20-25000 to about 15-18,000 square feet.
4. **Residential Build-out** – The R-2 district's basic requirements are the 20,000 square foot minimum lot size and the 150 foot minimum lot frontage. The half-acre parcel at 80 Piper Road (parcel 69) is an existing residential lot that meets, but does not exceed by much, the minimum legal requirements. The much larger 5.46-acre parcel 65 at 84 Piper Road has adequate frontage on Farmstead Way for the existing residence. A half-acre lot could be carved out there for the existing house. The parcel also has 414 feet of frontage on Piper Road, with sufficient area for two to three more house lots, without relying on the 2 acres of the parcel's wetlands for meeting minimum lot area requirements. Reliance on the wetlands for minimum lot area is allowed under zoning and could result in a higher lot yield.

Attached are area excerpts of the Town Atlas page G-3, and the corresponding wetlands and floodplain map area, and the zoning map for the area.

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F-2	F-3	F-4
G-2	G-3	G-4

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