

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

November 5th, 2008

7:30 PM

Jamestown Town Hall

93 Narragansett Ave.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. and the following members were present:

Gary Girard	Michael Swistak
Jean Brown	Richard Ventrone
Alexandra Nickol	Nancy Bennett

Not present:

Barry Holland

Also present:

Lisa Bryer, AICP – Town Planner
Cinthia Reppe – Planning Assistant
Donald Powers, Architect, Consultant
Bill Munger
Jack Brittain

I. Approval of Minutes October 22nd, 2008

A motion was made by Commissioner Swistak and seconded by Commissioner Ventrone to approve the minutes with the following changes:

Page 3 6th paragraph, Keep the area underlined in F **Section 1108.**

Page 4 3rd paragraph, that “should” be changed to “are strongly encouraged”

So unanimously voted.

II. Correspondence

1. CRMC – Residential Assent – Joseph Plakyil, 20 Frederick T. Miller Way, East Greenwich, RI 02818; to modify the direction of the terminal fixed “L” section of the authorized residential boating facility and revise the boat lift capacity from 1200 lbs. to 16,000 lbs. located at 1227 North Main Rd. Jamestown RI Plat 3 Lot 479. Noted
2. FYI – Letter from Donna Cameron Gricus to Cyndee Reppe Re: Concerns of Re-Zoning

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

IV. Reports

1. Town Planner’s Report
2. Chairpersons report – if a Planning Commission member attends a zoning meeting they are not representing the commission unless it is a unanimous decision from the Planning Commission. Next meeting is November 19th for the Comprehensive permit.
3. Town Committees
 - a. Harbor

- b. Fort Getty
 - c. Buildings and Facilities
 - d. Tree Preservation and Protection
 - e. Affordable Housing Committee
 - f. Wind Energy
 - g. North Rd. Bike Path Committee – met today
4. Sub Committees

V. Old Business

1. Jamestown Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Continued Discussion

A Letter was received from Magdalena Andres and she asked Chair Gary Girard to read the letter into the record as follows:

November 2, 2008

Dear Commissioner Girard,

Could you please read the following letter into the record at the November 5, 2008 Planning Commission meeting.

I am writing to express my concern regarding some of the revisions to the Zoning Ordinance being considered by the Planning Commission. According to recent articles in the *Jamestown Press*, the business community is advocating for relaxed regulations. I am concerned that the needs of the neighboring residential districts may be overlooked.

Currently, the eastern part of Narragansett Avenue has the same CD zoning designation as the adjacent ends of the side streets (Green, Clinton, Howland, Grinnell, and Coronado). However, they have entirely different characters. A one-size-fits-all zoning change, particularly with regard to parking requirements, will surely result in an intensification of business use. I worry that the parking burden will be borne by the adjacent neighborhoods.

Relaxed parking requirements (which may be acceptable for Narragansett Avenue) will have a negative impact on the town if they are applied to the feeder-streets. There are real differences between the CD parts of the feeder-streets and Narragansett Avenue. For example:

- Clinton Avenue is not wide enough to accommodate parking on both sides without restricting traffic to one-way.
- There are no sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians or children walking to school.
- On-street parking spaces in front of businesses are not clearly delineated with striping.
- There is no easy access to public parking lots. (Narragansett Avenue has easy access to three such public parking areas: East Ferry, west of the fire station, and east of the Integrated Management Solutions building.)

Requiring resident parking stickers would be cumbersome for everyone (the town, the residents, *and* the businesses), but if you allow more intense uses on Narragansett Avenue, coupled with more intense uses up the side-streets, where is the parking going to go? Clearly, into the residential districts.

Residentially zoned streets are not parking lots for the businesses. While some businesses are clamoring for their "rights", this re-zoning seems to be going down the road of giving them a free lunch, served up at the expense of the residents.

Regards,

Magdalena Andres
13 Clinton Avenue

Commissioner Girard welcomed Consultant Donald Powers and asked the Planning Commission if they had any issues that they would like to discuss with him this evening.

Commissioner Bennett asked about the requirement for the planted beds to be lower than the adjacent sidewalks. Mr. Powers explained to her it is for drainage reasons so that water is not channelized in to the sidewalks.

Commissioner Bennett's other concern is maximum setback and she wants the commission to look at it again.

A discussion ensued with Mr. Powers regarding the maximum setback. Mr. Powers respectfully disagreed with Commissioner Bennett and felt they were a benefit. The Chair stated that Commissioner Bennett wants the commission to get rid of maximum setbacks and asked if anyone else on the board object to maximum setbacks? The remainder of the Board agreed that they did not have a problem with them. The board will leave the way it is.

Commissioner Swistak questioned the restrictions on use of vinyl building materials. He asked Don Powers the reason for including this in the first draft? Mr. Powers said Vinyl siding does decrease property values in addition to it not being good for the environment or a healthy choice and in his opinion there is no way to make it appealing or traditional looking.

Don Powers stated we ~~You can define~~ **the** artificial things in your ordinance ~~too~~. **He stated** red and white cedar shingles are good for this area. If he had a vote he would vote for no vinyl siding. He would regulate it on Narragansett Ave.

