

# Draft Minutes

## Meeting of the Middlesex Planning Commission

Wednesday, October 21, 2020  
6:00 PM

**Due to restrictions on public gatherings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, these hearings were held remotely via the town's Zoom account and telephone.**

Planning Commission Members Present

Sandy Levine

Elias Gardner

Theo Kennedy

Mitch Osiecki

Dick Alderman – absent

Guests:

Clare Rock – CVRPC

Jennifer Murray

Michael Levine

CTO at 6:04

Guests were welcomed to the meeting.

### **Old Business**

#### *Walkable Village Design*

The Planning Commission and Dubois & King presented our Walkable Village Design to the Select Board last night, October 20. The presentation raised thoughtful questions.

D & K has completed their work on the project. Mitch will look into what paperwork the town needs to submit to the state in order to close out work on the grant. Will do this within a week, as having this grant open may impact other grant applications Middlesex has submitted.

## *Zoning Update*

As discussed previously, initial focus of zoning regulations will consider changes to Article 2, in particular, the appropriate uses and required review for proposed development in three districts:

Village

Mixed Use

Industrial – West (we are considering treating the two existing Industrial Districts separately).

Decision points:

Potential survey questions?

Outreach to interested parties, with possible emphasis on business community.

- Planetary Matters
- TJ Kingsbury
- Jim Colby
- Roots Market
- Dave Smith
- WNM Village Economic Development work group (both Dave Smith and Theo are involved)
- Connor Contracting
- Others?

Clare Rock commented that she's happy to share insights on how to effectively approach decision points.

Clare also presented an outline illustrating the three districts under consideration, including vision/purpose as described in town plan, key sections of current uses as specified in current regulations, discussion points from Exit 9 study, and ideas from the Congress on New Urbanism (CNU) workshop we participated in last year.

Rather than repeat large sections of that document here, I will attach it to these minutes.

Theo commented: important to make sure that we align updated zoning regulations with specific recommendations and strategies highlighted in the town plan.

Sandy commented that a survey was recently distributed to residents to solicit feedback to help prioritize spending from taxes on community infrastructure projects. Sidewalks scored low. That doesn't mean there's low support for sidewalks, just that the community doesn't necessarily want tax money spent on them. That's an important distinction.

Discussion of striking a balance between enumerating specific allowable uses vs. giving an appropriate review body (ZBA/DRB) some broader latitude to consider uses not explicitly listed.

Consider gathering feedback from local residents/business-owners on this point?

Do we have enough of a sense of the specific changes we are considering to develop a short survey to share with the community?

Seems that it would be beneficial at this stage to propose broad ideas and gather some initial feedback.

Sandy proposes to develop a one-page summary of decision points to be shared on Front Porch Forum (and elsewhere?) and invite feedback.

Theo commented that he likes many of the ideas mentioned in "June 2020" document as well as the CNU report.

## **New Business**

### *Budget Request*

We've been asked to submit a budget request for FY 2021.

Clare estimates a preliminary budget of \$16K for work on the updates to zoning regulations. We're hoping we can complete this for a little less, but it will certainly cost more than the \$7.5K we currently have available and the \$4.5K we spent on the town plan update.

Trimming expenses considerably will be tough if we want to hold the number of public meetings we are considering.

We have \$7.5K allocated right now. Estimate we can complete the work for another \$11K. We are currently anticipating completing work on the zoning regulations by about March 2022.

Sandy will submit a budget request of \$11K, which primarily consists of \$9K in consulting fees. Remainder is our usual miscellaneous printing, postage and other expenses.

### *Zoning Administrator Position*

Mitch's term as Zoning Administrator expired in March; currently acting ZA. Mitch is happy to continue as acting ZA, but happy to see a search opened to hire a new ZA. The formal process is that the PC recommends a candidate to the SB; SB has the authority to appoint a person to the role.

**Motion:** Elias moved that the PC advertise ZA opening, with Mitch continuing in the role of acting ZA until the position is filled. Mitch seconded. **Motion passed, 4-0.**

Sandy will check with Sarah for a job description.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Minutes of Special Meeting of July 29 (Public Presentation of Walkable Village Design). Theo moved to approve; Elias seconded. **Motion passed, 4-0.**

Minutes of Special Meeting of September 23. Theo moved to approve; Elias seconded. **Motion passed, 3-0-1.** (Mitch was absent)

**Upcoming Schedule:**

Wednesday, Nov 18

Wednesday, Dec 16

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** Mitch moved to adjourn; Elias seconded. **Motion carried 4-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.