

CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE

PLANNING BOARD

MINUTES

Date: **Monday, January 9, 2012**
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: RM 306, third floor, City Hall

Present: Chairman Michael Robinson, Anthony Almeida, Burton Batty, Krista Moravec, Robert Cole, Alternate Christopher Grant; Staff: Planning Director Jeanne Boyle, Chief Planner Diane Feather, City Solicitor Andrew Andreoni.

The meeting opened with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance by all in attendance.

1. SEATING OF ALTERNATE MEMBER

All members were present and seating of the Alternate Member was not required.

2. APPROVAL OF PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

- A. Minutes of December 11, 1011 to be submitted.
- B. There was no meeting on November 14, 2011 (It was cancelled.).

3. APPROVAL OF PLANNING BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

A. Memo dated 12/13/11 to the City Council Re: 2011 East Providence Emergency Operations Plan. On a motion made by Mr. Almeida, Seconded by Ms. Moravec, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the correspondence.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing – Final Report Taunton Avenue “Auto Row” study prepared by Horsley Witten Group (dated Jan. 4, 2012, copy enclosed); Action Required – Recommendation to the City Council

Ms. Boyle asked Ms. Feather to present this item. Ms. Feather noted that Mr. Nathan Kelly from the Horsley Witten Group, who prepared the draft report and regulations, was present to answer any questions the Board may have on the report. Ms. Feather noted that the staff had given the Board a status update at their December 12, 2011 meeting.

Ms. Feather noted that in preparation of the City's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) application, the Planning Department worked with the Police Department (Captain Kidman) to get crash data for Taunton Avenue. In an approximate two-year period in just the eastern section of the corridor from east of the Pawtucket Avenue intersection to approximately Commercial Way, there were 29 motor vehicle accidents. The proposed "road dieting" is seen as a means to reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents. She stated the enter left turn lane would provide a storage area outside the travel lane for motorists wishing to turn left, whose safety would be increased, and the configuration would improve efficiency of traffic operations for motorists and for freight transport by removing turning traffic from travel lanes, thereby supporting the businesses located in this corridor and their patrons visiting this corridor, and finally, pedestrians would also likely feel and be safer as a result of the lane reconfiguration.

Ms. Feather pointed out the design guidelines for the different segments of Taunton Avenue, that part west of the Pawtucket Avenue intersection near Hall Street, the mid-point which includes Wampanoag Mall and Shopperstown, and the portion east of the Pawtucket Avenue intersection.

Chairman Robinson stated that he did not think that improved safety by going to a two-way left turn lane with one lane in each direction had been proven. Ms. Boyle and Ms. Feather noted that the State Traffic Commission was in favor of the proposal and they were currently doing a traffic study on the concept which should be ready by the Board's next meeting. Ms. Feather also noted that the Chair of the State Traffic Commission, who is also an employee of RIDOT, could be asked to see if he could attend the next meeting. She noted that the RIDOT had done road-dieting in a number of other communities and the results have been favorable. Mr. Batty also expressed some concerns.

Ms. Boyle and Ms. Feather noted that the Board could continue the public hearing to next month's meeting, by which time the RIDOT study should have been completed, and perhaps the STC Secretary could attend the Board's meeting.

On a motion made by Mr. Batty, seconded by Mr. Almeida, the Board voted to continue the hearing on this matter until the February 2012 meeting.

B. Public Hearing – Proposed Amendments to the Land Development and Subdivision Review Regulations (Memo dated Jan. 4, 2012 and Proposed Amendments enclosed); Action Required.

Ms. Boyle asked Ms. Feather to present this item. Ms. Feather noted that the proposed amendment primarily relate to the slight increase in fees and a few other amendments, all of which are described in the Memorandum dated January 4, 2012 (and its attachments) from the Planning Department to the Planning Board. She noted that the Regulations had not been amended since November 12, 2003. Upon a motion made by Mr. Batty, seconded by Ms. Moravec, the Board voted 5 – 0 to enter the Planning Department memorandum and its attachments into the record.

Ms. Feather provided the Board with a chart noting the fees for other RI communities. She noted that by State law, the Board is allowed to charge fees to cover the costs of review. She noted that the proposed slight increase in fees is in keeping with that provision of law, and she further noted that some Rhode Island communities might be legally challenged because their fees are seen by some as being in excess.

Other amendments include requiring electronic copies of plans and as-built's (and the as-built's showing final topographic grades), and the prohibition of stockpiling of soil for lengthy periods of time while there is no construction activity on a site. She noted that a class 1 survey has always been required, but this is made clearer in the amendments. Requiring that a Professional Landscape Architect licensed in the State of Rhode Island be required to prepare any landscape elements of a plan was also a proposed amendment. Ms. Feather noted that other aspects of submission currently require the work of professional surveyors, planners and engineers.

Mr. Batty asked about the prohibition against stockpiling soil on a site. Ms. Feather noted this is only meant for those situations when a stockpile is left in place for a lengthy period of time, not for instances where there is active construction.

She noted that the Subdivision and Land Development Review Regulations are under the purview of the Planning Board, so it is their vote on whether to amend them or not. Based upon a finding that the proposed amendments are in keeping with Sec. 1 – 2, the General purposes of the Land Development and Subdivision Review Regulations, and are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, upon a motion made by Mr. Batty, seconded by Ms. Moravec, the Board vote 5 – 0 to approve the proposed amendments as presented by staff. Ms. Feather noted that the Department would inquire as

to whether the approval for the increased fees requires the approval of the State Budget Commission currently operating in East Providence.

C. Meeting Schedule – Proposed Meeting Schedule of 2012

Ms. Feather noted that the proposed meeting schedule maintains the meeting on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 PM except for three months - August, October and November - on which the regular meeting falls on a holiday and in these cases the Board will then meet the day after the holiday, the second Tuesday of the month. On a motion by Ms. Moravec, seconded by Mr. Almeida, the Board voted to approve the proposed schedule of meeting dates for 2012.

5. CONTINUED BUSINESS

There was no continued business.

6. STAFF REPORT – These items were noted as the staff report, with details to come at the next meeting.

1. Economic Development Newsletter
2. Harbor Management Plan Update
3. Hunt's Mills Landscape Improvements
4. Statewide Low-Impact Development Training in East Providence
5. Resident Emergency Notification System Upgrade
6. Physical Security of City Hall
7. EOP (Emergency Operations Plan)
8. FEMA Warren Avenue Culvert Grant
9. Community Development Disaster Relief Block Grant
10. RI Department of Health
11. Floodplain Management
12. Homeland Security
13. Safe Routes to School

7. COMMUNICATIONS

None

8. ANNOUNCEMENT

Next Meeting – **February 13, 2012, 7:00 p.m.**, Room 306

9. ADJOURNMENT – 9:20 PM (On a motion made by Mr. Almeida, seconded by Mr. Batty; 5 – 0 Vote)