Commissioner Ventrone said ~~if we could have~~ a professional, **an architect**, designs and installs it, ~~it makes a big difference.~~ **specify how any siding would interface with the corner boards, the facia, the window frames and the entrances so that the interface is the same as wood and mimic the same structural discipline of wood.** It's an aesthetic issue. ~~Commissioner Ventrone asked if we could define how the seams are installed and treated.~~

Lisa Bryer said they previously decided to allow Vinyl and Aluminum in the CD and CL with the approval of the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission also has the ability to consult with the architectural consultant on issues that come before them.

The Planning Commission discussed parking and the idea of treating existing buildings that are over 50% building lot coverage differently in terms of parking requirements. These are generally older buildings that will need a parking variance to do anything different with the lot or building. The Commission agreed that this was a reasonable solution to try to help out some of the business community in the core retail and restaurant area of Narragansett Avenue that have difficult lots and buildings due primarily to the age of the building.

Commissioner Swistak asked ~~his~~ **Donald Powers** opinion of what the Planning Commission had decided regarding not changing some CD to T4. He was disappointed because that does not reflect the sentiment of what was desired by the residents at the Charrette. He said that immediately after crossing Clinton or Grinnell St. it was desirable to not have the compression and compaction of the CD area. If he was designing Narragansett Ave. today it would all be CD but that is his opinion

but not the majority of the residents expresses that during the Charrette. Keeping the 4 corners as CD or CL has yet to be determined.

Commissioner Nickol expanded on what Swistak said, property values are the concern, she does not think the intent was to manipulate property values, she wants to know Mr. Powers opinion on removing or softening the transition areas. Don Powers indicated that it can be done visually from a streetscape perspective. You should visually know when you are leaving an urban area and entering a residential area. The appropriate progression is what was attempted. When asked about keeping the same names of Zoning Districts he agreed that was fine. Preserving the property values at both levels for everyone is the goal. Commissioner Nickol would like something tangible. What is the main objection from the public, they perceive it is down zoning of their property. He thinks it is a very reasonable compromise and from a legal point of view it's harmless, it is certainly important to create a transition zone.

Commissioner Ventrone brought up Mr. Bill Munger's statement about his 3 lots on Knowles Ct. being an issue. Bill Munger – has 3 lots on Knowles Ct. what was the purpose of singling out those lots and down zoning them. What was the point and why was it not the same on the entire south side of Knowles Ct.

Lisa Bryer, Town Planner can explain why the other lots were left as CD. To be clear, his lots were not singled out. There are a total of 6 lots, one around the corner at Knowles Court and Coronado. The lots that remained as CD were done so because they are "through lots" that go from Narragansett Avenue to Knowles Court. So any lot that was not a through lot was changed to the transition area. It is not good planning to have 1 lot be divided into 2 zones.

Commissioner Bennett questioned the west end of Narragansett and the zoning of that area from Clinton to 4 corners, if you had to pick one or the other is it more valuable to preserve the less dense area from Grinnell to 4 corners which would create a logical transition.

Commissioner Bennett can we create another softer CD area for this area of Narragansett Ave.

Commissioner Brown said it is almost the same as what was first presented that was met with such opposition, if you're the owner of commercial and you are being down zoned that would be upsetting to the property owner. Lisa Bryer reiterated that is what we tried before. Commissioner Bennett said a very minor adjustment to the CD or T5 for this area of Narragansett Ave. A discussion ensued over this issue and some of the Commissioners thought asking the public input on this might help when we update the Comprehensive Plan as suggested by the Planner.

Commissioner Nickol wants to talk about the 4 corners area. Don Powers said from a development perspective there are valuable things to the community to have this be CD. Commissioner Bennett asked are we violating the Comprehensive Plan by adding more CD? The Comprehensive Plan says no expansion of the Commercial district. If we intensify a portion of what exists, I would say we are on shaky ground. Let's discuss this during the update of the Comp Plan and we should have more neighborhood meetings.

Commissioner Swistak asked if the parking in this draft is creating a fairness situation. The Town Planner stated that there are any numbers of ways you can regulate parking. You can put a line on

a map or regulate it by building lot coverage as suggested if you are trying to give those older structures more flexibility.

Don Powers said that in the Charrette, it was clear that the community valued buildings of value or older structures.

Commissioner Girard stated that for the older buildings we are asking them to meet the standard, just a different one. Don Powers applauded Lisa Bryers efforts in coming up with a fair way. Commissioner Ventrone said in the town we want to increase density. He wants to do away with parking restrictions.

Commissioner Ventrone wants to know how the Planning Commission feels about having parking stickers. Both Commissioners Girard and Brown informed him this discussion had taken place over the last several years with the Parking Committee and has never been successful. That is a discussion for another time.

All agreed except for Commissioner Ventrone with the parking tables as written.

The Use Table will be discussed at the next meeting.

VI. New Business – nothing at this time

A motion to adjourn at 9:35 p.m. was made by Commissioner Ventrone and seconded by Commissioner Brown. So unanimously voted.

Attest:



Cynthia Reppe
Planning Assistant

This meeting was digitally recorded