

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Economic Development Committee
October 27, 2015-Tuesday

Present: Ed Harrington, Chairman
Thomas J. Lacey, Vice Chairman
Robert Conlon, Councilor
Rebecca Haugh, Councilor

Not Present: Brian McDonald, Councilor

Also Present: Matthew Barry, LStar
Eric Shiftman, Southfield Neighborhood Association

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chairman Harrington called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. He reported that he had a discussion with Council President O'Connor reminding that there are limitations to what can be discussed in committee while the matter is still in deliberation by the full Council. They can however, discuss a list of questions or information they would like the developer to answer or provide.

Southfield Zoning Discussion-Maximizing Weymouth's Interest

Chairman Harrington provided his list:

1. What can the town expect in direct benefits in terms of tax revenue for the various types of development; which will give the most bang for the buck: research and development, commercial, retail, office space, age-restricted and non age-restricted housing. Where is the best return?
2. Stability of markets; to plan on development in economic cycles; is there any time that is more recession proof than another? If they want to produce revenue what types will produce revenue sooner? Which are less prone to negative impact by recession and rank most to least in expanded on contracted economies between now and full build-out by 2031? How have they tended to be over the last 30 years?
3. Show the projected demands of all types of development over the next thirty years- is there a reliable or standard for measure?
4. Indirect benefits of all types of development: which are spurred on by other types? Which type provides the best indirect benefit? Which are the most beneficial?
5. Amount of open space at the base; he has asked this before. He got the total for the town from Jim Clarke last year and will ask again. How much open space is at the base, and how much is planned for development. What is the percent of open space in Weymouth, and surrounding areas? How much could be developed without affecting attraction to the site. Is there a good amount to have as a town?

- Is there still some out there – could we afford to give some up for the benefit of the town?
6. Solar collection/wind farm- is this considered open space? If so is it a possibility?
 7. Balance of development on the base. Are there ranges of the types that ...so much of this and that to make a balance? What is more /less important? The town is out of balance. It has a certain number of children to support without an offset by commercial and industrial revenues. It needs to be adjusted to improve the overall quality of life in town.
 8. Commuter rail station/parking? Has there been any progress increasing car capacity or number of trains? Is there a likelihood of increasing as development increases? Has there been any feedback from the MBTA? Studies and statistics have shown the need for parking in proximity to the T- would they require less parking if near terminal vs. residential housing? What should the parking parameters be for parking around a transit station? He would like to see studies and has asked Braintree also.
 9. Demographic of the residential around transit stations. Do they have more or less children than the average household? What do they require for educational services; what is the town's cost, how dense will it be?

Eric Shiftman, Southfield Neighborhood Association was invited to add questions:

1. From a resident perspective, will the tax rate remain low?
2. How much of the new zoning will be rental? Some is necessary and creates a nice balance, but they do not want to see it too heavily weighted to rental property.
3. Expanded T service is a concern of Southfield residents also.

Chairman Harrington asked if they are able to zone in owner-occupied limitations? Can the town or the HOA prohibit non owner-occupied? Chairman Harrington reported that he will provide a copy of the list of questions to the Planning Department as well so they can chime in.

Chairman Harrington noted that town needs to improve its financial situation. Other things can be done around town, but nowhere near what they can do at Southfield, and they need to keep the needs of the residents there in mind. The goal is to keep the quality of life but maintain a balance.

Councilor Haugh noted that three main points came out in the fight for legislation changes:

- Increase senior housing to provide tax revenue without children
- Push for commercial development and it is being increased
- Fought to get dedicated commercial zone entirely in Weymouth and it has been increased and at the current 82 acres now is almost tripled.

Vice Chairman Lacey asked what interest is and the strategy LStar is using to attracting biotech industry? Understanding that because of negotiations, what they share at this time is limited, overall interest from commercial expansion strategy. He would like to see

the Rockland commercial piece. He had asked where the town line is on the aerial shot. How is the space aligned with Weymouth and the overall project, and in particular roadway and traffic flows. RT 18 and Columbian Square indirect impact- these have the biggest benefit Weymouth could realize.

Councilor Conlon noted it doesn't hurt to wait; the main goal is to get something that is the most beneficial. Not commercial right now; if they have to wait 5 or 6 years he's ok with that. The most important is Main Street- it needs parking. He likes high rise parking and parking nearby would help to develop the property. He suggests installing a stadium with a dedicated road going in and out.

Vice Chairman Lacey noted they should most definitely not wait 5 or 6 years for anything. They can come up with a high quality product of mixed uses without waiting that time.

Councilor Haugh reminded the committee members that Rockland has a flat tax rate \$18.64/1000 for residential and commercial while Weymouth has a shift for commercial and industrial. She wants to know how Weymouth can work with LStar to attract the commercial development to Weymouth.

Chairman Harrington asked how many square feet of commercial is in town now and what is the impact of 3M more square feet—and if it could be enough to reduce the commercial rate so that they still get revenue but make it competitive to other towns. The town depends on every dollar it gets; is there a way to reduce the rate as the number of square feet is developed?

Mr. Barry will bring the list back to the development team for perusal.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:33 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Councilor Haugh to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Councilor Lacey. **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.**

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Chairman Ed Harrington
Voted unanimously on 7 December 2015