



**TOWN OF ACTON  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
MINUTES OF AUGUST 22, 2007 MEETING**

7:30 p.m.  
Room 126, Town Hall

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING: Sept 5th, 2007  
Acton Town Hall, Rm 126, 7:30 p.m.

**Present:** Ann Sussman(AS) (Chair), Tom Peterman(TP) (Vice-Chair), Ed Starzec(ES), Holly Ben-Joseph(HBJ), Terra Friedrichs(TF) and Lynne Alpert(LA).

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm.

We reviewed, made some minor corrections and approved the meeting minutes of July 18<sup>th</sup> 2007. It was noted that all minutes need to be copied also to Lauren Rosensweig along with emailing them to the town clerk. We will start a file for the DRB for meeting notes in room 121. We will need to purchase a filing box and some manila folders.

**Action Item:** HBJ and LA will bring hard copies of the meeting minutes to put in the file.

Tom reviewed and explained the existing by-laws and summarized them in a handout. He also made recommendations on how to improve the by-laws with 2 graphic sheets one showing existing zoning, the other proposed. (See attached). Tom said that even making a simple graphic change in the existing by-laws showing the parking along the side of the building could have an impact on how developers approach the site design. One suggested change is to increase the Floor Area Ratios (FAR's) in the village districts and to lower the required parking – however these changes are complex and need to be studied. For example, many people now feel that there is not enough parking required.

We did conclude that without making any changes to the current by-laws that we cannot fulfill the goals listed in the design review guidelines.

Also, if we are suggesting allowing an increase in the FARs, we need to be careful how this is accomplished. We may need to stipulate that if a developer is going to increase the FAR, they need to work with the Design Review Board.

*Question* – Should we approach the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to go over all of these by-law changes that we have been discussing, or should we approach them with the request to change the outdoor eating by-law only? And approach them with the more complex issues at a later date?

Ann read an email from Dore regarding whether or not they will be able to see the Design Review Board (DRB) at the Sept 10 meeting. We discussed how we should answer this email. We decided to answer that:

1. We have been working with the planning board to make the zoning change regarding Café-style outdoor eating, and that we would like to make this change in a timely manner so that it will apply to the renovation of Ken Sundberg's Main Street project and also to the Exchange Hall project also currently going before the BOS. If we can meet with BOS on the 10<sup>th</sup> then we can go before the Planning board on Sept 25<sup>th</sup> with this issue.

2. Also we would like to bring the BOS up to date on what we are doing and what we are planning to do in the future – such as suggesting other by-law changes to that we can fulfill the DRB guidelines that were developed by the citizens.
3. Other issues – the DRB would like to be formally involved in the master plan development, which could be an appropriate way to make far-reaching changes rather than piece-meal changes of reviewing individual projects.

**Steps that the DRB will need to take to make by-law changes:**

1. Present our ideas to the BOS and get their comments and approval to move forward to change the by-law 3.5.5 (outdoor eating)
2. Develop language with the planning board (and Roland) to draft a proposed amendment to the zoning by-law.
3. Planning board will hold a public Hearing stating that they support or do not support this proposal.
4. Get the proposed amendment onto the town Warrant for Town meeting in April. The town would vote to support this or not.

*If we wanted to get the proposed change into the Town Warrant for the November meeting, we would need to have all the steps completed by ???*

We discussed how we will review the next project coming up – Miencke building at the next meeting. We agreed that we have the opportunity to look at the entire block at this time. What flexibility will we have in suggesting something that is not following current zoning which we would then ask that the developer apply for a variance.

**Action Item:** Get a copy of the map showing the existing site plans for Kelly Corner. Ed said that he could probably get this.

HBJ will bring trace paper to the next meeting so that we can study the entire area and the particular site.

Ann will bring (if possible) Ken's proposed plans.

Final action – we reviewed the new fence proposal for the Bank of America drive-thru teller at 422 Mass Ave.

The DRB recommended that only real wood be used.

The DRB recommended that a post a rail fence or low shrubs (max. 4' ht) (Holly or boxwood) replace the existing split rail fencing.

The DRB recommends that the current stockade fence be replaced with something less rustic and more appropriate to the area – such as the V-groove board fence with top cap.

We all agreed that to properly review something like this we really should have a plan that shows the dimensions and locations of the different types of fencing on the site.

