

ZONING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ZAC)

◀ **Minutes of Meeting** ▶

Meeting Title	:	Zoning Advisory Committee
Date	:	October 21, 2009
Time	:	7:30 PM
Place	:	Cordaville Hall
Chair Person	:	Dana Cunningham
In Attendance (Cttee)	:	Dana Cunningham, Sam Stivers, Kathy Bartolini, Nancy Vargas, John Leeds, Steve Davis, Judi Barrett, Vera Kolas
Also in Attendance	:	Charlie Gaffney, Mary Hynes, Ana Ferris, Lee Bartolini, Jack Bartolini, Bill Depietri, Freddie Gillespie, Meme Luttrell
Absent	:	Don Morris, Bill Boland
Agenda	:	Discussion of Policy Decisions – Part 2 of First Reading Draft of ZBL
Minutes Submitted By	:	VK
Minutes Submitted On	:	11/02/09
Next Meeting (Public)	:	Date: Time: Place:
Next Meeting (ZAC)	:	Date: 11/4/09 Time: 7:00 p.m. Place: Cordaville Hall

Decisions:

#	Decision
1.	All meetings to begin at 7 p.m.
2.	Project schedule extended to go to Fall 2010
3.	Additional funding to be sought from Selectmen
4.	Minutes from 9/2 and 9/16 approved

Action Items:

#	Action Item	Owner	Status	Due Date	Comments
1.	Comments on Part 2	ZAC		Prior to 11/4 meeting	
2.					

Carry-Over Items for Next Meeting:

#	Description
1.	
2.	

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM by the Chair (Dana Cunningham).

Discussion of project schedule, referencing recent memo from Judi. Discussion of the pros and cons of extending the schedule to a fall town meeting. All present agreed that taking the additional time to “do it right” made the most sense. All understood that this means additional ZAC meetings and an additional time commitment, but that it is better for the project.

Consensus and final vote of the committee was to extend the project to the fall. The co-chairs will take care of any contractual issues with Judi.

Dana Cunningham asked if committee members were willing to start meetings at 7 p.m., which all said they were. The committee also added one additional November meeting for November 18th. Subsequent meetings are December 2nd and January 6th.

Steve Davis then suggested that the use narrative be presented in a tabular format, stating that it will be much easier to use and understand. Judi agreed and will incorporate this change into the 2nd reading draft.

Minutes from the Sept. 2nd and Sept. 16th meetings, as revised, were approved.

Discussion of Policy Decisions chart – Part 2 of ZBL

The several decisions surround parking issues.

1. The schedule of off-street parking requirements includes a maximum number of spaces for some uses, e.g., retail. The purpose is to prevent large, underutilized parking lots.

Decision: 6-0 in favor.

2. General comment: several of the minimum parking space requirements are lower than Southborough’s existing requirements. Again, the purpose is to avoid forcing applicants to construct unnecessary parking.

Kathy Bartolini commented about restaurant use and asked about function rooms. The decision was to indicate that some restaurants may have more than one function space.

Nancy Vargas asked if the proposed parking requirements were sufficient for one-bedroom apartments/townhouses. Judi replied that the one-bedroom housing stock is such a mix of households that the average of 2 parking spaces/dwelling unit results in too much parking. Visitor parking provisions should take care of any extra need for spaces overall.

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Other comments made were that the parking provisions are different for first story uses as compared to upper story uses. This is because the demand for street level uses is higher.

Additional discussion included: (i) the minimum width of parking spaces (9 feet versus 9 ½ feet) (ii) the percentage of spaces for compact cars and (iii) if it makes sense to have areas of parking dedicated for larger vehicles. It was agreed to leave the parking space dimensions alone and leave this issue for site plan review.

Decision: 6-0 in favor.

