

**Foster Planning Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday February 1, 2006  
Eddy Building 7:00 pm**

The Planning Board meeting convened at 7:03 pm, present was John Lewis – Chair, Julia Parmentier – Vice Chair, Helen Hardy – Secretary, Mike Carpenter, Patricia Moreau, Robin Fish, Don Moyer and Richard Grant – Administrator of Subdivisions and Land Development. Philip Marcelo from the Providence Journal was in the audience.

**Minutes**

Helen Hardy moved to approve the minutes of January 18, 2006 as amended, Don Moyer seconded, motion carried unanimously, 7-0.

**Correspondence**

State Planning Council notice of upcoming workshops.

**Reports**

None

**Public Hearings**

None

**Subdivisions**

None

**Commercial Site Review**

None

**Old Business**

Moved until after New Business

**New Business**

1. Review of the Commercial Site Review Application – Richard Grant supplied the Planning Board with copies of the 1994 form and the form that was updated in May of 2004. Richard recommended changing where it refers to the consultant fees, currently it reads a \$75.00 an hour as needed. Following the discussion with the Board, Mike Carpenter moved to accept the amended Commercial Site Review application recommended by Mr. Grant for now, which would read as follows; > 8 acres \$1500.00 plus a consultant fee as needed, < 8 acres \$2500.00 plus a consultant fee as needed, then Patricia Moreau will conduct a study of surrounding cities and towns to see what they charge, Robin Fish seconded, motion carried unanimously, 7-0. Mr. Grant felt that the suggested amendment will be adequate to handle any upcoming Commercial development. Chair John Lewis asked that it be added to the list of Future Agenda Items.

2. Overall Plan for the Municipal property – John Lewis, Richard Grant and Nancy Woodlock found a site map of the Municipal Zone in Foster Center at the Town Hall which was prepared by Scituate Surveys in 1989. The suggestion was made to have this document updated to include all current buildings and have it digitized. Mr. Grant felt that a student at the University of Rhode Island may be able to this for the Town and would take care of having it done.

Julia Parmentier moved to have Mr. Grant arrange to have the map of the Foster Center Municipal Zone and vicinity digitized and updated, Patricia Moreau seconded, motion carried 7-0.

**Old Business**

1. Affordable Housing Plan – John Lewis and Julia Parmentier have an appointment with Statewide Planning on February 3, 2006 at 11:00 am, anyone else can attend if they are available.

John Lewis read the two recent comments from Rhode Island Housing; Statewide Planning has asked me to poll the Board to see if they can address these concerns. So does anyone on this Board think that we can modify the residential compound strategy in any way to address these concerns? **Regarding the first concern:**

Robin Fish stated that the Board is already proposing a compromise from our Residential Compound, and that any further change would increase the density to the point where it wouldn't be accepted by the Council or by the Board.

Don Moyer – Concur with what Robin has stated.

Helen Hardy – Also concurs with what Robin stated and adds that the concerns from Rhode Island Housing reflect a lack of knowledge of the Town of Foster and if they were more familiar with Foster's zoning and the local terrain that they would not be so skeptical about the modifications that we have made to make it more suitable for Affordable Housing.

Julia Parmentier – I agree with what Robin and Helen said and I also would like to add that the original legislation for Affordable Housing talked about density increases where there were utilities and other infrastructures to support those increases and we do not have those in the Town of Foster.

Mike Carpenter – I concur with all the previous comments.

Patricia Moreau – I also concur with all the previous comments.

Richard Grant – I also agree with all the previous comments and that Julia points out a very important fact that the infrastructure is critical.

John Lewis – I believe that this is a difference in philosophy; they believe that this will not work. Yet, no town in the state has significant experience with an Affordable Housing Plan. This is a strategy that the Town is willing to under take, it's a strategy that does give a density bonus and it's a strategy that addresses what they ask us to address and we think that it very well could work. I don't think that a difference of opinion without any experience to back it up is a reason to deny our plan. They believe it won't work but they can't prove it by other towns because no background exists.

Richard Grant at this point asked for a five minute recess.

Upon reconvening – Julia Parmentier moved to not modify the Affordable Housing Plan submitted to Statewide Planning any further, but to continue to back our previous plan, Mike Carpenter seconded, motion unanimously carried 7-0.

**Regarding the second concern:**

Rhode Island Housing wants the Board to consider whatever density Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management deems appropriate for a parcel based on the existing soils.

Robin – We have already suggested a modification of our zoning to give a density bonus to make land more affordable but any greater density increases are not supported by the existing zoning or infrastructure and that anything further would have to go back before the Council.

Julia Parmentier, Mike Carpenter, Helen Hardy and Patricia Moreau all concur with the previous comments.

John Lewis – The greater sized lots here are due to the lack of infrastructure and the protection of the groundwater for not only our wells but also for the Situate Reservoir watershed. The more development, the greater the risk to the water supply for much of the State.

Robin Fish adds each Town is a “microculture”, our zoning and comprehensive plan reflect the maintenance of the attributes that are unique to Foster.

John Lewis – Responding to these significant changes would make unacceptable changes in or zoning. The Planning Board can't accept these requests and we have confidence that the Town Council would not approve these changes.

Don Moyer states we are required to come up with a plan that meets our goals for Affordable Housing and that the Council endorses. We are not requested to accept someone else's plan.

Patricia Moreau moved not to take action on Rhode Island Housing's recommendations to increase density, Robin Fish seconded, motion unanimously carried 7-0.

John reviewed the editing suggestions for the Affordable Housing Plan, Julia Parmentier moved to have John Lewis make the editing corrections he has reviewed with the Board, Mike Carpenter seconded, motion carried unanimously 7-0.

**Old Business Continued:**

2. Review of the Edits to the Comprehensive Plan – Julia and Nancy reviewed the Final Comprehensive Plan and the marked up version and found only one place where the copies differed; Julia Parmentier moved to include the two bullets from section 5.7.7 under “Approach”, as noted on the attached page 125, Robin Fish seconded, motion carried 7-0.

Julia Parmentier moved to send the final version of the Comprehensive Plan Draft back to the State, Patricia Moreau seconded, motion carried 7-0.

Robin Fish suggested that this submission should be well documented.

3. Ordinance Revisions- The Implementation section remains to be considered, sections noted for possible ordinance revisions are sections 61. to 6.3.

4. Scenic Roads – Julia received from Nancy a packet of information from the Department of Transportation. Julia will review this information and will try to address a scenic road grant and will try to bring something to the Board for consideration for the 2-15-06 meeting.

5. Back to Ordinance Revisions – The Planning Board reviewed the Implementation section to identify places that may involve ordinance change, to be able to make arrangements for an RFP for a consultant for ordinance review as required by the Comprehensive Plan.

**Future Agenda Items**

1. Driveway location for Plat 12, Lot 60, Central Pike/Ponagansett Road
2. Request to have RIDEM conduct a Septic System workshop
3. Subdivision regulations pertaining to alternative septic system designs
4. Ordinance revisions
5. Scenic Roads
6. Conservation Development
7. Possibility of having a Subdivision Suitability workshop
8. New School progress report from the School Building Committee
9. Planning Assistance
10. Economic Development Advisory Committee Recommendations
11. Commercial Site Review Applications

**Adjournment**

Mike Carpenter moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 pm, Patricia Moreau seconded, motion carried 7-0, meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Helen Hardy  
Secretary