**Action Item:** Ann will email these comments to the appropriate person.

The meeting was adjourned at: 9:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Holly Ben-Joseph

(see following pages – produced by Tom Peterman)

## Zoning Summary

### Parking General

Parking diagrams in bylaw always show parking in front of building

Shared parking prohibited except village districts

30' minimum setback for parking except for WAV, SAV, EAV (still reqd: KC, PM, NAV)

Parking cannot be in front of building in WAV, SAV, EAV (still allowed: KC, PM, NAV)

24' wide access drive required on each lot (shared driveways encouraged in village districts)

### Parking Required

Retail: 1 space /300sf

Office: 1 space /250sf

Restaurant: 1 space / 3 seats

Residential: 2 spaces/unit

Village districts allowed a 30% reduction in required number of spaces

### Building Setbacks

Front 10' in EAV, NAV, SAV 30' in KC, PM 0' in WAV

Side 10' in all village districts 20' in PM

*Kelly Corner  
Powder Mill  
West Acton  
Village*

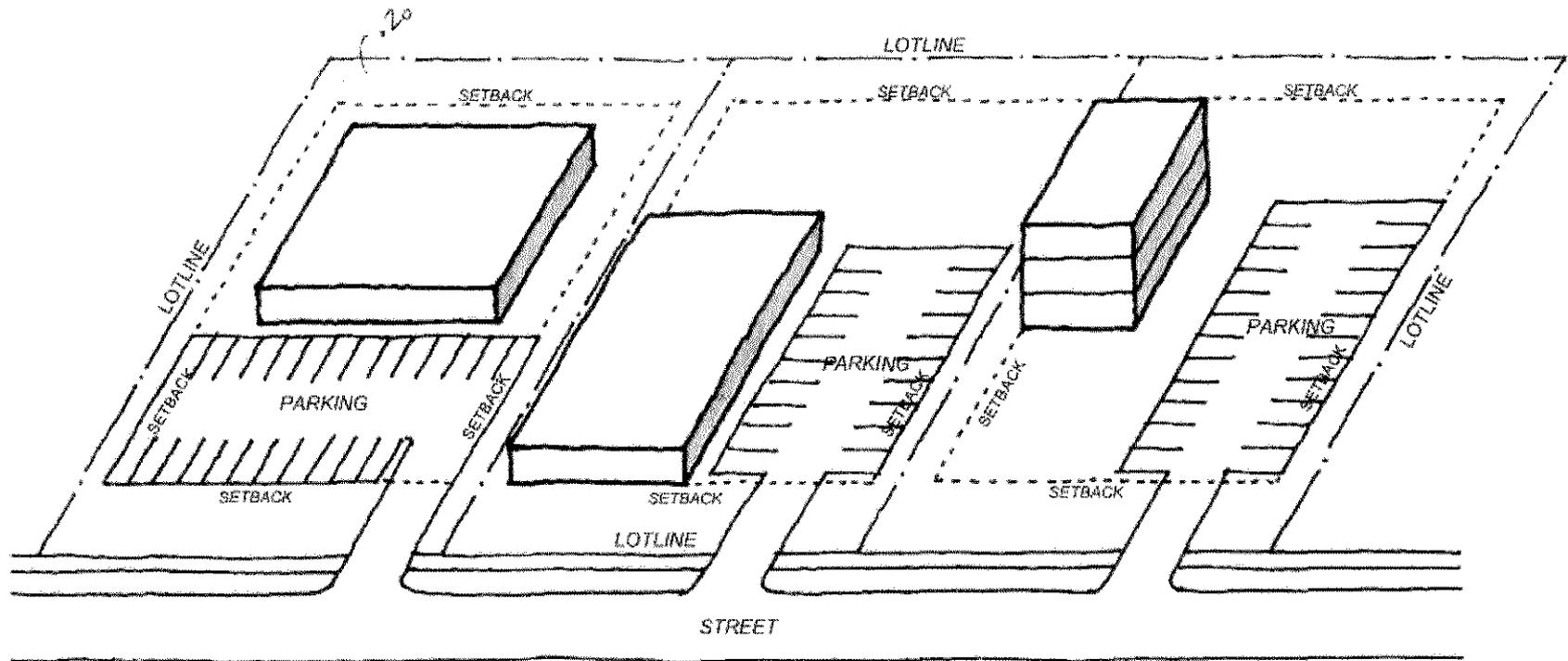
### Outdoor Dining

Section 3.5.5 requires patio for food service must be closed on all sides and only be accessible from the establishment it serves (except for EAV)

