

Walpole Planning Board
Town Hall
Minutes Tuesday, July 10, 2018
7 pm

Presiding Members: Jeffrey Miller (Chair), Robert Miller (Vice-Chair), James Aldrich, (Secretary), Dennis Marcom, Jason Perron, Jeff White, Steve Dalessio (Selectboard Representative). Alternates: Jeff Colley, Joanna Andros.

Recording: Marilou Blaine. These minutes are unapproved and will be reviewed at the August 2018 meeting for corrections, additions and/or omissions.

Meeting Opened: Mr. J. Miller called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Roll Call: All board members were present so an alternate was not needed to fill in.

Minutes: Mr. Marcom made one correction to the June minutes. On page 1 the word changed was in quotes. The quotes should have been around the word "where." Mr. Aldrich made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Mr. Marcom seconded the motion and the motion carried.

New Alternate: Vote to approve Mr. Jeff Colley as an alternate, replacing Ed Potter. Mr. Marcom made a motion to approve the nomination of Jeff Colley as an alternate. Mr. Aldrich seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board. Welcome Mr. Colley.

Old Business: Avanru, Jack Franks, Building C on the original plan, Lot 1, where the Co-op was going to go: Public Hearing for a commercial building. Public Hearing postponed until August. Mr. Franks will be at the meeting for an update.

Mr. Franks said he would like to hold off on the plan he laid out to the Board two months ago for building C. It may still happen, he said, but it's not ready now.

Mr. Franks said he turned in two copies of the lighting plan for the original plan for Lot 1 and the secretary couldn't find them. Mr. Franks called the lighting company and the light plan is on a program that they no longer use and there would be considerable cost to get that plan updated. He was asking for direction from the Board. "We did turn them in and it was dark-sky night," Mr. Franks said.

Mr. J. Miller said he should be able to get a paper copy of the lighting plan. And, he continued, he (Mr. Franks) and his partners must have some copies of everything that was submitted to the Board. The secretary suggested that since the lighting was going to be included in this project, there must be some sort of catalog that had pictures of the lighting.

Mr. Robert Miller asked if the lighting plan was on the co-op building. Mr. Franks said the plan was for all of Lot 1, which included the co-op building and the another building, Building B. Mr. R. Miller asked if he was talking about the same building. Mr. Franks said now he was talking about Building B and there would be some changes to that building.

Mr. R. Miller pressed Mr. Franks if was asking for a Public Hearing in August for Building B. Mr. Franks said "yes", then added that he's 90 percent sure the civil engineers can make the changes in two weeks.

So you want to amend the site plan to Building B next month? he asked. Mr. Franks said, "yes."

Ms. Andros asked if Mr. Franks had to present the plan before he had a hearing. Mr. J. Miller said he could do it all in the same night.

Mr. Dalessio asked Mr. Franks to bring in the before and after plans for Building B.

Mr. R. Miller made a motion to have a Public Hearing for the amended site plan for Building B in August. Mr. Aldrich seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Two subdivisions. Joe DiBernardo represented both owners' subdivisions – one for Mary McMahon and one for Rascal Baby, LLC, the former Berg property on Valley Road.

Project One: Mary McMahon – 58 Adams Lane, off Whipple Hill Road. Ms. McMahon is proposing to subdivide off a lot of 14.48 acres labeled "NOT TO BE DEVELOPED" leaving a remainder of 143.09 acres with Tax Map No. 3 Lot No. 1. The parcel is located in the Timberland and Rural Agricultural Districts. Lot #2 of 14.48 acres is accessed solely by a class VI town highway.

A Public Hearing was requested and approved last month for a hearing in August on this matter.

Project Two: Rascal Baby, LLC is proposing a Lot Line adjustment off Valley Road across from Swain Lane. This adjustment involves 3 lots of record all owned by Rascal Baby, LLC. Tax Map No. 13 Lot No. 51 will expand from 0.55 acres to 6.45 acres. The additional land is being taken from Tax Map No. 13 Lot No. 50. Tax Map No. 13 Lot No. 50 is acquiring 2.18 acres from Tax Map No. 11 Lot No. 29 giving Lot No. 50 a total area of 21.13 acres. Tax Map No. 11 Lot No. 29 is being reduced to 18.66 acres after adjustment.

