



Town of Georgetown

MINUTES

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4 Committee: Planning Board
5 Date: April 12, 2023
6 Time: 7:00 pm.
7 Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom
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10 Members present: Harry LaCortiglia, Bruce Fried, Bob Watts, Joanne Laut, George Comiskey.
11 Staff present: Town Planner, John Cashell, Administrative Assistant, Andrea Thibault.
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13 Minutes transcribed by A. Thibault. Note: Video recordings of all Georgetown Planning Board
14 meetings may be found at www.georgetownma.gov and by choosing the Community TV option.
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16 The Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Harry LaCortiglia.
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Minutes:

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21 J. Laut: I move to accept the draft minutes from March 8, 2023 meeting as stated in our
22 packets and on this meeting's agenda.
23 B. Watts: Second.
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25 Motion carries 5-0; via roll call vote.
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Vouchers:

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30 J. Laut: I make a motion to pay the vouchers for BMO/Zoom for March 2023 in the amount
31 of \$15.99; and to reimburse the Administrative Assistance for postage regarding the abuttor
32 notices for 430 Andover Street in the amount of \$93, 21; and \$10.00 for notary swear in fees;
33 as cited in our packets and on this meeting's agenda.
34 B. Fried: Second.
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36 Motion carries 5-0; via roll call vote.
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Planning Office:

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42 J. Cashell: We will be going over everything involving the Planning Board tonight as a review.
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45 J. Cashell: Massachusetts General Laws will now allow virtual meetings for municipal Boards and
46 Commissions through 2025, effective March 29, 2023 by the Governor and the Legislature.

{The Planning Board and Town Planner discusses and agrees to continue with virtual meetings by unanimous consent.}

1. Update on MBTA Multi Family Non-Age Restricted Housing.

J. Cashell: I thoroughly reported on this in the Comments Report in your packet. I submitted the grant application last Thursday, and this grant has already been awarded. A very fast grant award! We were awarded \$20,000.00 for technical assistance to meet the compliance requirement and will be working with MVPC on this.

Once MVPC comes up with an overlay district after their analysis, they will present their recommendations to the full Planning Board. We are needing to accommodate up to 750 units of multi-family housing.

The other aspect is to analyze our zoning ordinances, and to determine what is needed in a bylaw to provide compliance.

By November, the overlay district will be created. Maybe late September, MVPC will come to the Planning Board to present their recommendations and findings. MVPC is working with 17 communities helping us all comply with this statute.

If we get what we need by late September, then we can finalize it by late November. This will give us time to schedule public hearings for January and February 2024. We will have any potential warrant articles for spring meeting 2024.

We are supposed to have an overlay district and a bylaw completed by December 31, 2024 as a deadline with the state.

After it goes before the voters at Town Meeting, the Attorney General will review our bylaw.

It seems that the state is developing a structure of this that it will pretty much force compliance. It seems like there is a lot more to it than meets the eye when you get into the details. I do not think it is going to end up being a choice for communities.

In other communities, as well as ours, there are a lot of infrastructure concerns.

G. Comiskey: Will MVPC look at infrastructure needs?

J. Cashell: No. MVPC has said that communities that lack the infrastructure for the number of units being mandated, the state will take that into consideration. Municipalities will not be on the hook to improve infrastructure to accommodate the density of the multi-family housing required.

2. Green Communities update:

J. Cashell: Over the last three years, we have improved the weatherization at Town Hall, Public Safety Building, all the schools even the Penn Brook, the Library, and the Highway facility.

The overall goal is to reduce the energy costs annually for the town by twenty percent. We have not measured that yet, but before the program is finalized, we will have that measure.

We put together the data baseline, how much we were spending for energy to begin with. It was all analyzed before anything was implemented.

There may be other things that can be implemented to reach the twenty percent. The program does not end until we get to twenty percent.

We are also transforming the town's vehicles into electric vehicles. Town Hall has two EV stations and the Peabody Library also has one. That was another grant, not the Green Communities program.

The EV Zoning amendment will be brought before the votes at Town Meeting in May.

The Green Communities program has been very successful.

B. Watts: Thank John and Orlando for this effort. You have handled this all very well. I appreciate the aggressive attitude.

J. Cashell: It really seems to be important that there is a team effort. Massachusetts really knows what it is doing with energy efficiency.

