

Zoning By-Law Review Committee
September 24, 2013
Minutes

Present: Patrick Doherty, Ted King, Shirley Smith

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 PM. The committee reviewed the minutes from April 2, 2013. Ted made a motion to accept the minutes. Patrick seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Update on Status of ADU and Inclusionary By-Laws

After explaining that the 6 public hearings, primarily concerning the domestic animal regulations in Section 3.01, Uses of Land and Structures, were the reason behind the long stretch of time between our meetings, Shirley informed the committee that the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen wanted only Section 3.01 to be presented at the November 19th Special Town Meeting. This meant that the ADU and Inclusionary By-Laws would have to wait until sometime next year.

Village Center District By-Law

Overlay Designation: It had not been clear as whether the Village Center District should be a regular district or an overlay. Shirley had done some research and passed out a summary of the results to the committee. She said that 50 towns in the state had Village Center Districts, the vast majority of which were overlay districts. The most cited reason for this was that overlay districts were perceived by voters as being far less threatening than redrawing base zoning districts of radically changing regulations. In Mendon, where there is often tremendous resistance to significant changes, the committee agreed that the overlay would be the best option. Another reason was that eventually the Town could develop into 3 Village Centers: the existing triangle, the Providence Road/Hartford Avenue East Intersection, and the Mendon Drive In location, should that property become available. The overlay would cover all of these and provide consistent requirements. Patrick wanted to know if people could choose between abiding by the regulations of the overlay district and the base district. Shirley said that the answer was no. All of the by-laws have a provision stating that once an overlay is established, the requirements of that district supersede those of the underlying zoning.

Boundaries: Shirley laid out an enlarged assessor's map of the area under consideration. The committee had discussed various scenarios but agreed that the district should consist of the original Village District officially certified by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and both sides of Providence Road to the Hartford Avenue East intersection. The boundaries on the easterly side of Providence Rd. would be at an 800 foot depth. Those on the westerly side would follow the lot lines of the parcels abutting the road. Since the historical boundaries did not include the very important Drive In parcel, there was discussion on extending that boundary line. Shirley said she would check out the area and report back at the next meeting so they could decide exactly how far up Rte. 16 the boundary line should be moved.

Historical Components: Shirley had met with members of the Mendon Historical Commission. They liked the fact that we had included the original Village Center boundaries, certified by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, as part of the Village Center Overlay District. They were also pleased that we had taken into account the results of a series of workshops held in 1996 on the issue. In addition, the adaptive reuse provisions and the design guidelines also met with approval.

Patrick made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ted seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Shirley Smith