

**PLANNING BOARD  
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, New Hampshire**

**Minutes of November 14, 2011**

**Members Present:** Chairman Leandra MacDonald, Tom Weeks, Richard Clarke, Alan Zeller, Joel Harrington and Ivy Vann.

**Also Present:** Carol Ogilvie, Director Office of Community Development, Laura Norton, OCD Administrative Assistant.

The Peterborough Planning Board held its regularly scheduled meeting on November 14, 2011 in the Selectmen's Meeting Room of the Town House. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Chair MacDonald introduced the members and staff. She announced that the members would be appointing two alternates to serve out the terms vacated by two members who resigned. She suggested a memo go out to the entire membership "to let everyone know we plan to do this at the next meeting and please be here."

Chair MacDonald noted the first item on the agenda was the Public Hearing on the Cultural Resources Draft Chapter of the Master Plan, the essence of which is an overview/inventory of local cultural resources, and recommendations regarding public and private support of these resources.

**Cultural Resources Chapter of the Master Plan:**

Ms. Mose Olenik was present to represent the subcommittee. Other members in attendance were Mr. David Simpson and Ms. Catherine LaRoche. Ms. Ogilvie noted Chairman David Macy was unable to attend but had stopped by to touch base with her earlier that day. Chair MacDonald noted that while the bulk of the work for a Chapter in the Master Plan is done by the Steering Committee or an appointed subcommittee, the Planning Board is responsible for adopting it. She noted that with some new members she hoped everyone had a chance to read it but noted "if not we will get you a copy." Chair MacDonald then gave the floor to Ms. Olenik who began with "I see new members, it is great to see younger members on the Board, and it is great to have young blood." Ms. Olenik briefly explained the subcommittee as "a great committee" noting their Chairman was David Macy, Resident Director at MacDowell Colony. She reported "we worked rigorously at first then took a bit of a hiatus over the summer. It is a really good chapter." Ms. Olenik added "and we are open to comments and changes you may see fit, it is ready for new eyes." She went on to note "the Master Plan Steering Committee is ready to go on to the next thing" adding "so if you feel there are areas to revisit, your input is important to us." She concluded with "the goal is Peterborough entities collaborating to make cultural and economic participation even more vibrant and successful, thank you."

David Simpson introduced himself and noted "I found being on the Committee helpful as I was new in town and did not understand all the resources available. I hope the chapter will be distributed out and into the community. It is a *makes you feel good* kind of thing. I hope you can accomplish that."

Chair MacDonald asked about some of the incomplete sections of the chapter “specifically the chart” (demonstrating the economic impact of just the four largest cultural organizations in town). Ms. Ogilvie noted Chairman Macy had stopped by earlier to extend his apologies for not being able to be present. She noted he assured her the chart would be completed within days and would not change the substance of the chapter. Ms. Ogilvie also noted Ms. LaRoche had been by and was working on the cultural resources inventory map and how to not only visually depict all the information in the chapter but where in the chapter it is located.”

Chair MacDonald noted “another goal is integrated with getting the town to allow use of the facilities at reduced rates and this should certainly apply to the Armory.” She added “it is hard to have a function in the Town House” and described the awkward rental system, set-up and pricing structure. Mr. Simpson interjected “one question we asked is *do we want a center for the arts?*” Adding “and discovered that we did not need an actual building.” He went on note church halls and school auditoriums were not being used to their potential. Ms. Vann gave an account of her experience when she rented space at the Historical Society for a planning charrette.

Mr. Hicks was in the audience and suggested “doubling up” on artistic experiences by having (for example) an art gallery on the lower floor of the Town House before Monadnock Music began their concerts. “You could have art all around this room (the BOS Meeting Room) and then have the concert upstairs:” he said.

Chair MacDonald asked if there were any other comments or concerns for the Board. Mr. Weeks interjected “I found a typo but I think it was very well written.” Chair MacDonald noted she had one question and pointed out page 11-6 and read “By participating in local arts activities and encouraging participation by their employees and peers, elected and appointed municipal workers can help the town...”

“That just doesn’t sound right, it strikes me as being odd” she said, Ms. Vann suggested they replace *municipal workers* with *municipal officials* with everyone in agreement. It was also pointed out that it is not necessary to capitalize the “I” in internet and that on page 11-7 Granite staters should be Granite Staters. The last correction was on page 11-8 (8.) where *criteria and process* should be *criteria and a process*.