Governor Baker and the Legislature really stepped this up. The Regional Planning Agencies have all come together on this. Massachusetts is really on the fore front.

There is a lot of brain power in this state that in action constantly. Massachusetts held the National Planners Conference about ten years ago in Boston.

The keynote speakers that year from Massachusetts were amazing, professors from Harvard and MIT, all incredible planners. We are at the epi-center.

3. Zoning Amendments.

{Planning Board and Town Planner discuss Note 7: The landscaping being delegated to front yard to industrial and commercial districts.}

G. Comiskey: I watched the Select Board's meeting and they seemed ok with the Stormwater bylaw. They seemed skeptical about the bylaw addressing electric vehicle charging stations.

{Planning Board and Town Planner discuss Chapter 57 in the warrant article.}

143 **4. Border to Boston Rail Trail update.**
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146 J. Cashell: This has consumed a lot of time with the appraisal letters to the abutters. Our office
147 received a lot of calls. I made sure everyone had copies of the design and explained what each
148 easement would involve.
149

150 Two years ago, when we sent the first round of mailings, we did not get much response. It seems now
151 that we are approaching twenty percent. There are thirty plus easements that do need to be required.
152

153 The appraisals have been done. We are moving into acquiring easements.
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155 As of yesterday, we will not need town warrant articles. Town Counsel has determined that for all the
156 properties that we need to secure a right of way for the Boxford-Georgetown portion, none of those
157 parcels need relief from Article 97. So, we will not need town warrant articles.
158

159 G. Comiskey: John and I attended the Conservation Commission meeting, and Carl (Chairman) had
160 reached out to Town Counsel and assured her that the Town would provide that use and that Article
161 97 is not needed.
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164 **5. Planning Office Annual Report:**
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166 J. Cashell: The report details all the annual projects of the Planning Office. Every department
167 publishes their report by fiscal year July 1 through June 30. We need to stay in this timeframe.
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170 **6. Housing Production Plan:**
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172 J. Cashell: Because MVPC is updating the Housing Production Plan. They will be done with the draft
173 update for all the member communities in April 2024 and the completion will be in June 2024.
174

175 In the meantime, they will be doing all the legwork, and working with town staff, and bringing
176 everything up to speed with all the state statutes.
177

178 I would like to get two Board members to be part of the core team. Mostly it will be town staff
179 working with MVPC compiling the data.
180

181 *{Harry LaCortiglia and George Comiskey volunteer to be part of the team.}*
182

183 H. LaCortiglia: When a town falls below 10%, the town is vulnerable to 40B.
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185 G. Comiskey: Maybe someone from the affordable housing trust, and someone from the open space
186 committee?
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188 H. LaCortiglia: The last time this was done, a private consultant did it.
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192 **7. Other Business.**
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194 J. Cashell: Barry Way update – they have submitted their as-built plans and Dave Varga has requested
195 revisions. Rich Williams is working on plan revisions. Once this has been completed, and we have the
196 plans, it will be before the Board for sign-off.

197
198 The town acquired eight acres and there are three beautiful brand-new homes. It was a very
199 successful subdivision.

200
201 Parish Commons- nothing was ready for Dave Varga to report for this meeting. There are 3 building
202 permits that are existing. One is occupied, two are under construction.

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204 G. Comiskey: There is still no open space deed to the Conservation Commission. It was required
205 prior to the first occupancy permit. If he is coming in, I would ask what the delay is?

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207 J. Cashell: I have not talked with him specifically on that topic yet.

208
209 For the Sedlers project there are three active building permits right now. The Georgetown Affordable
210 Housing Trust has been paid.

211
212 For the G. Mello project, on April 6th, Nancy McCann confirmed that she will submit by the first week
213 in May, the Major Development Review application.

214
215 That is the special permit application, and they are not in any hurry for the public hearing for that.

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217 G. Comiskey: When that comes in, could we have Town Counsel attend our first meeting to discuss
218 the parameters under the Court guidance?

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220 B. Fried: Great idea. I would like to be clear on what we can and cannot do. A clearer statement from
221 Town Counsel would help us.

222
223 B. Watts: I would like to see a summary from our attorney as the status of the litigation and what are
224 our options.

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226 J. Cashell: I will talk to Orlando about that. We could schedule that first, and keep the cost to Town
227 Counsel down.

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229 H. LaCortiglia: This is a separate application for Major Development Review. How much lead time
230 do you think we will have once you get the application?

