



Planning Board Meeting Minutes Tuesday, July 7, 2020 at 7:30 pm – Zoom Meeting

Members Present:	Heather von Mering (chair)	Diab Jerius
	Elizabeth (Betsy) Cregger	Maureen Meister
	Heather Hannon	
Also Present:	Brian Szekely, Town Planner	Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary
Others Attending:	Steven Margles	WinCam
	Jack LeMenager, Historical Commission	John Clemson
	Jeffrey Gonyeau, Preservation Massachusetts	Nancy Schrock
	Brendan Lyons	Doug Cromwell
	Frances Roberto	Julia Aquino
	Tricia Traxler	Guy Dixon
	John Stevens	Katy Kostakis

A quorum being in attendance, Chair von Mering calls the Winchester Planning Board (PB) meeting to order at 7:32 pm, noting that the meeting is being video recorded via WinCam.

Updates:

Mr. Szekely provided background information regarding The Vale, a very large project in Woburn, bordering on Winchester and Stoneham:

- Project seeking 2 special permits before the Woburn City Council at their meeting tonight.
- A special review committee (Woburn) will review the permit (not sure if open for public comment) and make recommendations for a vote on 8/3 by the City Council.
- Winchester's primary concerns are storm water, the residential abutters, and the visual impact.
- Select Board (SB) and Town Manager sent two letters yesterday focusing on Planning/Engineering concerns and legal concerns.
- Planning Board needs to send letter focusing on land-use issues.

Discussion continued at end of PB meeting.

Mr. Szekely proceeded to conduct the election of the PB Chair and the Vice Chair/Clerk for the next fiscal year effective July 1st. Mr. Jerius moved to retain Ms. von Mering as Chair. Ms. Hannon second the Motion. Ms. von Mering accepted the nomination as Chair. Vote: Jerius, Hannon, Meister, von Mering in favor. Cregger absent. 4-0-0 Motion passes.

After discussion on Vice Chair/Clerk position, Chair von Mering motioned to have Mr. Jerius serve as Vice Chair/Clerk. Ms. Hannon second the Motion. Vote: von Mering, Hannon, Jerius, Meister in favor. Cregger absent. 4-0-0 Motion passes.

88 Harvard Street:

Mr. Lyons presented his project: an existing two-family home at 88 Harvard Street that he proposes to take down and replace with a duplex. He provided several drawings showing different design options and requested input from the PB before moving forward, noting the asbestos has been removed and the Historical Commission has been involved. Comments follow.

Mr. Cromwell: He is a life-long resident of Winchester who grew-up on Harvard Street. He currently lives on Irving Street and wants to preserve the Black history and character of this neighborhood.

Ms. Schrock: This is more than a single building; it is part of a community. Newcomers settled here. It is important to retain the scale and feel of the existing building to maintain and preserve this sense of community.

Ms. Meister: Historic preservation is important, to retain this piece of our Town's history. The home at 91 Irving Street provides just one example where new construction maintained the historic character of the original house.

Mr. Gonyeau: As a representative of the Preservation Massachusetts program, he encouraged conducting research to identify the historical findings. He noted historic preservation of Black history is not just local, but a statewide and national concern. He also supports the preservation of this structure.

Additional discussion:

- The Memo dated June 8, 2020, from Mr. Clemson outlines many important historical points, including the specific history of this two-family home which has housed Black families.
- The Historical Commission (HC) is the deciding board. The PB makes recommendations to the HC.
- This is part of a historical neighborhood.
- PB reached a consensus to encourage preservation if the house.
- A new duplex would require a special permit. A two-family house must read as a unified mass, as if it is one unit. Expanding or adding a second unit are two viable alternatives.
- Keep in scale of the neighborhood; if possible, keep "up/down" design (two-family).

Mr. Lyons: appreciated the input from the PB. He will plan to keep the house. He raised his concern of affordability and requested help from the PB as he moves through the process.

(Ms. Cregger arrived during this discussion).