3. The draft ZBL includes several exemptions and automatic parking reductions in a village business district: very small retail shops, buildings with two usable floors, and off-premises parking. *Question for ZAC: is the concept of reduced parking in a village business district generally acceptable, even if you disagree with one or more of the specific provisions of this section?*

General discussion noted that the group favors not requiring off-street parking. However, it was brought up that there is very little on-street parking in Fayville, which we need to recognize; that each Village is different. The notion is that by requiring less off-street parking, we can encourage more development. Freddie Gillespie expressed concern for the employees of these businesses. Judi noted that this proposal is a recognition that suburban shopping areas are very different from villages.

Decision: 6-0 in favor.

4. TDM plan in the IP, I, and BH districts. This provision would give the Planning Board authority to require a TDM plan for major projects on/adjacent to Route 9, and also require post-construction traffic monitoring.

This is a proposal that is currently part of the Planning Board's review process; this formalizes the rationale and provides a special permit for enforcement.

Decision: 6-0 in favor.

5. Electric car recharge stations may be required for up to 5 percent of required parking spaces.

Many supported this provision, but Steve Davis and Jack Bartolini disagreed, saying that a company should not have to pay for an employee's electricity.

Decision: 3-3.

6. Proposed ZBL provides for shared parking by two or more abutting uses by special permit. Purpose is to encourage more efficient use of land and (potentially) better site layouts.

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The special permit will provide for better enforcement. Kathy Bartolini asked about mixed-use or uses that have different day vs. night uses and how can we ensure the parking is available over time. Again, the special permit was cited as the enforcement mechanism.

Sam Stivers believes that this provision is fraught with a danger of things changing over time and/or misunderstandings. He believes that the situation is much neater if everything stays on separate lots and stays the same.

An additional comment noted that this provision allows for more site design flexibility.

Decision: 5-1 in favor.

7. Proposed ZBL includes some incentives for shared access: reduced lot frontage and an increase in the maximum FAR.

Decision: 5-1 in favor.

8. Proposed ZBL creates possibility for the Planning Board to allow business or industrial parking on land in a residential district, by special permit. The purpose is to deal with some of the development constraints on lots along Route 9.

There was little support for this proposal. The decision was to DEFER this until later.

9. The off-street parking regulations include requirements for bicycle parking in commercial and multi-family developments.

Decision: 6-0 in favor.

10. The landscaping section is not substantially different from Southborough's existing ZBL, although it has been reorganized. One change that comes to mind is removal of the long list of invasive plants from the ZBL. The list has been replaced by reference to a recognized standard (NHESP guide book). Sam Stivers suggested that a more durable reference to such a standard in a ZBL might be worded as "the most current version of the NHESP guide book, or other equivalent, recognized standard as may be determined by a vote of the Planning Board".

There was general support for taking the specific plant list out of the bylaw and replacing it with a reference instead. A question was raised about a requirement for a project proponent to remove existing invasives on-site as well. This would require some sort of standard/threshold to make the requirement reasonable.

Dana Cunningham stated that he would like to increase the landscaping requirements, particularly in parking lots. It was noted that parking design standards have been included in the ZBL separately from the overall landscaping standards. It was also raised that there is an issue with what

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plants have been selected for use on Route 9. General support for berms, hedges, and screening of cars in parking lots was expressed as well, with a primary objective being to reduce the ability of travelers on Route 9 to see parked cars. However, landscaping cannot create safety issues.

This could be an opportunity to improve and encourage development/redevelopment on Route 9. Is there a way to provide incentives to current property-owners whose sites do not conform to our current regulations?

Jack Bartolini commented that the Town's Landscaping Bylaw is relatively new, and he believes that it should be given a longer period of time to show its strengths and weaknesses before it is changed as in the current proposals.

Bill Depietri commented that the Landscaping Bylaw should include a requirement that plantings along Route 9 be, to the extent reasonably possible, salt resistant—as road salt in this area is a particular problem for plantings.

Decision: 6-0 in favor.

VOTED: To adjourn at 9:20 PM