The members briefly discussed the Appendix at the end and how that information could become a living document that could be updated regularly. Ms. Vann noted (as an example) the Peterborough Children’s Choir has changed their name. A brief discussion about existing arts websites followed. Mr. Harrington noted “my wife and I are very involved in the arts statewide” adding “we go to one or two websites. That is it.” He also suggested the members consider the humanities “as a part of all of this.”

The members also discussed the social networking sites with one member noting “they are becoming more and more popular with tentacles growing in all directions.”

Ms. Olenik reported the Arts Alive! Meetings have focused on working on such a website. “They are working for that easy icon you hit and everything that is going on in the Monadnock area comes up.” She noted Arts Alive! is on Facebook adding “they are doing that type of outreach as well.” Ms. Vann concluded “well a hot link to the living site is the way to go.”

Chair MacDonald suggested the Board table the adoption of the draft chapter until their Workshop noting “we should have the graph by then and we can approve the chapter with the corrections we discussed tonight.”

The Public Hearing closed at 7:30 p.m.

**Continued Zoning Amendments Review: Request for Craig Hicks regarding Commerce Park, Mercer Avenue and Southfield Lane.**

Commerce Park: Mr. Hicks began with “I am checking to see if you are still going to think about a re-zoning for Commerce Park.” Chair MacDonald replied “what are you asking for and are we to be thinking about more mixed use?” Mr. Hicks replied that is what he would like to see, adding “after years of owning Commerce Park it has not done anything but drain my pocketbook.”

Mr. Clarke asked if Mr. Hicks might bring the new members up to speed. Mr. Hicks outlined the Park’s boundaries on a graphic and gave a brief history of the parcel. He explained he would like to have retail south of the pond “and maybe housing or mixed use on the northern part” adding “I would like to see *something* happen out there.”

Ms. Vann asked about wetlands and whether or not the two drives depicted on the graphic could be connected. In response Mr. Hicks pointed out the wetland areas and confirmed the two entries could be connected and a brief discussion about access for both retail and residential followed. Mr. Weeks noted the Shoreline Conservation Zone adding “you will have to go to the ZBA about that.” The members also briefly discussed a second curb cut off Route 202 with Mr. Weeks asking “is a second curb cut going to be able to stay out of those environmentally sensitive areas?”

Referring to the Common Pathway Ms. Vann noted “I am not a fan of crossing the trail. People use it all the time. There is a lot of activity on that trail. I am loath to see that disrupted for any use.” Mr. Hicks spoke briefly on a curb cut at the intersection of Route 202 and Scott Mitchell Road. “It is a good location with good access” he said.

Mercer Avenue: Ms. Vann noted “we have to think about where we are” (as a Board) with Chair MacDonald adding “and what we think the town would support.” Mr. Hicks replied “of course.” Mr. Hicks went on to explain his idea for elderly housing on the parcel located at the end of Mercer Ave. He noted he had gone to the ZBA recently for a Special Exception for an increase in density. He noted the lot was 7.85 acres and referenced the Master Plan when he said “it advocates infill, infill, infill” as well as staying close to the town center. He noted “there are not a lot of pieces like this (this) close to downtown.” Chair MacDonald asked about steep slope with Mr. Hicks replying “yes there is steep slope but it is a cut and fill.” Mr. Clarke asked what zone the lot was located in with Mr. Hicks replying “Rural.” He pointed to the graphic and then the triangular-shaped lot sandwiched between the Village Commercial and Family Zones, adding “but that is not rural” he said.

Mr. Weeks asked about the condition of Mercer Avenue adding “a Special Exception for a smaller project was denied by the ZBA.” Mr. Hicks responded by noting several other options

for access to the lot not involving Mercer Ave. The members also discussed the width of the road and agreed the Director of Public Works and the Fire Chief would need to have input. Chair MacDonald noted the possibility of expanding the lot to the Village Commercial District adding “that would open it to other uses.” “Absolutely” replied Mr. Hicks.

The members once again looked at the graphic that showed the zoning districts and the white (rural) “triangle” in the middle of the VCC and General Residence Districts. Mr. Weeks questioned Mr. Hicks’ thought on the neighborhood and asked “how are people going to feel having a primary access through their front yards to access commercial development? Mr. Hicks replied “I have been talking about this for a long time” with Mr. Weeks interjecting “I have been talking about it longer.” Mr. Hicks went on to point to several examples of neighborhood lots existing in two separate districts and added “this is where we should think about lots defining a district, not the 200 feet.” Ms. Vann interjected “I would be interested in seeing a connection for Mercer Ave to (Route) 202 south regardless of what district it ends up in.”