ZBA Petition 3905 – 30 Clark Street:

Mr. Szekely provided background details: a minor addition to the existing home where the footprint does not change. Historical Commission voted as no adverse impact. Mr. Szekely recommends favorable action but requested PB comments to the landscaping portion. The plan includes two retaining walls that reach 15 feet high in some places. Discussion:

- Concern for neighbors (supporting letters from neighbors did not mention the retaining walls, only the addition).
- Concern for trees being removed.

Mr. Jerius moved to recommend favorable action for ZBA Petition 3905 for the addition to the house and unfavorable to the landscaping portion due to the removal of large trees and the impact to neighbors. Ms. Meister second the Motion. Vote: Meister, von Mering, Hannon, Cregger, Jerius in favor. 5-0-0 Motion passes.

ZBA Petition 3906 – 36 Mt. Pleasant Street:

Mr. Szekely provided background details: a one-story addition. Historical Commission voted as no adverse impact. Mr. Szekely recommends favorable action. Discussion: a question was raised about the impact to the tree. Dr. Margles, owner of the property, clarified that the tree, a Japanese Maple, would stay.

Mr. Jerius moved to recommend favorable action for ZBA Petition 3906. Ms. Meister second the Motion. Vote: Meister, Jerius, von Mering, Cregger, Hannon in favor. 5-0-0 Motion passes.

RFP North Main Street Study:

Mr. Szekely opened the discussion noting that some residents and builders have asked about the process and requested participation. Comments and discussion:

- One suggestion is to establish a vision first.
- Review existing conditions (lessons from Central Business District).
- Cannot change what was approved at Town Meeting (Phase 1: Study the barriers to development; Phase 2: Reformulation of the zoning).

- Not enough money for both a vision study and Phase 1.
- It is “quality” development that is wanted. What defines “quality”?
- What is meant by a visioning process? – commercial vs residential; massing of structures, height of buildings; parking; sidewalks. It would also allow neighborhood participation.
- Two primary goals for North Main Street: create a village character and increase economic activity/investment.
- Suggestion: PB conduct the visioning study, working with neighbors and then use the appropriation from Town Meeting (\$30,000) to bring in a consultant for the remaining portion of the study.

Mr. Roberto spoke as the owner of 802 Main Street, an auto service business. He has reviewed other options for his property. He wants an economically feasible business that fits in with the vision.

Conclusion: PB will start the visioning study with a joint meeting of the PB with business owners and residents to discuss suggestions; recruit representative Town Meeting members from impacted precincts to communicate with their residents for participation and input.

FY21 Agenda:

Mr. Szekely indicated he needed PB direction regarding The Vale, since there is only one PB meeting before the 8/3 City Council meeting. Discussion and direction for next PB meeting:

- Provide a briefing on the project and details.
- Request current residents/abutters to provide input directly to PB prior to 7/21.
- Summarize PB issues in draft response letter to discuss at 7/21 meeting.

Fall Town Meeting (FTM) Agenda Items:

- Requested Mr. Stevens to provide information on his article that was withdrawn from the Spring Town Meeting for discussion at the next PB meeting. Mr. Stevens concurred.
- Need to consolidate list for FTM.

Mr. Szekely provided a list of outstanding issues received from PB members, noting that they are difficult to prioritize. After discussion, Mr. Szekley will sort them into groups by the responsible board/committee and include on the agenda at the next PB meeting. A partial list follows:

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| • Site Plan/Special Permit | • North Core in the CBD |
| • Disability Access Commission | • Abandoned/Neglected House ByLaw |
| • Planned Unit Development (PUD) language | • Tree Bylaw |

Chair von Mering noted she talked with Mr. Bettencourt (SB Chair) about the need to clarify how committees coordinate among each other and the laws associated with that process. Mr. Bettencourt agreed to identify a group consisting of representatives from each board/commission/committee to work on this question. Ms. von Mering will participate from the PB.

Mr. Jerius moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Meister second the Motion. Vote: Jerius, Cregger, Meister, von Mering, Hannon in favor. 5-0-0 Motion passes. Meeting adjourned at 10:07 pm.

Diab Jerius, Clerk

Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary