

Town Center Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2013

Members Present:

- Stephanie Carver, Chair
- Peter Curry
- Diane Hessler
- Skip Murray
- Stephen Parkhurst
- Lee Ritty
- Dave Sherman
- Mary Townsend
- Jamie Wagner

Staff Present:

- Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

Item 1: Call Meeting to Order

Meeting called to order at 4:03 by Chairperson Stephanie Carver.

Item 2: Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Mary Townsend moved that the minutes from the October 28 meeting be accepted. Steve Parkhurst seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 3: Public Comment

- Resident Frank Strout, 1184 Shore Rd, briefly thanked the committee for their service and said that while he understood in order for the committee to do their job they must explore all options with regard to expanding or contracting the current boundaries, but stated that the boundaries as they are seem sufficient from his perspective.
- Resident Sara Lennon, 54 Cranbrook Dr, asked whether the TCPC would try to buy any of the available Town Center properties that are on the market now (Key Bank?). Will zoning be changed in Town Center?
- Peter Curry answered Ms. Lennon's question by stating that the committee is advisory only. No buying or selling. "We are far from doing that—we have no power."
- Lee Ritty added that the committee has no budget (not even for donuts).

Item 4: Review of the 1993 Plan Recommendations

- Stephanie Carver stated that the committee plans to make recommendations vis a vis its relevancy to the 1993 plan (39 recommendations).
- Lee Ruty stated that after the committee finishes the 39 points, they should discuss what they might like to add to the recommendations.
- Lee Ruty asked Town Planner Maureen O'Meara to share her insight on the history of each point—in particular why some points were addressed and why some were not.

Review: Recommendation #1

Designate the following structures as having local historic significance:

1235 Shore Rd, Stick Style, C. 1875-1890, 312 Ocean Houser Rd, Italianate, c. 1855-1875 (Murray House) 320 Ocean House Rd, Colonial Revival, built 1901, rebuilt 1948 343 Ocean House Rd, Greek Revival, c. 1840-1870 351 Ocean House Rd, Greek Revival, c. 1840-1870 359 Ocean House Rd, Italianate, c. 1860-1885 11 Hill Way, Colonial Revival/Gothic, late 19th C Hill Way, Barn, late 19th -early 20th C Scott Dyer Rd, Thomas Memorial Library-Pond Cove School Section, Colonial Revival, 1912 Scott Dyer Rd, Thomas Memorial Library-Spurwink section, Italianate, c. 1875-1885 Scott Dyer Rd, Middle School, Colonial Revival, 1933

Dave Sherman moved the committee not include Recommendation #1 as part of the TCPC Report. Diane Hessler seconded. Motion carried (7-2: Townsend/Carver).

- Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner stated that a study was done to designate structures as historically important. Committee recommendations were implemented, but a later Town Council stripped out historic preservation provisions as part of a separate effort to adopt town-wide historic preservation regulations. The only historic building protections preserved were for town-owned buildings. As the code stands now only the town-owned property would be considered "historic". Originally, only the "demolition delay" provision provided protection town-wide for historic structures, but that was removed.
- TCPC member Dave Sherman asked if there might be other ways that the town could explore preservation? Credits?
- TCPC Chair Stephanie Carver suggested perhaps incentives could be offered for maintaining the structures.
- Town Planner Maureen O'Meara noted that in the Comprehensive Plan, it states that "tear downs often improve the value of the surrounding area".
- TCPC member Skip Murray said the recommendation was acceptable to him.

Review of Recommendation #2:

Encourage preservation of locally historic buildings.

