

Approved As Amended
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
May 2, 2012
7:30 PM
Jamestown Town Hall
93 Narragansett Ave.

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 p.m. and the following members were present:

Michael Swistak - Chair	Duncan Pendlebury – Vice Chair
Rosemary Enright - Secretary	Richard Lynn
Michael Smith	Mick Cochran

Absent:

Michael Jacquard

Also present:

Lisa Bryer, AICP – Town Planner

Heather Lopes- Recording Clerk

I. Approval of Minutes April 18, 2012

Discussion: Lisa Bryer handed out an amendment to the minutes. For corrections, Commissioner Pendlebury referred to page 4 second paragraph, it states the tax assessor has downgraded the value of surrounding homes. Mr. Pendlebury states this is in the area of the water towers but as stated it seems to reflect homes in the area of the proposed turbine site. In the next paragraph quoting Paul Sprague, it should read “the Commission” needs to take more time, not “you”.

Commissioner Cochran referred to page 8 item 4C asked what the catastrophic impact would be on the Pell Bridge itself. He was told “blade-throw” or “ice-throw” is what was considered in that. Discussion moved to the comment of Seth Handy that the voters approved the site of Taylor Point and many residents feel this is not true. It was noted it was not in the language of the bond issue but was in the Legislation approved by the State. By the voters approving the bond it has been determined by legal counsel that they in turn voted to approve the site due to the inclusion of Taylor Point in the Legislative language.

Commissioner Smith noted the word “and” on page 7 should be removed in the statement of having windmills on Dutch Island.

Commissioner Enright asked where the addition to the minutes regarding Seth Handy should be inserted. Lisa Bryer stated paragraph one and three of the insert belong on page 7 of the minutes under Seth Handy’s comments. Discussion continued.

Commissioner Enright inquired to the motion made to continue the Development Plan Review to the next meeting although it is not on this agenda. Lisa Bryer stated the applicant requested

a continuance and will be on the May 16 agenda for clarification of issues that need to be addressed by the applicant and discussion of the field trip to Portsmouth. The application was continued until June 6.

Commissioner Swistak noted the statement on page 6 third paragraph from the bottom amend “as the wind left the property” to “for noise at the property line”.

A motion was made by Commissioner Pendlebury and seconded by Commissioner Smith to accept the minutes as amended. So unanimously voted.

II. Correspondence

1. Memo to Zoning Board & Fred Brown, Building/Zoning Official- Eric Bell- Plat 5 Lot 263, Spindrift – Recommendation. Received

III. Citizen’s Non Agenda Item – Nothing at this time

IV. Reports

1. Town Planner’s Report

The Town of Jamestown has requested a continuance. The team met on Friday and would like to address some of the issues the Planning Commission brought up at the last meeting. The attorneys cannot attend the meeting on May 16 and requested it be continued to the June 6th meeting. Ms. Bryer stated the Town Solicitor suggested the Commission discuss a site visit. This will be placed on the next agenda for discussion.

Lisa Bryer stated the Town Council had a work session with the Buildings & Facilities Committee and Commissioner Pendlebury was in attendance. The Buildings & Facilities Committee submitted their report regarding the Golf Course building. She stated she has completed the Management Plan for the Jamestown Shores lots that were purchased by the Town. Ms. Bryer stated the Town Council wants to put an easement on those lots for ground water protection with the Conanicut Island Land Trust. The Town Council also held a work session on Ft. Getty and they are continuing their discussion on options for uses. She stated they also discussed the possibility of creating a committee for Ft. Getty and Ms. Bryer asked the Planning Commission if they wanted to discuss what involvement they could offer to the Town Council. Commissioner Lynn thinks Planning should be involved. Ms. Bryer stated she will put this on the next agenda for discussion. Lisa Bryer advised that the Town Council did accept the communication regarding short term rentals and the Solicitor suggested that it should be sent to Planning, but they did not formally ask for Planning’s input and there was no vote to send it to the Planning Commission. Ms. Bryer will inquire as to their intentions on this matter.

