



**Long Range Planning Committee Meeting
November 17, 2023
8-9:30 am**

In Person in Town Hall Council Chambers & Virtually via Zoom:

In attendance: Allen Paul, Marvin Gates, Portia Hirschman, Rick Shinay, Rachel Hendrickson, Peter Freiling, Autumn Speer, Karen Martin, Eric Sanderson

I. Review Minutes October 13, 2023

Portia Hirschman noted the Transportation Committee held public input for the Master Plan on September 26th, not in October as noted in the draft minutes.

Motion by Rick Shinay, seconded by Peter Freiling to approve the minutes as amended. Passes unanimously 5-0-0.

II. Review and discuss Chapter 405B Site Plan Standards and Commercial Design Standards Merger/Update – Draft Architectural Standards and Draft Site Layout Standards

Autumn gave an overview of the Ordinance language changes proposed since the October meeting. The Committee started by reviewing building placement on a site and how it relates to parking, landscaping, etc. The standards are proposed to only apply to new commercial and multifamily development. Peter Freiling suggested to view other purpose statements for this section from other municipalities, as well as that language be added for applicability to “new or substantially altered” buildings. Autumn suggested a percentage of footprint be specified for “substantially altered. Rachel noted on page 1 that “within commercial district’s” should be “districts”.

The Committee then went on to discuss setbacks, coming to the consensus that the town should look to reduce setback requirements in commercial districts. This allow buildings to have a closer relationship to the street. Allen Paul noted that this could vary for buildings with multiple street frontages, or for infill development, which could have a building entrance facing internally towards other commercial spaces and parking, but also frontage on a street on the opposite site. Autumn responded that such buildings would be required to have front façade treatments on both sides. Visuals were requested for meetings when reviewing such standards to view examples. It was concluded that in addition to reducing setback requirements, a maximum setback requirement could also be added

Outdoor seating was also discussed with respect to setback requirements. A waiver process was suggested for such instances and sites that have natural resources based constraints. Rachel Hendrickson cautioned the Committee that the Planning Board often sees applicants who buy a site smaller than what is needed for their business, and that the Board would not grant waivers if a building was too large for a site. That could lead to sites being left vacant or unimproved as applicants regroup.

Access management standards were discussed, with the Committee indicating it was comfortable requiring cross easements for site plans to allow future connections if neighboring sites come to the town and Planning Board for a site plan review. In terms of parking, Rachel Hendrickson asked for the town to start working on maximum parking standards. The Committee discussed the benefits of such a proposal, and noted reducing maximum impervious cover requirements could assist in this end. She also noted on street parking should not count towards off street parking requirements, to which the Committee discussed showing future spaces in the event off street parking is full and on street spaces are still unavailable. Autumn updated the Committee that in some instances an existing building may require additional parking based on the tenant, so the town will be working to make parking requirements more consistent across uses moving forward.

Internal pedestrian amenities were discussed, with Allen Paul noting painted keyboard crosswalks are undesirable and inefficient as they fade. He would like to see something more in line with a texture change (brick, concrete, etc.). The Committee added that “pedestrian crossing ahead” signs should be required to ensure even with snow covering an internal crosswalk, pedestrians and drivers can safely identify the crossing locations and be alerted in advance of it. It was added that sidewalks “shall be provided” instead of “wherever possible”. Autumn Speer added that the Committee may want to consider payment in lieu for maintenance of existing sidewalks when a property changes hands and updates require town review.

Overall, the Committee wants new development to be closer to the street, engage with the street, have parking at the side and rear, require sidewalks, and look at parking requirements for what spaces count towards minimum required spaces and maximum impervious cover.

Autumn then updated the Committee on possible updates to the landscape requirements after receiving comment from professional landscape architects after the Ordinance standards were adopted. The Committee was comfortable with staff going straight to Ordinance Committee for addition of several perennials and shrubs to the approved landscape list, noting minor changes may be required as climate change affects the natural environment moving forward.

- III. Discuss and provide guidance to staff concerning a request to consider adding horticulture and landscaping business uses into the Rural Farming zone.
- IV. Public Comment

V. Staff Updates

The Town is forming an Ad Hoc Open Space Committee in pursuit of the Council adopted goal of conserving 30% of the town's land by 2030. The Ad Hoc Committee is seeking members and the Long Range Planning Committee has been provided a voting member. Committee members are encouraged to think on a possible nomination for this post, which would involve approximately 2 meetings a month from January to September of 2024.

VI. Committee Member Updates

Rachel Hendrickson updated the Committee that the Planning Board will be moving to one per month meeting starting in 2024, where the previous schedule was once every 3 weeks. She also noted the Parks and Conservation Land Board is updating its evaluation process to purchase land, which has not been done since 2002.

Portia Hirschman updated the Committee that the Transportation Committee is moving ahead with the Master Plan and feedback from the most recent public hearing was being solicited and processed.

VII. Adjourn

Rick Shinay made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Marvin Gates. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30AM. The next meeting will be Friday, December 8th, 2023 in the Public Safety Building.