

CITY OF CONCORD PLANNING BOARD
July 10, 2012 SPECIAL MEETING

A special meeting of the City Planning Board was held on July 10, 2012, in City Council Chambers, in the Municipal Complex, at 37 Green Street, at 7:00 p.m.

Present at the meeting were Members Lavers, Councilor Shurtleff, Smith Meyer, Hicks, Foss, Dolcino, and Regan. City Planner McPherson, Mr. Henninger, Ms. Hebert and Ms. Muir of the City's Planning Division were also present, as was Ms. Aibel, the City's Associate Engineer.

At 7:04 p.m., a quorum was present, and Ms. Smith Meyer called the meeting to order. A motion was made by Mr. Hicks to install Ms. Smith Meyer as Acting Chair. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hicks. Motion carried unanimously. The Acting Chair seated Ms. Dolcino for Mr. Swope.

REGULAR MEETING

1. Design Review Guidelines Project – update on progress and discussion of the organizational framework for Concord's Design Guidelines

Ms. McPherson reviewed the progress made on the Design Review Guidelines. She stated the consultant, Terry Dewan, had completed a site visit to Concord, where he took photographs and organized them into various categories.

Ms. McPherson explained that Mr. Dewan had asked that the Planning Staff, Planning Board, and Architectural Design Review Committee to review the Design Review Guidelines he has completed for Kittery, Maine, to get a sense of whether this organizational framework might be appropriate for the Concord Design Guidelines.

Ms. McPherson reported that the City's current guidelines, which were prepared in 1990 and revised in 1991, follow the same general framework as the Kittery Guidelines, which is a common format.

Some of the Planning Board comments are as follows:

- Concord is more nuanced than Kittery
- Examples need to be specific and clear as to why they are good or bad; the examples in the Kittery document weren't clear
- Provide only one good example and one bad example for each, but also provide a brief analysis or caption making it clear what makes it good or bad
- Organize the guidelines geographically – Heights, Downtown, etc.
- Use a matrix to sort the various categories, geographic areas and/or zoning districts, which could have links to various sections in the Guidelines in the web-based document

- It's important that the guidelines be user friendly and easy to navigate
- Have standards for chain stores
- While the use of photographs are a good idea, the use of line drawings are also useful
- The signage section is very important
- The matrix could be three dimensional – type of project (housing, commercial, industrial); category (lighting, signage, parking); and geographic area of city.
- Cull out the general standards that would apply to all categories
- A “key” format might be more user friendly, for example “if you are designing a building ... refer to this section;” or “if you are designing a sign ... refer to this section,” etc.
- Use the words “preferred” or “inappropriate / discouraged / undesirable” instead of good or bad
- There should be no doubt about the photos that this is something that we want to encourage – do not include photos of barely acceptable designs
- Have better organizational notations than in Kittery
- Standards should be created for transitional areas – signs that might be okay in the commercial areas would not necessarily be okay for a commercial area with an immediately adjacent residential neighborhood
- Use bullet points for the character and defining themes of each district
- Less is more – use fewer photos, but have more concise analysis
- Use this type of symbol  to get the unacceptable message across with the pictures
- Be specific with the photos don't show mediocre photos, use only the best design and explain why
- As we are becoming more and more a visual society, it is important to use more pictures than words, but the Kittery example was very dense and difficult to read

The Planning Board discussed signage issues including 24 hour lighting, internally lit signage, light pollution, and whether or not the City has the ability to regulate what information can be allowed on a sign. Mr. Henninger stated he would obtain some case law to share with the Planning Board, and Ms. McPherson will speak with the City Solicitor to obtain his opinion.

Ms. McPherson stated that she would keep the Planning Board informed as to an upcoming August site visit by the consultant once that has been determined.

2. Consideration of a proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, revising Article 28-4-7, Cluster Development

Ms. McPherson reported that the Planning Staff has been reviewing the Cluster Development section of the Zoning Ordinance for possible amendments. She stated that the change in the title from Cluster Development to Open Space Residential Development more accurately reflects the purpose of ordinance.

The Planning Board began their review of the proposed changes in sections a through e of the draft, including the purposes, exemptions, and principal and accessory uses. The Board discussed the definition of zero lot line units, which is a new proposed principal use, and the differences between zero lot line units and duplexes and condominium subdivisions.

The Planning Board agreed to end the discussion at this point, and scheduled another special meeting for Monday, August 27th at 7:00 p.m. to continue.

There was no further business to come before the Planning Board, and the meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Gloria McPherson
Clerk

djm