Dave Sherman moved to adopt. Lee Ritty seconded. that the committee adopt recommendation #2 as part of the TCPC Plan with the amendment that the term "locally historic" will be defined by the 1993 plan. Motion carried (5-4/Murray/Hessler/Curry/Sherman)

- Diane Hessler asked for clarification on what might be locally historic.
- In response to a question about examples of nonregulatory actions could be taken to support locally historic structures, Maureen O'Meara suggested that an incentive program could include a lecture series on maintaining historic structures.
- Peter Curry expressed concern that the committee could waste time on a recommendation that had been vetted by a previous council/committee.
- Dave Sherman agreed with Mr. Curry.
- Diane Hessler suggested that this would be the first pass and the committee could return to the recommendations later with more detail.
- Stephanie Carver suggested that the preservation of buildings here sets a scale for what is to come and so it is relevant.
- Skip Murray suggested that Recommendation 3 may cover those concerns.

Recommendation#3:

Require exterior alterations, including additions, to these buildings to be done in such a way as to preserve and restore their architectural features and historic character.

Stephanie Carver moved that the committee adopt recommendation #3 as part of the TCPC Plan. Lee Ritty seconded. Motion carried (9-0).

- Jamie Wagner stated concern that the town had not identified the buildings that are deemed historical. What if you wanted to break out of mold—an example being a modern building with solar panels? Would that opportunity exist?
- Maureen O'Meara said we already restrict what we do. Design standards are generic.

- Lee Ruddy wondered if the committee should revisit the guidelines? “Is that what we want to do?”
- Skip Murray suggested the committee recommend changes to the Town Center design standards, stating that current design standards are expensive. “There’s a lot to it,” he said. Cedar shakes were one example of an added expense.
- Dave Sherman suggested the committee hear from C’s market to get firsthand, real time account of design standard challenges.
- Stephanie Carver asked if the committee had time to review these guidelines.
- Dave Sherman suggested that perhaps a portion of the committee to look at design standards rather than the committee as a whole.
- Peter Curry suggested that perhaps the recommendation could make move toward making building more efficient, less expensive.

Review of Recommendation #4:

Develop design guidelines which require new development to be compatible with the architectural character of these buildings.

Stephanie Carver moved the committee table discussion on #4 until the next meeting to give committee time to review the existing guidelines. Dave Sherman seconded. Motion carried (8-1/Hessler).

- Stephanie Carver suggested the committee bring in a property owner to discuss how difficult it is to build in town center.
- Jamie Wagner suggested he could speak with Mike Concannon.
- Committee in full agreement.

Recommendation #5:

Create a Town Center Zone to regulate land use within the area described. The zone should include requirements for maximum building setbacks, village-oriented uses, and bulk and scale limits. Separate regulations should reflect the different scale, dimensions, and bulk of the School campus. The draft Town Center Zone, included as Appendix C, should be used as a guide in amending the Zoning Ordinance.

Dave Sherman moved the committee not include Recommendation #5 in the TCPC Plan because it’s been completed. Stephen Parkhurst seconded. Motion carried (8-1)

- Diane Hessler stated concern this #5 is similar to #4.

Review Recommendation #6:

Establish a design theme for the Town Center. This theme shall govern the selection of distinctive sidewalks and lighting, street tree plantings, and signage. Consideration should be given to the appointment of a Committee to organize activities in the Town Center that promote a sense of community, as well as to coordinate anticipated improvements.

Dave Sherman made a motion to adopt Recommendation # 6 as part of the TCPC plan. Peter Curry seconded. (Motion amended to say that we will consider including additional language for the charge and make up of the TC Committee.) Motion carried (9-0)

- Maureen O'Meara said the current town center plan was the result of a confluence of different efforts, such as the Main Street 90 program, which emphasized beautification, and Sign Ordinance amendments. When parts of the town center plan infrastructure was constructed, there was no one town entity to insure an consistent design theme. An example is the pedestrian lights. The original pedestrian lights were selected because they were the least cost. When new lights were installed, the light fixture selected was a staff decision. You could create a committee to handle the design for TC or perhaps delegate to existing committees.
- Stephanie wondered if these responsibilities could be implemented by another committee.
- Jamie Wagner suggested an ad hoc committee that could handle design and implementation.
- Dave Sherman suggested that the TC Committee could deal with sidewalks, recommendations around open businesses; and the direction the committee should take.
- Peter Curry suggested that this particular recommendation is most important thing the committee can do.
- Steve Parkhurst said while he is not qualified to be on this type of committee this committee structure should be centered around those with experience in town planning design. Perhaps an arborist as well.
- Mary Townsend suggested that in addition to professionals, include a fair representation of CE citizenry and Town Center users.
- Dave Sherman thought the recommendation should include a charge, which Stephanie Carver and Maureen O'Meara would draft.

