



# *Town of Southwick*

## **Planning Board**

### MINUTES



**Tuesday, April 27, 2021**

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Michael Doherty, Chair  
Marcus Phelps, Vice Chair  
Richard Utzinger  
David Sutton  
David Spina  
Jessica Thornton, Associate  
Alan Slessler, Town Planner  
Meghan Lightcap, Secretary

**ABSENT:**

A special meeting of the Planning Board was scheduled via Zoom and was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mr. Doherty. He stated that the meeting was being recorded and asked if anyone in the audience was recording the meeting. Attending the meeting were Doug Moglin, Rob Tirrell, Rob Levesque, Jason Fiore, Felipe Cravo, Joe Walz, Sofia Bitzas, Kathie Leduc, Ken Eggleston, Harold Heap, Diane Giordano, Robert Knowles, Dan Bishop, Paul Ackerman and Todd Cellura.

**PLANNER'S REPORT:** 7:00 p.m.

1. Randy Brown and I met with the new owner of the VFW on Point Grove road. He is interested in turning it into a brewery and restaurant.
2. I met with potential owner of Allen's Auto Repair to answer questions on use of the business located in the "B" Zone.
3. I received and reviewed plans for the Bailey Project on 686 College Highway and added them to the May 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.
4. I spoke with Steve Salvini about an ANR on Mort Vining Road.
5. I had a conversation with Luke Showalter at Sage Engineering in regards to a potential Day Care Facility for 217 College Highway, just north of CVS.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** 7:05 p.m.

## **APPOINTMENTS:**

7:10 p.m.                      771 College Highway                      Special Permit

Mrs. Lightcap read the Notice of Public and Mr. Doherty read some language on the zoning as the property is located in the BR Zone. Felipe Cravo a representative of R. Levesque and Associates shared the screen and ran through the plans. Rob Tirrell was also present and he is the owner of the proposed R & R Storage LLC, a self storage facility that is intended for this property. Mr. Cravo described the site plans, landscape plans and lighting designs. Mr. Tirrell briefly described his intentions with the proposed business and how he is local to the area and wants to build a family run business. Rob Levesque of R. Levesque and Associates spoke up to clarify some confusion that has come about in regards to this project and Dr. Joe Walz project across the street. When Dr. Walz hired R. Levesque and Associates to design the plans for his project he had originally wanted to add self storage but was told, by R. Levesque and Associates, that it was not allowed in the Business Restricted (BR) zone. Later when Mr. Tirrell proposed his project Mr. Levesque looked further into the zoning and realized the storage regulations are rather ambiguous and that storage may be allowed in this zone. Mr. Doherty stated that he had not found any language that specifically defines it and Mr. Levesque said that it should be allowed on both properties.

Mr. Doherty shared the DPW and Fire Department concerns on the property and Mr. Levesque addressed each one and said changes would be made appropriately but he did question one concern the Fire Dept had with spacing in the back driveway and agreed to speak to the Fire Chief directly about it to clear it up.

Mr. Doherty read an email of opposition from Mr. Harold Heap a resident living next door to the proposed site in the Wynnfield Condominiums and he also read a letter of opposition signed by many residents of Wynnfield Condominiums. These residents are against a storage facility being built right next to their housing community.

Mr. Phelps recommended that the Town of Southwick Counsel look at the zoning bylaws as there appears to be an issue as to whether this type of building is allowed the BR zone. Mr. Doherty asked about the type of units that would be inside the buildings and Mr. Levesque said the first building would be climate controlled and the rest would be garage style units. Mr. Utzinger asked if it was possible for the client to add a berm between the storage facility and the housing community to have better privacy. Mr. Levesque said they could do that to make sure the view of the storage facility is obstructed from Wynnfield Condominiums. Mr. Moglin agreed that the issue about zoning needs to be looked at as there was a similar issue along College Highway.