### Floor Area Ratio

.20 for all village districts except .40 in WAV and KC

.70 allowed in WAV if mixed use residential incorporated into building



**Pro Forma based on Current Bylaw for village districts (except WAV):**

- 20 FAR (.40 allowed at KC) - Kelly Connor
- 30' min front yard setback (10' at EAV, NAV, SAV)
- 10' min side yard setback
- 1 parking space for 250sf office, 300sf retail
- Parking allowed in front (side only at SAV, EAV)
- 24' Access drive required on each lot

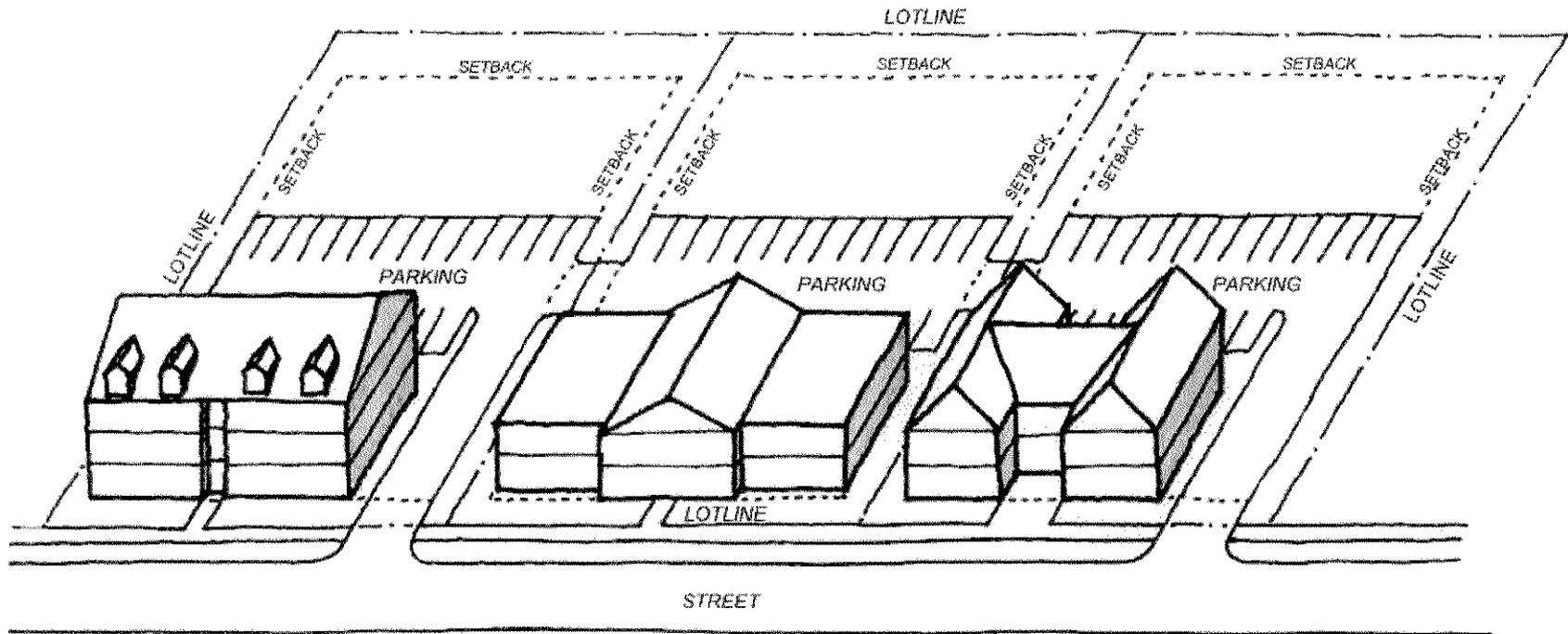


**Comparative Zoning Bylaw Study**  
 Acton Design Review Board

**Existing Zoning**



August 22, 2007 PETERMAN ARCHITECTS, INC.



**Form based Zoning based on the following:**

- .40 FAR
- 10' front yard setback (mandated)
- 10' side yard setback (maximize frontage)
- 1 parking space for 500sf office and retail
- Parking allowed in back only
- Shared Access Drives
- Entrances on Street, connected to public sidewalk
- Encourage multistory, mixed use buildings

