

Holliston Planning Board Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2017

In Attendance: Chairman David Thorn, Geoffrey Zeamer, Karen Apuzzo-Langton and Josh Santoro. Warren Chamberlain was absent.

Call to Order: The Chairman called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room #105 of the Town Hall, 703 Washington Street.

General Business:

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mrs. Langton, seconded by Mr. Zeamer, the minutes of April 13, 2017 were approved as drafted.

Approval Not Required Subdivision of Barbara DiCarlo, 0 and 194 Lowland Street

On a motion by Mr. Santoro, seconded by Mr. Zeamer, the plan prepared by Connorstone Engineering, Inc. dated April 5, 2017 consolidating Map 12, Block 4, Lot 33.1 and Map 9, Block 2, Lot 57.1 was approved and endorsed. Mrs. Langton abstained.

Evergreen Square Construction Extension

Based on a request from Wall Street Development, members agreed to an extension through September 8, 2017 in order to evaluate punchlist items and the potential for moving the roads forward for acceptance at the Special Town Meeting. The motion was made by Mr. Santoro and seconded by Mrs. Langton with all in favor.

Town Meeting Preparation

1. Report to Moderator

May 4, 2017

Jackie Dellicker, Town Moderator
703 Washington Street
Holliston, MA 01746

RE: Planning Board Report on Articles 20-23

Dear Mrs. Dellicker:

With regard to the proposed Zoning Map amendments, I would respectfully report that the Planning Board held a public hearing as required by MGL, c. 40A, s. 5 on March 30 and April 6, 2017. Notices were provided to over 200 impacted property owners and the sessions were fairly well-attended. The public hearing was preceded by a well-attended Open House and mailing in February. The printed maps (beginning on page 46 of the Finance Committee Report) have been amended to reflect citizen input.

The members voted to recommend support of the proposed articles as written in the Warrant. With regard to Article 22, I would note that I abstained from voting on this matter as I am an affected property owner. Additionally, the Economic Development Committee voted to support the articles at their meeting of April 6th. As a member of that committee, I also abstained from that vote.

Approved: May 18, 2017

**Holliston Planning Board
Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2017**

Town Planner Karen Sherman and Cynthia Wall, Principal Planner at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council will be present at Town Meeting to provide a more-detailed report and presentation.

Sincerely,

David Thorn
Chairman

cc Liz Greendale, Town Clerk

2. Handouts

Articles 21 – 24: Toward Holliston’s Land Use Objectives

Village – A small, compact center of predominantly residential character, but with a core of mixed-use commercial and community services. Local scale economic and social functions. Pedestrian orientation.

Zoning is a tool with which to actually regulate land use. Zoning establishes how you can and cannot use land; where each use is permitted; and what dimensional requirements apply. Zoning also serves as a legal set of regulations to prevent conflicting land uses and overcrowding, while providing for future development.

Village Center Commercial Zoning (VC) – Articles 20 & 22. In 1982, the Town converted part of the Commercial district to VC and enacted Section V-K of the Zoning By-Law. The district’s objectives:

- a. Provide convenient business and professional services for residents and those passing through.
- b. Facilitate the development and maintenance of small businesses.
- c. Promote a compact, pedestrian-oriented environment.
- d. Develop harmonious visual relations between the VC District and its surroundings.
- e. Promote pedestrian and vehicular safety and convenience.
- f. Provide for mixed uses in the center of Holliston compatible with its historic village character where residents are able to walk to shops, services and public transportation.

Our objectives within the downtown corridor are to modestly grow the VC district, convert some of the historical Industrial building and property remnants to VC, and in general, do some housekeeping on the physical boundaries, eliminating split-zoned parcels. The design requirements and design guidelines of Section V-K aim to add regulatory protections to Holliston’s center, from the remnants of the mid-18th century pre-urban village of local craft industries with its 19th century Second Empire and

Approved: May 18, 2017

**Holliston Planning Board
Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2017**

Queen Anne reconstruction to the 20th and 21st century additions such as banks, retail centers and traffic signals.