Mr. R. Miller made a motion to hold a Public Hearing on the Rascal Baby subdivisions in August. Mr. Marcom seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Update to Master Plan: Lisa Murphy, planner at Southwest Regional Planning Commission was invited to come the meeting to talk about helping the Planning Board update the Master Plan.

Ms. Murphy said she'd been at SWRPC for 10 years. She helped Walpole update its Master Plan 10 years ago and has been doing a lot of updating Master Plans in the region lately. The state recommends updating the Master Plan every 5 to 10 years, Ms. Murphy said,

She asked Board members if they had a copy of the Master Plan and how they used it. Board members said they had copies of the Plan. Mr. J. Miller said we do use it quite a bit in certain proposals. The Board looks at it regularly to define the meaning of a proposal and uses it in clarifying certain decisions. There are certain plans and special exceptions where it's noted that the Master Plan plays a part in the decision. The Board finds it to be a better foundation to be able to make a better decision on certain criteria, he said. Recently, it was decided that the Board should take another look at it.

Ms. Murphy said she asked that question because she believed the Master Plan helps you foresee the future but also it helps in cases that go to court. If a town can say this situation doesn't follow our Master Plan, the town has a good case.

It also helps with grant opportunities. Funding for federal and state projects are hard to come by but if the criteria is it consistent with the Master Plan, and it was recently updated, towns have a better chance of getting a grant. She explained that recently she had been working with the town of Chesterfield and they received money for a management plan for Spofford Lake. The town got it immediately, Ms. Murphy said. Part of the state's reasoning was that the town had just updated its

Master Plan, Natural Resource Inventory and hazardous mitigation plan.

Some towns work on the whole Master Plan at one time, others do it year by year and update one chapter at a time. Mr. Miller said they were taking the later approach. The Board wanted a quote for how much it would cost for help from SWRPC on the land analysis section. They would submit the quote to the Selectboard and if the Selectboard agrees, the quote would go to the townspeople next March for a vote.

Ms. Murphy suggested that the Board look at how they were going to use the Master Plan, is there something missing, say such as an energy plan. Ms. Murphy said she looked at the current goals and objectives. While they are good, many of them don't have actions. How are you making that happen? she asked. Go a little bit further she suggested.

She also suggested the Planning Board get together once a year with all the different committees - the zoning board, conservation committee and look at a way to make things happen. It takes a lot of work and several meeting but if you're serious about taking an action to protect certain areas or encourage a certain type of development, such as senior housing.

Population and housing chapter. Should you update the population and housing chapter with the census coming up in two years? That depends – if your working on census information from 2000 or 2010. If it was 2000, you should probably update now. It will show a trend and be closer to the outcome of information that's collected in 2020.

Mr. Miller said the only section that was updated was land use and that was in 2006.

Mr. Dalessio said the town is changing in population and the population makeup is changing. He talked about a survey of what the people wanted. He said the last time a survey was done a very small percentage of the population completed the survey. The Board would like to do a better marketing job this time and get a bigger cross section of people to participate. The Board would also like to take a forward look and how do to track work force.

Ms. Murphy said that SWRPC just received a grant in July from the Tufts Foundation to do an age-friendly grant to track both the older and younger populations. The are is losing the younger population fast. The grant will take two years, but you will be able to get a lot of numbers and information on the population trends. They want to get a percentage of the population from 33 towns but also target specific groups to find how they view transportation, housing and economic situations in the area. And it won't cost the Town anything.

She suggested going to Survey Monkey to look for a survey the Town might want to use. Getting the word out is the hardest part. Ms. Murphy suggested getting electronic copies as well as paper copies. Mr. Dalessio said we have a successful blog site with The Walpolean that's fairly well read in town and then there's our local newspaper, The Clarion, which has a good readership.