- Jamie Wagner suggested that the committee include an allocation of funds to hire a designer. Need a visual to help public understand what's possible.
- Lee Ruty suggested this committee be a permanent committee—TCPC might be first iteration.
- Jamie Wagner said this committee is essential if we want to move forward.
- Mary Townsend expressed concern that any contracted design would be 100% conceptual given that the Town only controls a small part of Town Center property—the rest are privately-owned.
- Stephanie Carver will work on a committee charge with Maureen O'Meara.

Recommendation #7

Establish design guidelines for new construction in the town center. The guidelines shall suggest design alternatives, which are pedestrian oriented, are compatible with locally historic buildings and farmhouse style architecture in general.

Diane Hessler moved that the committee table Recommendation #7 and consider with #4. Skip Murray seconded. Motion carried (9-0)

Review of Recommendation #8.

Revise the Zoning Ordinance to prohibit new office uses, except for home occupations, in non-business zones.

Dave Sherman moved that Recommendation #8 not be included in the TCPC Plan as it has already been implemented. Diane Hessler seconded. Motion carried (9-0).

Review of Recommendation #9:

Explore the possibility of placing all utility lines underground.

Diane Hessler moved that the committee not include Recommendation #9 in the TCPC Plan. Stephanie Carver seconded. Motion carried (9-0).

- Dave Sherman said that the town explored burying the lines, but didn't do it.
- Maureen O'Meara said the process was prohibitively expensive...more so than sidewalks.

Review of Recommendation #10:

Conduct the storm water management study and construct a storm water management system.

Dave Sherman suggested that we encourage the construction of storm water management system in TC district. Stephanie Carver seconded. Motion carried (9-0).

- Maureen O'Meara said the town did the study, but it was only partially implemented due to infrastructure cost. Storm water is costly. Pond Cove Shopping Center couldn't afford to upgrade.
- Diane Hessler asked if there were existing committees that could handle this recommendation.
- Stephanie Carver asked if the town takes that on.
- Dave Sherman asked if there were alternative to the improvements.
- Jamie Wagner said this issue was one that must be addressed as part of becoming more friendly to businesses. Perhaps we can ease up on this recommendation.
- Skip Murray suggested the recommendation be left in the plan.
- Jamie Wagner expressed concern the current wording. Are we there yet?
- Maureen O'Meara said the town is comfortable with current standard. Parts have been built. Benefits C's Market because they can hook-up to HS storm water system that was put in place during renovation.

Review of Recommendation #11:

Continue discussions with the owners of the Pond Cove Shopping Center to renovate the building in keeping with a village-oriented design, with emphasis on increasing the prominence of the Post Office.

Jamie Wagner moved that the committee approve Recommendation #11 as part of the TCPC Plan, but with the emphasis on the Post Office removed. Skip Murray seconded. Motion carried (9-0).

- Maureen O'Meara said one idea discussed was to move the post office function to the front corner of the IGA, put a window in the blank brick wall so that folks know a post office is located in the IGA, and still have access to the post office through the IGA door.

Review of Recommendation #12:

Review the sewer reserve capacity for the Town Center area to assure adequate capacity for expansion of commercial uses.

Diane Hessler moved that Recommendation #12 not be included in the TCPC Plan because it has been implemented. Dave Sherman seconded. Motion carried (9-0).

