MORRISVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
June 6, 2000

Members Present: Julie Compagna(JC), Kelly Rogers(KR), Bruce Tomlinson(BT), George Robson(GR), Bill Henchey(BH), Sam Guy(SG).

Members Absent: Stephen Jennings

Guests: Ken Sweetser, Sharon & Bill Rowell, Gary Greaves, Peter Bourne, Rosaire & June Levecque.

Chairman GR called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

First Order of Business:
GR invited the guests present to offer their comments on areas of concern they have with the proposed bylaw changes.

Sharon Rowell stated that she had spoken with all Commission members, except KR, prior to the meeting in an attempt to understand where the proposed changes were coming from. She stated her family has a concern with issue three – special use district. She stated that three weeks ago she called Ken Sweetser regarding the News & Citizen warning on the proposed bylaw changes. She stated that she would like Ken Sweetser to respond to how he answered her inquiry.

Ken Sweetser stated that he had told her it was a Medical Campus name change and some other changes. He stated that he was with someone in his office at the time of her call and that he didn't recall a lot about the conversation but that he did suggest she obtain a copy of the language, which she later did.

Sharon Rowell stated that she recalled she was told it was a name change only. She came to the Town Office and obtained a copy of the bylaw changes. She stated she then discovered there were many proposed changes. She stated that her family was not thrilled years ago when the area was given a special use designation, but they went along with it as long as residential was a permitted use. She asked that the Commission strike language altogether regarding the prohibiting of recreational and residential uses. She stated they are not crazy about re-naming the district at all.

GR asked if she could be more specific as to what section of the bylaw?
Sharon Rowell stated everything in the special use district now, 16-17 acres on Washington Highway from the new medical building (Dr. Roy and others) up to the Village limits on the corner by the armory. She stated that she had come in and looked at the maps with Ken Sweetser to make sure the changes included their land. She also stated that she would support not labeling Mansfield Drive as that use (medical campus).

GR stated that there are two different issues – mapping and wording on the district.

Sharon Rowell stated that the proposed change has eliminated single family, two-family, recreational and multi-family uses.

GR stated that the Commission could look at the issue some more. As far as maps are concerned, he stated that one possibility could be conditional use for housing.

Sharon Rowell asked why not leave it as a permitted use, why change?
GR responded that the Commission would have to see how the public discussions turn out.

Sharon Rowell stated that in talking with people she questioned which meeting the issue would have come to light? She stated she thought that many on the Commission felt it was a change of name only.

GR stated that he didn't remember the process, but that is the reason for the public hearing.

Sharon Rowell suggested not changing anything in the language regarding the Special Use District.

JC asked if Sharon Rowell wanted to share whether there are any particular covenants or restrictions in their deed.

Sharon Rowell stated that Copley Hospital has a right of first refusal though they have no intention of selling to them. The property grows great soybeans and corn.

Gary Greaves stated that fifteen years from now they may wish to build a retirement home. He feels they are being told they can't build on their own land.

GR restated the purpose of the public hearing process for discussion on the topic.

Sharon Rowell inquired whether the Commission discussions would be behind closed doors?

GR stated that all meetings are open to the public.

Sharon Rowell stated that she would like to hear from the Commission if they thought it was a name change only.

GR stated that the Commission would go through the public comment process, and recognized that the raised issues will have to be looked at.

Sharon Rowell stated that the June 20th meeting was warned as a name change only.

GR stated it was whatever was in the document in the newspaper.

Sharon Rowell requested an interpretation of name change only. She asked to look at a copy of the warning. Ken Sweetser produced a copy of the News & Citizen warning.

Sharon Rowell stated that she wanted to take a look at how it was warned in the news. She asked how long ago the Commission discontinued taping meetings?

GR stated that public hearings are still taped, but that no one was tracking the taping of regular meetings so a written record is taken instead.

Sharon Rowell stated that she wanted to be sure she understood the warning.

Ken Sweetser stated that the warning was sent to the News & Citizen and LCPC.

Sharon Rowell requested a copy of the warning. Ken Sweetser provided a copy to her. She asked if the public had to call ahead to be on the agenda because she suspected June and Rosaire Leveque were in attendance for the same reason.