Mr. Perron suggested going to the local school to send out the survey to get the opinion of parents of school age children. Ms. Murphy said that's exactly what you may have to do – go to that group of people you want to answer the survey, such as a church groups, Boy Scouts, youth groups.

Ms. Murphy said you may also want to tie the announcement of the survey to a special event and you may even have a drawing that if someone has completed the survey, their name is entered into a drawing such as dinner at such and such a restaurant. Or get someone to donate something as a little incentive.

If you have the old survey, you might use it to mirror what is happening now and it may show a trend. Only 10 percent of the population responded to the last survey. Ms. Murphy said 20 percent is great.

The elder population usually answers survey. You can't ask the question how old are they are but you can ask how long have you lived in town.

Mr. Perron asked about the time it took for the Chesterfield update. Ms. Murphy said two years but they had a very active subcommittee. They completed 7 chapters including some mapping.

Mr. J. Miller said, "We know what we want." The first step is the survey and a look a land use. Then start taking a look at other chapters. It may be a two-to-four-year process. Mr. Perron said it seems as if it's going to be a three-year project anyway.

Ms. Murphy asked how was the survey going to be mailed out. Do we do it and then collect and analyze the information? She also said that right now they had grant money to do the transportation part for free.

She asked why the Board wanted to start with land use.

Mr. J. Miller said, it's the section looked at most often when questions come up. If we do the survey on land use, that will be a year. The survey will drive how we look at the rest pf the sections.

Why does the Master Plan have a lot of weight in court, if you have a court case? Mr. Aldrich asked.

Ms. Murphy said if you can identify something in the Master Plan and are denying an application and point to the section and use it in motion of denial that the denial is not consistent with the Master Plan, the judge can say this is definitely not a planning board that is being prejudice.

The other thing is you must have good definitions. When you don't have strong definition, you're leaving it up to interpretation of the judge.

Mr. Dalessio asked if there were a hierarchy of official documents with the Master Plan at the top.

Ms. Murphy said she personally thought they were all on one level – the Master Plan, Site Plan, Zoning Ordinances.

She said some site plan regulations and ordinances are really old and haven't kept up with the times. She suggested looking at them as well.

Mr. Eric Merklein ask if a Zoning Ordinance allows a 10-story building but the Master Plan does not, what would happen?

Ms. Murphy said she hoped that wouldn't happen and that the Zoning Ordinances are consistent with the Master Plan and Site Plan.

Mr. Merklein then asked that seeing that the revision is a three-to-five-year project, is it wise to cautiously make sure that Zoning Ordinances match the Master Plan.

Ms. Murphy said she will look at what is already there and also look at current planning trends and current statutes and see if locally you're aware of them and where you are having problems. She'll check to see that zoning ordinances aren't out of date.

Mr. Merklein than asked if she would counsel the people involved in the updating the Master Plan while they go through the procedure. Ms. Murphy said, "yes."

Mr. J. Miller asked her for a quote that will be submitted to the Selectboard. She will get one to the Board within a week or so.

Hooper Golf Course: Fred Dill has purchased the Hooper Golf Course and the buildings and wants to subdivide the cottage, the 130-acre golf course land and the 9.91 acres remaining with the land, mansion, barn and pro shop. There may be a hiccup because cottage is in Residential A and needs 200 feet road frontage and 40,000 square feet. So it may need a variance, Mr. Miller said. But maybe the argument for that is that the conservation easement lines can't be changed.

Mr. R. Miller made a motion to have a Public Hearing for the three-lot subdivision in August. The motion was seconded by Mr. Aldrich and the motion carried.

Workshop: It was also decided that there will be a workshop on a solar energy ordinance on the fourth Tuesday of July.

Mr. Aldrich made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Marcom seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilou Blaine

cc: WPB, ZBA, Town Offices, North Walpole Commissioners, The Walpolean.

Posted: Inside Town Offices, on the bulletin board outside the Post Office