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232 J. Cashell: Realistically, they are comfortable with the last meeting in June for a hearing, before the
233 summer starts.

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235 B. Fried: If there is still litigation on the Conservation Commission ruling, can we even begin another
236 application?
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J. Cashell: Yes, they can put in an application. In accordance with the last Land Court decision, the appeal process is over and nothing was appealed.

H. LaCortiglia: When the application comes in and it is stamped as complete, would we have time for a meeting night prior to the public hearing in our regular schedule where we could get the needed information from Town Counsel before the public hearing?

J. Cashell: We may want to go into Executive Session with Town Counsel. We could have a special meeting just for the Executive Session if needed.

H. LaCortiglia: That is probably ideal to go into Executive Session.

B. Fried: If we could have Town Counsel answer all our questions, then we will not have to waste any time in the public hearing.

G. Comiskey: I would like to first get permission that we can do it.

J. Cashell: I will check with Town Counsel.

B. Fried: We want to be sure that we do everything properly and to the T.

J. Cashell: For the Tinn Lizzie project- they are schedule for May 2 for the ZBA.

For the review of 188 East Main Street, a May 2 public hearing by the ZBA is scheduled to discuss a proposed 6-unit townhouse development. There has been some opposition.

430 Andover Street is withdrawing.

{Planning Board agrees to cancel April 26th meeting.}

H. LaCortiglia: Is there a motion to cancel the meeting on April 26?

G. Comiskey: So moved.

J. Laut: Second.

Motion carries 5-0; via roll call vote.

J. Cashell: 91 and 93 Tenney Street projects are proceeding along. I was told that construction will start soon now that spring is here. They have been good keeping the roadway clean of mud.

No complaints whatsoever.

For 34 East Main Street – Dunbar Tavern has recently been granted by the ZBA a two family in the main structure; and the ZBA also allowed for storage use in the carriage house. It was historically a tavern, and an inn with 24 rooms.

And the carriage house where the horses were stabled is also part of the interesting history.

There are also several dilapidated properties in the downtown area. I want everyone to know that town officials are working on these two properties with the owners to bring them into safety compliance.

Duplex use is not allowed in the downtown area. If you look at any downtown area in New England, one of the more attractive features is the dwellings mixed in with the commercial structures. Georgetown prohibits that use. That causes a problem to rehabilitate or improve them to modify a non-conforming use.

The Planning Board may want to come up with a zoning amendment that will allow for existing dwellings to be modified and improved without having to get a use variance.

A town like Georgetown would want to maintain those dwellings that add to the quaintness and the village atmosphere.

G. Comiskey: The former Town Planner could not come up with a solution to off-street parking in order to approve this type multi-family housing in the downtown district. 40R district has to provide 25% affordable housing.

J. Cashell: It was close to passing but it didn't. The Planner at the time left the position. There should have been follow through the next year working out the wrinkles, but that didn't happen.

To bring it back up now, maybe it is the time to bring back up?

H. LaCortiglia: With the 40R, we never came back because the carrot to adopting it was a fund from the state. Unfortunately, it never came through and we lost by two votes and by the next year, the state money had dried up and there was no carrot.

J. Cashell: For 38 Jackman Road, per your request Harry, I did speak with Julie in Conservation Commission. It looks like there is a mitigation plan having to do with marking out with boulders and wetland markings the wetlands of that area.

Last update, on the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness, the town is presently engaged in applying for a \$400,000.00 grant for engineering services to create a Stormwater Master Plan for the whole town.

A study of all the culverts, finishing the downtown area study that was started, etc. Eventually there will be a plan in place relative to making all the improvements that need to be done.

H. LaCortiglia: Could we get a copy of Orlando's report?

J. Cashell: Yes, I will send that out. The proposal is comprehensive, it was done by a consulting engineer including the work done on MS4.

We are up to speed with MS4. This MVP program builds on that.

G. Comiskey: Have they made improvements to town hall gutters? I thought I saw one of the spouts going into the ground now.

334
335 J. Cashell: They may have, I will look.
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337 Lastly, all Boards in town need to be aware of this. {*Reads the MA Court Ruling regarding Policy on Civility*
338 *Restraint.*} People do not have to remain civil.
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341 B. Fried: Motion to adjourn.
342 J. Laut: Second.
343 Motion carries 5-0; via roll call vote.
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347 Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.