Dan Bishop of 9 Wynnfield Circle asked about the berm and shrubbery height as his patio abuts the proposed property and Mr. Levesque said the berm would be 3-4 feet with 6-8 foot tall Arborvitaes added as well. Mr. Bishop also asked if the facility would be open 24 hours a day and Mr. Tirrell said yes it would. Robert Knowles of 25 Wynnfield Circle who is also on the Board of Directors for Wynnfield Condominiums asked about the type of fencing used and the height. Mr. Levesque said its black aluminum in front and chain link around the rest of the property. Mr. Knowles also said he wasn't convinced that the shrubbery height would be adequate and Mr. Levesque assured him that he was committed to blocking the view for the residents. Mr. Tirrell stated that he was not opposed to closing the facility earlier in the evening and also that they would not be allowing woodwork and such in the facility. The facility would

have 24 hour monitored camera surveillance, no power access to the units and remote lock and motion sensors. Mr. Heap expressed concerns over the noise factor and RV storage and Mr. Doherty reminded everyone that business warehousing was allowed in that area.

Dr. Walz expressed his frustration over this proposed project because he owns 15 acres across the street and he was denied the same application a year ago but this one is being allowed. He believes this will be an eyesore and property values will decline for residential homes. Mr. Doherty stated that Dr. Walz did not bring this type of plan before the Board to then be denied. Dr. Walz said he was told by R. Levesque and Associates that this was not allowed. Mr.

Levesque said that there seemed to be a discrepancy between his office and the Planning Board office as to what was allowed there but ultimately Dr. Walz went in another direction with his project. The decision was made to contact Town Counsel to get more information before going forward with making a decision on the Special Permit application.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Phelps and **SECONDED** by Mr. Utzinger to continue the public hearing for 771 College Highway to Wednesday May 12, 2021 at 7:10 p.m.

**Roll call vote:**

Mr. Doherty, yes	Mr. Phelps, yes	Mr. Utzinger, yes	Mr. Sutton, yes
Mr. Spina, yes			

The motion passed by majority vote.

7:30 p.m.            115 Fred Jackson Road            Special Permit, Estate Lot and Common Driveway

Mr. Utzinger recused himself as he is an abutter to the property and Mr. Doherty designated Mrs. Thornton as a Voting Member. Felipe Cravo of R. Levesque and Associates shared the site plans on the screen and Mr. Levesque briefly described the plans to build a single family dwelling on an estate lot and have a common driveway. Mr. Levesque stated that most of the items had been addressed by the Planning Board at previous meetings. They are still waiting on confirmation from the State of Massachusetts and they are still working through some Conservation items. Mrs. Thornton said she felt they the Planning Board should wait until Conservation accepts the project.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Phelps and **SECONDED** by Mrs. Thornton to continue the hearing to Wednesday May 12, 2021 at 7:06 p.m.

**Roll call vote:**

Mr. Doherty, yes	Mr. Phelps, yes	Mr. Sutton, yes	Mr. Spina, yes
Mrs. Thornton, yes			

The motion passed by majority vote.

8:00 p.m.            141 Congamond Road            Informal Review

Mr. Levesque shared plans on the screen as he is representing Ken Eggleston. Mr. Eggleston is purchasing the property from Mr. Scuderi and would like to set up a marina and breakfast spot at the previous Crabby Joes restaurant. Mr. Levesque explained the plans that showed the proposal of leaving the building, adding parking spots and using existing dock slips. Mr. Eggleston spoke up and said he would like to utilize the existing breakfast area and dock slips and later fix up and use the restaurant. Mr. Doherty stated that it appeared that there could be potential parking issues and permitting issues and those issues needed to be looked into as well as speaking with town counsel before coming to the Board for a permit.

The Board decided to defer on approval of meeting minutes because of the lateness of the hour.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Phelps and **SECONDED** by Mr. Utzinger to submit the briefing paper for the master plan at the annual town meeting.

**Roll call vote:**

Mr. Doherty, yes	Mr. Phelps, yes	Mr. Utzinger, yes	Mr. Sutton, yes
Mr. Spina, yes	Mrs. Thornton, yes		

The motion passed by majority vote.

Being no further business to be brought before the Board, A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Spina and **SECONDED** by Mr. Phelps to adjourn the meeting at 10:01 p.m.

**Roll call vote:**

Mr. Doherty, yes	Mr. Phelps, yes	Mr. Utzinger, yes	Mr. Spina, yes
Mrs. Thornton, yes			

The motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Meghan Lightcap

**The Next Meeting is May 12, 2021**