Mr. Hicks replied “I get the sense this might be a good move: and asked “would you like me to make the call to Ashford?” (Ashford Realty Corp. owns the Monadnock Plaza). The members agreed they would like Mr. Hicks to proceed and inquire about any interest from the plaza owner. Chair MacDonald noted “it is significant, we could rezone to the VCC but without that access I don’t think it would fly.” “I totally agree” replied Mr. Hicks. The members briefly discussed making the access limited entry or emergency access only to keep it from becoming a shortcut or bypass from the (traffic) lights. Ms. Vann noted “I see no compelling reason to make it emergency access only.” Mr. Weeks mentioned the potential problems of the Plaza losing a row of parking, the current gas tank farm on the northern end of the plaza and the addition of the outside porch at the Pearl Restaurant. He added “and the town already has concerns about an adequate entrance to the back of the building.” The members also briefly discussed topography and erosion issues.

Southfield Lane: Mr. Hicks explained a condition of the Special Exception on his property at either side of Southfield Lane was that the land “has to stay in its natural state” adding “I would like to have that changed so that a nonprofit organization can use the property.” The members viewed a graphic of the parcel and discussed its proximity to the High School. Mr. Hicks noted he would like to see a hockey rink in town and suggested that if the school would raise the money to construct one he would donate the 5-acre parcel to the school. He noted “however, the deed states no commercial enterprise except forestry performed to best management practices” adding “I would like to see it used for something.”

The members briefly reviewed the language of the deed and believed that the density had been used for the upper lot where Southfield Village was located. Chair MacDonald noted “Southfield Village got the right to X amount of units and the lot below (Mr. Hicks’ lot) in not being developable.” Mr. Weeks interjected “so you bought land you cannot develop?” with Mr. Hicks replying “correct.”

The members briefly discussed the number of units on the upper lot with no development on the lower lot. Chair MacDonald noted “it is confusing” adding “I guess the question is would the Board agree to propose allowing a nonprofit use.” Mr. Hicks went on to note “if the condition was a Planning Board condition I am asking you to change it” adding “I would like to see it go

from non-developable to be able to be used by a nonprofit.” He cited examples such as (all) the church properties and the Mariposa Museum.

Mr. Harrington suggested the members research how the condition was created and who created it. He also asked about any connections to wetlands and if there was an alternative area for a hockey rink. A brief discussion about the potential for a rink at the former NEBS facility followed.

Mr. Weeks asked “why don’t you put the rink in Commerce Park where it is permitted?” Mr. Hicks replied “that is a for-profit piece of land.” Chair MacDonald interjected “I just don’t see how we can change a deed.” Mr. Hicks replied “I think it had something to do with this group.” Ms. Ogilvie offered to research the documents and determine where the condition came from.

Back to Mercer Avenue: In conclusion Mr. Hicks noted he would contact the owner of the Monadnock Plaza and inquire about potential access through their parcel to access Route 202. Mr. Weeks asked about a Mercer Avenue neighborhood meeting with Ms. Ogilvie noting there definitely would be such a meeting at the appropriate time.

The members briefly discussed the potential for re-zoning; Mr. Weeks noted he felt a re-zone would be seen as spot zoning with Mr. Hicks replying “the entire town is spot zoned.” Mr. Hicks went on to say “the entire area was General Residence before it became the VCD.” Mr. Weeks noted he was just raising the question. “That will come up” he said.

Mr. Hicks reiterated the sale of 35 acres of church property last year as being the last of the available General Residence zoning in town. “We don’t have any substantial General Residence left anywhere that I can think of” he said.

Mr. Weeks concluded with “whatever you put on the site the question of a secondary access will come up.” Mr. Hicks noted ConVal, NEBS and EMS as being in similar positions adding “at some point you have to agree there is only one way into some things.” Mr. Weeks replied “I only raise it because it is going to come up; the question is going to be raised.” Mr. Hick suggested the issue be presented to the Fire Chief “and see if he is concerned or if he is not concerned.”

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Planning Board Workshop is Monday, November 21, 2011 at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton,  
Administrative Assistant

**Approved as Written 12-12-11**