

Topsfield Planning Board
October 2, 2007

Chairman Martha Morrison called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM. Board members present were Martha Morrison, Janice Ablon, Gregor Smith, Robert Winship. Ian deBuy Wenniger arrived at 9:15 PM

Visitors: Members of the Master Plan Committee including Heidi Fox, Holger Luther, Alice Sheridan, Andrew Simms, Janine Cunniff, Joe Geller.
Also Selectman Dick Gandt, Anne McNeil (Enpro Services), Steven Hall, Jody Clineff, Ralph Stump.

NEW BUSINESS:

Scenic Road Special Permit:

Public hearing was opened at 7:45 regarding 86 Salem Road, Topsfield, MA

Anne McNeil of Enpro Services, for MIT Real Estate Foundation Inc., reported that there had been an interior oil tank spill on the property, requiring a clean up of the area and stream on the property. Access to the spill for cleanup operations required removing portions of the stonewalls on the property. Completion of the cleanup and restoration of the stonewalls is expected to be done by December, 2007, pending clean samples of soils and water on the site done by Licensed Service Professionals.

Member Robert Winship made the motion to approve a special permit to remove portions of the stonewalls on the property and restoration of the stone walls disturbed, pending clean up completion as determined by clean soil and water samples, seconded by Gregor Smith, so voted 4-0.

Member Janice Ablon made the motion to close the Public Hearing at 8:00PM, seconded by Gregor Smith, so voted 4-0

Rail Trail Letter of Support:

Martha Morrison presented a letter of support from the Planning Board to be approved by the board for inclusion in a Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation grant application. These funds are being pursued by The Topsfield Rail Trail Committee, with the support of the Selectmen, to be committed to the development of the Topsfield Linear Path.

Member Robert Winship made the motion to approve sending a letter of support to DCR for a rail trail grant committed to the development of the Topsfield Linear Path, seconded by Gregor Smith, so voted 4-0.

120 High Street Conservation Restriction:

Martha Morrison presented a letter,(in final form), addressed to the Conservation Commission and the Board of Selectmen regarding a requested Planning Board response to Conservation Commission's 120 High Street Conservation Restriction document.

Member Robert Winship made the motion to adopt and send said letter to the Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen, seconded by Gregor Smith, so voted 4-0.

Joint Meeting of the Planning Board and Master Plan Committee for the purpose of discussing zoning issues/ Route 1.

Issues discussed included a review of current zoning districts and uses, consideration of a single or 2 separate Business Highway Districts (BH, BH2)and determination of the boundaries of a potential new district at the junction of Route 1 and Ipswich Road. The majority opinion was that we should consider 2 separate districts, due to the location, extent and limitations of the intersection and differences between the districts.

Other considerations included whether or not this should be a mixed use district allowing retail, commercial and multifamily dwellings (up to 4 units) and the fact that this district would be constrained by wetlands, flood plain, Zone 2, septic limitations and other physical limitations including lot depth. Other considerations included a public access requirement between the interior of lots and assessment of traffic impact and possible need for road expansion.

There were questions about what would be practical to develop within the district and the scale of what we would want. The scale of development could consider such things as, the height and size of the buildings, % of buildable area, buffer strips and landscaping. The majority opinion was that site plan review process, rather than adopting design standards or the establishment of an architectural review board, would give the needed flexibility and control desired.

For our next scheduled meeting, Heidi Fox agreed to define the intent of the 2 districts, ie, BH could be defined as the entrance to Topsfield, traditional, rural, attractive and BH2 could be defined as small scale commercial, retail, multifamily.

There was agreement to review site plan review rules and regulations with consideration of developing descriptions, conditions, uses and density and dimensional standards for the districts. All in attendance agreed to review a working document provided by Gregor Smith regarding uses in the BH and BH2 and be prepared to discuss these at the next scheduled meeting on Tuesday Octo9ber 16th @ 8PM.

Martha Morrison discussed the need to move forward, rather quickly, given the time frame for the submission of warrant articles for the May 2007 ATM. We will need sufficient time to hold public meetings and have clear materials published and available on the town website.

Member Janice Ablon made the motion to adjourn at 9:50PM, seconded by Robert Winship, so voted 5-0.

Respectfully submitted

Janice M. Ablon
Planning Board
Clerk