Recommendation #13:

Redesign the Route 77/Shore Rd/Scott Dyer Rd intersection to make it safe and accessible for pedestrians. It is the hope of this committee that redesign can be done without installation of a full red/green traffic light system, although some kind of walk light may be appropriate. This should be coordinated with the Maine Department of Transportation.

Dave Sherman moved that we include Recommendation #13 in the TCPC Plan without the 2nd sentence. Stephanie Carver seconded. Motion carried (8-1/Townsend).

- Dave Sherman said that given recent history, there would be no traffic light, but perhaps the town could explore other options. Perhaps a different alignment. (Scheme B in TCPC 1993 Plan?)
- Skip Murray suggested tweaking language not to include restricting a traffic light.
- Mary Townsend said that the public seemed strongly opposed to a light in the forum and in past attempts, so the language as is was acceptable.
- Maureen O'Meara said a light is challenging because the intersection would have to comply with D.O.T. standards (including a left turn lane).

Review of Recommendation #14

Construct and reconstruct sidewalks throughout the town center. If sidewalk construction is to be phased, first priority should be construction of sidewalks along both sides of Shore Rd extending from the Community Center to Town Hall and from the Scout House to the Methodist Church. Phase 2 should include extending sidewalks to the Shopping Center and reconstruction of sidewalks on Scott Dyer Rd. Phase 3 should complete the extension of sidewalks on Route 77 to the Fowler Rd/Old Ocean House Rd intersection. Utility poles should be relocated out of sidewalks. The sidewalk surface treatment should be appropriate to the location. It may be appropriate to construct concrete sidewalks in front of Town Hall and retail areas, asphalt adjacent to neighborhoods, and some specialty treatments as appropriate. Sidewalk design should include handicapped accessible ramps and a grassed esplanade with street trees and pedestrian lighting.

Stephanie Carver moved that Recommendation #14 be implemented as part of the TCPC Plan. Peter Curry seconded. Motion carried (8-1/Hessler).

- Jamie Wagner stated public opinion in favor of better sidewalks.
- Maureen O'Meara said this part of the plan is expensive to implement. What has been done looks good so far. 100% of the implementation issue is having the resources to complete. Designs are done, but could cost \$600K to implement (according to a 2007 estimate).

Recommendation #15

Prohibit parking within the front yard of new development. Parking should be located at the side and rear of new development and be appropriately screened and landscaped. Shared use of parking facilities should be encouraged to produce efficient parking lot designs and limit the area required for parking.

Diane Hessler moved that Recommendation #15 be tabled. Mary Townsend seconded. Motion carried (8-1/Carver).

Recommendation #16

Prepare a comprehensive traffic circulation and parking plan for the entire school campus. The safety of the access road, separation of school buses and private vehicles and parking management for special events should be addressed.

Diane Hessler moved Recommendation #16 not be included in the TCPC final plan as it has been implemented. Dave Sherman seconded. Motion carried (8-1).

- Dave Sherman wondered how it was working now.
- Lee Rutty mentioned gridlock at drop-off and pick-up.
- Mary Townsend said that during special events where users exceed parking spots, people park where they can.
- Skip Murray suggested that there weren't many available alternatives.
- Wagner suggested perhaps the Fire Station Parking Lot could be used for overflow.

At this point in the meeting Maureen O'Meara suggested the committee move to Item #7 (Draft Status Report) as it was getting late and this item was a necessary. The committee decided to take up the additional recommendations at its next meeting (December 9 @4:00 p.m.).

Item 7: Draft Status Report

Stephanie Carver moved the committee approve the Draft Status Report Extension Request Letter with a new completion date of June 30, 2014. Steve Parkhurst seconded. Motion approved (9-0).

- Lee Rutty asked who would make the recommendation to the Council.
- Dave Sherman suggested he and Jamie would do so.

Item 9: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Mary Townsend made a motion to adjourn at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Diane Hessler.
Motion approved (9-0).

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Townsend, Acting Secretary