

Approved As Written
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
October 1, 2014
7:30 PM
Jamestown Town Hall
93 Narragansett Ave.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

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

Michael Swistak – Chair	Rosemary Enright – Secretary
Mick Cochran	Michael Jacquard
Michael Smith	

Not present:

Duncan Pendlebury
Bernie Pfeiffer

Also present:

Lisa Bryer, AICP – Town Planner
Cinthia Reppe – Planning Assistant
Wyatt Brochu
Jack Brittain
Steve Frary
Shelly Widoff
Betty Hubbard

II. Approval of Minutes September 17, 2014

A motion was made by Commissioner Enright and seconded by Commissioner Jacquard to accept the minutes as written. So unanimously voted.

III. Correspondence – nothing at this time

IV. Citizen's Non Agenda Item

Jack Brittain stated that he heard at the last meeting it was mentioned that Cumberland Farms is working with the town. They are changing the façade of the building. He is concerned that they did not come before the planning commission and wants to know why? There are substantial changes, over 75% in his opinion and he would like to see the plans. We talk about Village Design and how the Village should look. He says it looks like a Providence Building now. Anybody else in business downtown would have had come to the Planning Commission. Whose job is it to enforce this? If these plans were reviewed by the TRC and they were altered who is responsible? He thinks the design is horrible and it does not fit in with the character of Jamestown.

We cannot discuss this at this time because it is not on the agenda but we can discuss this at the next meeting. It can be put on the agenda. Ms. Bryer reviewed the plans in the spring. She will report on this at the next meeting and provide the TRC minutes and a copy of the plan. Town Solicitor Wyatt Brochu said he would like Mr. Brittain to meet with Fred Brown and Lisa Bryer first, prior to the meeting.

V. Reports – nothing to report at this time

1. Town Planner's Report
2. Chairpersons report
3. Town Committees
4. Sub Committees

VI. Old Business

1. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments to Article 11 – Jamestown Village Special Development District– continued

Commissioner Swistak recapped the last few meetings. Every member was polled and it was agreed that there would be no regulation of residential “buildings of value” in the Village District. We talked about education and it being voluntary. We talked about DPR and incorporating the design guidelines into the Zoning Ordinance. The draft changes were compiled by Lisa Bryer after a meeting with Wyatt Brochu, Duncan Pendlebury and Mike Swistak.

We are addressing the charge from the council to fix 1103 and to use the pattern book as a tool.

The Planning Commission decided to utilize Buildings of Value and follow the design guidelines for commercial buildings in CD, CL, CW and P. We already have a process for Development Plan Review.

We are adding a little more definition in the purpose and intent so that the goals of the Village Special Development District (JVSDD) is clear. We also have a statement of guiding principles for the JVSDD.

Ms Bryer started reviewing the additions and changes. Commissioner Smith asked about the 25% which is routine maintenance. Anything over 50% comes before planning. Smith asked if we are adding exclusions to this? Bryer said we could. Swistak thinks we should list the exclusions such as painting. Smith feels when you put the words in the ordinance then it is up to the planning commission to make a determination. Enright thinks it needs clarification, Solicitor Brochu said clarify what “in kind” means. He feels we need to get Fred Browns input. We need to ask Fred Brown what he uses for his basis of routine maintenance.

Shelly Widoff is confused about the mapping of Buildings of Value; are you saying all residential is not included? Are you putting buildings of value that are commercial on the map?

Town Planner Lisa Bryer said we want to celebrate Buildings of Value in the JVSDD and not regulate residential districts. But Buildings of Value in the Commercial Districts will still fall under the JVSDD regulations in Article 11. Coming up with an educational program to encourage the property owners is our goal. Without identifying them we do not know what we are talking about. What are we celebrating? An unknown entity.

Shelly Widoff said she has some issues of ShorebyHill being a private area and some of the houses that they say are historic are not. The community was duped when it was identified as Historic.

Commissioner Swistak said Shoreby Hill is a neighborhood identified as Historic by inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. He does not feel the individual houses are identified. He would not agree to put every single house on the map. In the definition Widoff says it says every building. Bryer clarified that it is a National Register District with contributing and non-contributing structures and are still part of the JVSDD. Swistak was hoping that with our conversation on this issue we need to change the definition.

Commissioner Swistak said we all agreed that Buildings of Value would be regulated in CD, CL, CW & P. The list or map provides clarification on which structures add to the character of Jamestown. More local pictures in the design guidelines should be used. Unless we go back to the original list that we worked on several months ago then this process is not going to work. Swistak if there is no regulation then there is no teeth.

Buildings of Value on the list are encouraged to use the guidelines. Commissioner Swistak said they are picking a path that is least offensive. There are some that think it is a good thing to encourage. There are some that want it ripped out totally because they are afraid of the next planning commission. The idea of regulation in a residential area it was voted down. In order to change the zoning ordinances it takes a majority of the Planning Commission, then a majority of the Town Council.

Steve Frary – it is not clear why the list is there. It is not intended for future regulations. Swistak - We are applauding those that are trying to keep Jamestown's character the way it is. We get that you do not want to be intruded on.

Commissioner Enright stated that we cannot encourage you if we do not name you.

Jim Burgess – he read through the pattern book and according to him the book is full of contradictions and creates more confusion and concern for the homeowner. He does not think it is fair.

He was told that you are not being regulated you are being encouraged. It is in the pattern book but needs to be in the zoning ordinance Commissioner Enright said. The design guidelines are not a perfect guide, we need Mr. Powers to come back.

Betty Hubbard agrees with Jim Burgess that his house is unique and beautiful the way it is. Should there be something that eludes to the beauty of the individual houses? If the houses are listed as buildings of value then maybe guidance on historic houses can be listed on another page of the design guidelines.

Wyatt Brochu said so much energy is put into talking about the list of buildings. Maybe it would benefit the community if there were more specific guidelines for commercial buildings but that the list of houses be removed.

Steve Frary said the practical implications of the list are hard to execute. Getting back to the real mission of preserving the wonderful things of Jamestown he hopes people continue to invest in their properties.

Sav Rebecchi - at this point since we have had these discussions for months now we do not know what the community considers a building of value. Come up with a simple designation such as if you are over 50 years. What do those that have been attending these meetings think? We do not have a definition or a specific statement from the community. He thinks instead of going through all this external regulation make it voluntary. Up until the 1930's is the golden age of architecture in Jamestown. It should be before some date. Buildings of historic significance. Building of Value comes from the smart code. Get rid of purple book and historical register and use a date. Commissioner Enright is going to work on what date to use.

A discussion continued about the changes to Article 11 with regard to pictures and standards and calling them guidelines instead of standards. A discussion about advertising and referencing books and what happens when things change over the years. We update our Comprehensive Plan every 10 years and also do periodic updates of the zoning ordinance too.

A discussion about demolition ensued and they would like to wait until Commissioner Pendlebury is in attendance to discuss this.


VII. New Business – nothing at this time

VIII. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 9:20 p.m. was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Enright.

Attest:

This meeting was digitally recorded


Cynthia L. Reppe
Planning Assistant