The Safe Routes to School project has been continuing and the two phases of funding have been combined. Ms. Bryer stated the Town has signed contracts with the State for approval of combining those funds and with the engineers to continue with their work on the design of the street improvements. The Kids Rock project received a \$38,000 grant and with these funds they are designing a playground for the Lawn Ave School, as well as installing a rock climbing structure. This is a matching grant program and fundraising will continue. Ms. Bryer states they are approximately within \$10,000 of their goal.

Lisa Bryer stated she has interviewed an intern, who is a landscape architect student, she is hoping to have him work on the sustainability plan which was discussed with the Planning Commission in January and also on Ft. Getty.

Commissioner Swistak noted the wind turbine issue will be on the June 6th meeting and inquired if the information compiled by the group will be provided to the Commission prior to the meeting. Ms. Bryer stated yes, it will be in the packets. Commissioner Enright asked if emails are the correct way to forward questions to the other members and staff. Ms. Bryer stated yes she can e-mail both the Chair and myself but e-mails between the commissioners is not permitted. Lisa Bryer will make sure the comments are forwarded to the applicant. Commissioner Pendlebury asked what other items the consultants are working on. Ms. Bryer stated set back issues and open space intrusion as well as what was discussed at the last meeting. Commissioner Swistak added to the list the items of effects on property value; electrical connections detail plan; low frequency noise; turbine safety records and failure rates; historical approvals and recommendations and more detail on CRMC involvement. Other items requiring more detail are an illustration of height; lengths of blades; distances to surrounding buildings, water tanks and open space zones. Discussion ensued. The turbine will be on the May 16th agenda for discussion.

2. Chairpersons report
3. Town Committees
 - a. Harbor
 - b. Buildings and Facilities

Commissioner Pendlebury gave an overview of the work session with the Town Council on the Golf Course building. The recommendation given by the Buildings & Facilities Committee was to replace the building “in kind” and to retain the resource for the Town. Some of the benefits of a new building would be an efficient floor plan and a more energy efficient building. The report was accepted by the Town Council.

- c. Affordable Housing Committee
 - d. North Rd. Bike Path Committee
4. Sub Committees

V. Old Business

1. **Jamestown’s Economy: A Small Town Economic Development Plan and Strategy Continued Discussion**

Lisa Bryer noted that the Town decided last Friday that they would like to continue the wind turbine and so she had to switch gears at the last minute and that we had discussed this plan a month or so ago and this is a continued discussion. The purpose was to frame the project and give a background so when the project was put out to bid it would be clear on the intentions. The Town Administrator could not be at the meeting as discussed last time but Ms. Bryer spoke to Bruce Keiser regarding the tax base. The largest portion of our tax base is residential which is 96% of our tax base vs. commercial, 4%. What this means in terms of a discussion on economic development is that although we value the commercial district the Town depends highly on the residential tax base. Commissioner Smith stated there are several businesses grandfathered in to operate at their current locations. Loss of these areas would force many businesses to go out of

business or relocate out of town. Commissioner Pendlebury inquired if the tax rate is different for commercial vs. residential. Mr. Smith stated no, they are the same rates, although the rate for tangible property of a business is different. Discussion ensued. A suggestion was made to get information from the Tax Assessor regarding how a commercial business is taxed in a residential dwelling. The essential services are important to keep in town. Large box stores and fast food type businesses are not desirable in Jamestown. This would change the character of the island. Discussion ensued regarding what is considered an essential business and the effect on employment for residents if business were lost. Integration of businesses in residential areas was discussed. It was stated there was a grocery store as well as other types of businesses on the North end of the island and now there is none. The concern of having a small island, with limited land space for a business was discussed. This discussion will be continued at a later meeting.

VI. New Business – nothing at this time

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Pendlebury at 8:37 p.m.

Attest:

Heather Lopes,
Recording Clerk

This meeting was digitally recorded