

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
Town Hall Council Chambers
November 15, 2010 - Thursday**

Present: Michael Smart, Chairman
Brian McDonald, Vice-chairman
Ken DiFazio
Ed Harrington
Arthur Mathews

Also Present: Susan M. Kay, Mayor
James Clarke, Director, Planning and Community Development
Rod Fuqua, Principal Planner
Christine Stickney, Planning Director, Town of Braintree

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chairman Smart called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM.

10 111 – Rezoning Request for Weymouth Landing

Chairman Smart reported this item was referred to the committee by the Council at its meeting on October 4, 2010 at which time Mayors Kay and Sullivan presented their proposal. A joint hearing with the Planning Board will be held at the Town Council Meeting later in the evening.

Jim Clarke and Rod Fuqua outlined the request in a powerpoint presentation with an accompanying handout to the committee. The request is for the Village Center Overlay District. The village center concept is from the Master Plan. Braintree is submitting a similar plan. The concept is to have some moderate density around parking lots and public transportation and to make the area more pedestrian friendly. Design concepts are an attempt to make the new construction compatible with existing structures. There will be mixed use; ground floor primarily business. The area is currently zoned B-2 (6 story height) with the new zoning the story height will be two by right and 4 with special permit. Setbacks tie into bringing buildings closer to the street and to tie into the existing setbacks. Building orientations will be parallel to the street and there will be glass space requirements along the building façades for display and visibility purposes.

Mr. Clarke then reviewed the map of Commercial and Washington Streets. The existing B-2 area will be recommended to R-2 use; which is a residential designation that allows conversion existing residential to office use but is more to protect the character of the area and spans from the MBTA property to the southwest to the municipal parking lot. It is to preserve the character of the existing buildings and is a transition or buffer to the more commercial area. Further to the east are more residential buildings. The main area, in the center of the commercial core will be rezoned from B-2 to Village Center. He

outlined the extension of Village Center along Washington, Front and Broad Streets. The zoning will extend to the lot lines of the properties along the proposed area. There are some B-2 lots behind Broad Street which they recommend be returned to R-1 zoning (Webb, Phillips Streets in behind the old fire station).

Parking requirements are being reduced to encourage both on-street and municipal parking areas and also to encourage the redevelopment of some of the properties. The proposed zoning is for 1.5:1 to the current 2:1 required spaces for residential; 3:4 current zoning per seating for restaurants to 1:4. Requirements have been lowered for medical office parking use as well. There will also be shared parking as an option for businesses to reciprocate parking requirements by peak use, and shared entrance or driveways.

Changes to signage include a reduction in wall signage, allow for projected signs and some freestanding signs. This will benefit buildings with smaller setbacks and frontages. New usages will include bed and breakfast, artist usage. Any drive throughs for business other than food will be by special permit. He then reviewed the landscaping requirements and sight design requirements. Curb cuts will be minimized, and large blank walls will be prohibited. Transparency requirements were reviewed. Buildings longer than 100' will require entries every 50' to encourage pedestrian traffic. No outside storage will be allowed.

The site plan review process is completed administratively. Decisions will be made quickly. Joint review will be with the town of Braintree. A local design professional will also sit in on the site review. The administration of the town where the business is located will have the final say in the review.

Councilor Lacey commended the Mayors, the administration and Jim Clarke and his team for the work done to this point. It serves as a good baseline; this is the first village center overlay proposed in the town. The towns can set guidelines and restrictions and hopefully generate interest within the public sector. He noted that this will be a terrific opportunity for the towns. He looks forward to the public hearing later in the evening.

Chairman DiFazio noted the three major changes in the proposed zoning changes are parking, the design review process and signage. He asked for the reasoning behind the boundaries selected. Councilor Harrington asked if the increased density will produce any increase in the amount of students in the town. Councilor Mathews asked if there are any pending purchase and sales in the area. Councilor Smart asked what consideration was given to the traffic difficulties already while encouraging new growth. Mr. Clarke responded that the concentration is in an area close by mass transit which will encourage less driving. There is a grant with PWED that will analyze the future traffic needs. They do not expect a major impact immediately. Councilor DiFazio asked if the proposed zoning will preclude any larger type or convenience stores from buying several lots to build. Mr. Clarke responded that it is possible now in the current zoning and with less restrictions. The intent of the change is to carefully review design for other than the special permit process. Councilor Smart asked what the current plans are for the municipal lot. Mr. Clarke responded that both towns have been working on this.

Councilor McDonald noted that the MBTA lot has spillover in the mornings; he asked what the future considerations are for management of the lot. The town has been monitoring it and restricting T riders from parking in the municipal lot. Councilor DiFazio asked if there are plans to make the parking lot more noticeable to the public. Mr. Clarke noted the towns are reviewing, and PWED is looking at uniform signage. Councilor Lacey added some history to the parking lot issue. This was supposed to be partial T parking; however, when the MBTA did not follow through on the mitigation Agreement with the community, the towns were required to be resourceful in making improvements on their own.

Adjournment

At 7:25 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Councilor Harrington to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Mathews and was unanimously voted.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Councilor Michael Smart as Chairman