Village Residential Zoning (VR) – Articles 21 & 22. In May 2008, the Village Residential District became part of Holliston’s zoning culture. Residents assisted the board in developing the district’s boundaries, Schedule of Uses and Schedule of Intensity for the new district.

Within the downtown corridor, we studied several cohesive neighborhoods and streets that flank the existing Village Center Commercial District that are “over-zoned”, that is, the vast majority of lots do not meet the minimum requirements for lot area and setbacks. We propose that over 150 properties be added to the VR district to minimize nonconformities, to allow for relaxed dimensional requirements and to foster a regulatory environment that encourages personal investment in historic homes.

Residential (R-1) District Zoning – Articles 22 & 23. Primarily a housekeeping article to eliminate +/- 40 split district lots, these map changes also add additional parcels to the Residential District along Washington Street near the intersection of Highland Street.

FAQ

Why are we proposing to change the zoning districts in the downtown?

To meet Holliston’s community goals to: Reinforce the Downtown as an attractive, historic center of the Town. Enhance the economic value of the area as a place to shop, visit and work. Encourage individual investment, preservation of historic structures, and diversity of housing stock.

How will proposed zoning map changes impact my individual tax bill?

Changes should **not** impact your bill. Taxes are assessed based on active uses within unique structures on unique parcels, not zoning. Holliston has a **uniform tax rate** for residential, commercial and industrial uses (\$18.52/\$1,000 value). Most residential properties within the Downtown Corridor are included (and have been for quite some time) in a “neighborhood” classification used by the Assessors to establish baseline values because of the area’s unique gross density, non-conforming structures, properties and uses, and historic/heritage properties.

What protections does the Town have in place to prevent “tear-downs”?

The Town’s Demolition Delay By-Law (rev. 5/06) requires that the Historical Commission make a finding on proposed demolition of any building or structure which is in whole or part seventy-five (75) years old. A structure can be deemed significant to the architectural, cultural, or social history of the Town, in which case a 6-month period to provide an opportunity for preservation solutions applies. Planning Board “Performance Standards for Nonresidential Development” enacted in late 2014 express goals and standards for aesthetics, lighting, landscaping, stormwater, site development, pedestrian & vehicle access, especially within the Village Commercial Zoning

Approved: May 18, 2017

**Holliston Planning Board
Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2017**

District. Strengthening the Town's tool box further is a central goal of our current planning efforts.

Will proposed zoning changes impact my ability to farm (e.g. raise chickens, keep bees, and compost yard & food waste)? **No.** The Town of Holliston, by local by-law most recently revised in 2006, is a Right-to-Farm Community. This essentially means that agricultural pursuits "conducted in accordance with generally accepted agricultural practices" are protected and recognized as being beneficial to the community as a whole. The Zoning By-Law allows for "commercial" agriculture by Special Permit in both VR and VC zoning districts. Your own sustainable agricultural pursuits are **not** considered commercial agriculture.

How might the physical environment impact proposed district changes?

1. Downtown is "floodprone". In July 2014, the Federal Emergency Management Agency revised the National Flood Insurance Program map panels for the area between Linden Pond and Lake Winthrop along the Winthrop Canal (approximately 0.95 miles). A new hydrologic and hydraulic study was conducted using Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR). Some base flood elevations were raised, allowing many people to have their homes removed from "flood hazard areas", removing or reducing the need for expensive flood hazard insurance. However, the waterways and associated wetlands are still regulated by the MA Wetlands Protection Act and Town Wetland By-law.

2. Holliston is 100% reliant on individual septic systems (no public sewer). Based on results of a 2002 Wastewater Management Needs Study, approximately 50% of Downtown has significant limitations for onsite septic systems (e.g. limited depths to groundwater). Individual wastewater treatment systems can be a major investment for a property owner and can be viewed as both a limitation to growth and a cost prohibition to desired improvements.

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. on a motion made and duly seconded. The next meeting was scheduled for May 18, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Sherman, Town Planner

Approved: May 18, 2017