Rosaire Leveque stated that he lives on Mansfield Drive. When he bought the house he thought he might eventually build a duplex or retirement home someday. He was concerned about the change and contacted Ken Sweetser who told him he thought something could be worked out. He stated that when he bought the lot he could do what he wanted with it. If the proposed change goes through there would be no new construction at all. This would definitely have a financial effect on him. There is a rental trailer on the property now that will be moved to a Village lot. He realizes he could already put another mobile home on the lot, but that is not his intent. He stated that he realized this was not the official public hearing on the subject.

GR stated that all meetings are open to the public and that the Commission would like information prior to the public hearing.

Rosaire Leveque stated that he had talked to Ken Sweetser before and believed that what he says is true. He stated that he is not as affected as Sharon Rowell by the change.

GR stated that the intent of the proposed changes was with regard to the medical campus and when all is said and done there may be more changes.

Rosaire Leveque stated that across the road an owner was offered and turned down big money for his property. If he lived here he would see the news notice about the changes, but he lives in California and wouldn't know until it was too late.

GR stated that outside the hospital area probably won't be prohibited (residential use) but maybe conditional use instead. He stated the Commission will go through the process. He asked if Pete Bourne had any concerns to express?

Peter Bourne inquired with regard to the warning if this would delay the revision process?

GR stated that if there are substantial changes it has to go back through the warning process.

Ken Sweetser explained the coordination of the process with the Selectboard and Trusteees meetings. He stated that it sounds like after June 20th changes may be made. He will coordinate the meeting with the Selectboard/Trustees.

GR stated that timing is an important part as well. There is an opportunity for people to raise issues. He stated this issue is only one part of a section the Commission is working on at this time. He asked if there were any other questions or comments?

There being none, the guests departed.

GR stated that the second order of business would address mini storage in barns.

BH asked if the discussion could remain on the previous issue? The Commission discussed the issues surrounding prohibiting residential/recreational use, allowing it as a conditional use, or changing the district lines. The Commission examined the district boundary map.

BT asked if the Commission needed to vote on the issue.
GR stated the public hearing process had to be completed before further action could be taken.

The Commission proceeded to the second order of business. Ken Sweetser presented language regarding mini storage in barns that could be added to the bylaws after the June 20th public hearing. The Commission discussed the issue and determined further thought and information were required before a decision could be made.

Sharon Rowell returned to the meeting to explain that Copley's right of first refusal occurred prior to Sharon and Gary's ownership. It happened when their dad was living and they feel he never understood what he had signed over. The instrument was never recorded until three years after the fact and unbeknownst to the family. She stated they have no intention of selling land. She stated the proposed changes are just taking the property and killing the value. If they ever do sell they want top dollar for the property. She stated she didn't address the financial end of it earlier and that she feels it would be headed for imminent domain.

KR stated that the language is put out and that the Commission needs people to give input so it can be drafted the right way.

SG stated that the Commission sometimes makes mistakes that go through and are corrected after the fact.

Sharon Rowell stated that she could not see why it such be a conditional use and not a permitted use, and she asked for an explanation.

GR explained the impact of a large hospital with regard to noise, etc. Changing the designation or to conditional use would warn potential buyers and avoid legal issues. Potential purchasers would go through a hearing process and be advised of existing conditions.

Sharon Rowell stated that she thought designating it as Special Use was warning enough.

GR stated that under permitted use the DRB would not be involved and there would be no warning to a purchaser. The process makes them aware.

Sharon Rowell stated that she guessed if they were buying it they would know.

SG gave the airport as an example.

GR stated that it is a way to try to avoid legal issues.

The Commission resumed the mini storage barn discussion with regard to historic preservation, appearance and impact. The Commission tabled discussion on the topic.

Third Order of Business – The Commission reviewed the minutes of the May 16th meeting.
SG moved and BH seconded a motion to approve the minutes as written.
All were in favor.

Fourth Order of Business – The Commission reviewed the contract with Forcier Associates. The $6,000 includes a stormwater study and design to work with NRCS on the repair of existing problems on the North End of town.

GR suggested the engineering study should address the 2X2 existing box culvert.

Fifth Order of Business – The Commission reviewed the Motown Arts and Recreation Trail committees meeting minutes.

BT stated concern over the placement of a transplanted tree to the green in front of the Union. BT to submit concerns to Morristown Community Partnership committee.

Sixth Order of Business – The Commission reviewed the proposed bylaw changes. The public hearing will be held on June 20, 2000.

SG moved and KR seconded a motion to adjourn. All were in favor.
The meeting adjourned at 8:45PM.

Respectfully Submitted,