

GREAT BARRINGTON PLANNING BOARD

DATE: June 22, 2017
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: Large Meeting Room
FOR: Regular Meeting
PRESENT: Brandee Nelson, Chair; Malcolm Fick; Jonathan Hankin; Jack Musgrove;
Jeremy Higa
Pedro Pachano, Associate Member
Chris Rembold, Town Planner

Ms. Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Mr. Higa and Mr. Pachano had not yet arrived.

FORM A'S:

There were no Form A's presented.

MINUTES: JUNE 8, 2017

Mr. Musgrove made a motion to approve the minutes of June 8, 2017 as amended, Mr. Fick seconded, all in favor.

ZONING TO DO LIST:

Mr. Rembold said the items for discussion for the 2018 Annual Town Meeting include a request to limit the number of banks and real estate offices on Main Street, a zoning change for Gilmore Avenue and State Road.

Mr. Pachano arrived at 7:01 P.M.

Mr. Rembold said the State Road zoning was previously discussed with the MXD zone last year. It was decided that an MXD zone might apply to State Road but it needed to be done separately from the MXD zone on South Main Street.

Mr. Rembold said the B-3 zone in the downtown area should also be looked at. Specifically does it work for small parcels on Church Street and Bridge Street? The Board needs to think about whether or not to address recreational marijuana that will be legal to sell next year. Mr. Rembold said these are the issues he sees that can be addressed.

Ms. Nelson said there are split lots in the Belcher Square and State Road area that need to be addressed.

Mr. Higa arrived at 7:03 P.M.

Ms. Nelson suggested looking at the zoning map and text maps at the next meeting where there is time for discussion.

Mr. Rembold said both Mr. Hankin and Mr. Higa walked Main Street with me allowing us to discuss some ideas.

Mr. Hankin said when we look at the B-3 in the Church and Bridge Street area we could easily fix the zoning by simply adding that the 5,000 square foot minimum requirement would not apply to lots in existence in 2018.

Mr. Pachano said high end retail is tough as it is marketed to people who visit and not those who live here.

Ms. Nelson said she does not think we can control this.

Mr. Hankin said some places limit real estate offices. He said it is dismaying to see them taking over. He said they should be self regulating. If there are too many there won't be enough people for all of them and they will close.

Mr. Pachano said property owners have a right to set their rates and make their money.

Ms. Nelson asked Mr. Rembold to determine what planning tools we could use to address the issue.

Mr. Rembold said there are ways but he said he is not familiar with them. He said we are fortunate to have building owners who look for the right tenant when filling a vacant space. They hold out as long as they can to manage the retail space. The recruitment for different types of retail spaces is not necessarily a zoning issue.

Ed Abrahams said we have a very healthy downtown. There are 6 new retail spaces on Railroad Street. The issue could resolve itself by having more retail spaces available.

Ms. Nelson said she does not feel this is a major issue. She said she is not willing to take it on.

Mr. Rembold said active management of space may be a better tool than zoning.

Ms. Nelson asked Mr. Abrahams to let the Board know if he hears of an issue through a business group.

Mr. Nickerson said he would discourage certain tenants from renting his space but if it were a last resort he would not want his hands tied.

It was agreed not to pursue this item.

Ms. Nelson asked for a sense of where the Board is on recreational marijuana. She said the State will provide guidelines.

Mr. Rembold said at this time the State is still debating how to clarify the vote. At this point there is nothing in place regarding retail sales. He said there is something about medical marijuana facilities being able to sell it if there is nothing in place for retail but he said he thinks we have an agreement with our facility.

Mr. Hankin said if we want foot traffic on Main Street we should have a couple stores on Main Street.

Mr. Musgrove said it was passed by the voters so it will happen.

Mr. Higa said there are a lot of things to work out first.

Ms. Nelson asked if we should work on a moratorium.

Mr. Hankin said we don't need a moratorium until there are guidelines.

Mr. Higa said there are a lot of things we can talk about before hearing from the State.

CITIZEN'S SPEAK TIME:

Mr. Abrahams said the CPA committee has been meeting. Mr. Higa said the Board should review the CPA plan and make comments.

Mr. Hankin said he is a member of the Great Barrington Affordable Housing Trust who reviewed the plan. He said that the Trust will request all CPA money for affordable housing be granted to the trust fund and dispersed through the trust.

Ms. Nelson said she thinks this is a discussion for another meeting. She said if there is room it could be on the agenda for July 13th.

Mr. Fick said he didn't think we would review. He said it is not currently part of the plan. It should not be discussed.

Mr. Abrahams it has not been voted on or endorsed but it is proposed for next year's plan.

Ms. Nelson said we can get more information and discuss at an upcoming meeting.

Having concluded their business, Ms. Nelson adjourned at 8:06 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly L. Shaw
Planning Board Secretary