

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES FOR JANUARY 6, 2010

“Draft Minutes”

Members Present: Chairman Lynne Langlois, Neil Horner, Paul Deysenroth, Roland Poirer and Chris Kimberly

Members Absent: Nikki Bleifeld and Carol Baldwin

Guests: First Selectman Gayle Weinstein and Jane Connolly (Vice Chairman of Planning and Zoning)

Meeting called to order at 8:04 p.m. by Chairman Lynne Langlois

Lynne stated Chris Kimberly is appointed in absence of Nikki Bleifeld. Roland Poirer has been appointed as a regular member after having served as an alternate.

1. Introduction of new alternate, Carol Baldwin: Ms. Baldwin was absent from the meeting.
2. Discussion with Jane Connolly from Planning and Zoning on the 2010 Plan of Development as it affects Historic Districts: Ms. Connolly stated P&Z (Planning and Zoning) Commission has not received an application from Weston Village. Weston Village did attend the town planning meeting and had proposed a very large area in the town center which could affect both commercial and residential areas. The concept was not welcomed at this meeting by the Commission or residents. Weston Village would not need to conduct a study for a village district in town. They would need to go before P&Z commission who will decide if it whether to adopt the plan. An important factor in a village district is to have continuity with the village and its surroundings. In a village district P&Z has authority in planning as to height, size and color of the structures with help from a certified planner or landscape architect who would be hired by P&Z. Ms. Connolly stated that roughly one third of the 573 residents who answered the question on the recent survey in the Weston Forum agreed that new commercial development should take place only in the existing town center, the property adjoining it and across the road from it. The Village District has not been presented as a formal application to P&Z.

Paul asked what kind of process is involved if a formal application does come before the P&Z. Ms. Connolly stated this would mean a change in zoning and regulations for the P&Z. Weston Village would need to make a presentation before P&Z. P&Z would then decide if this were appropriate. The Historic District Commission would be present at this public meeting.

Lynne stated the proposed area involves much of the Norfield Corners Historic District. Paul asked if a village district can override a historic district. Ms. Connolly stated it may encompass it. She stated the Commissions will work together with decisions such as whether Weston Village will require a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to going before P&Z.

Lynne stated the Historic District Commission has control over parking which would become an issue in any expansion in a commercial area. First Selectman Weinstein questioned how Mr. Guidera's property, located at the corner of Weston Road and Norfield Road, would change if the property were zoned commercially. This area has limited parking, near the Onion Barn which is town owned property and is in the historic district. Ms. Connolly reported on a state statute which permits the owner of a property with inadequate parking to pay the town in lieu of complying with parking requirements. The monies thus collected must be used by the town for road repairs. Lynne stated the Historic District Commission has purview over paving. Ms. Connolly stated in a Village District P&Z Commission can determine the type of paving and the width of roads.

Lynne stated the process of creating an historic district process is lengthy, up to 18 months, because of requirements for both local and state review, public hearings and voting by property owners. This process does protect property owners' rights as well as preserving the historic assets within the community. The Historic District Commission will work together with the P&Z Commission. Lynne stated the only historic district that would be affected would be the Norfield District.

Ms. Weinstein was concerned that the publication from Weston Village looked as if it were from a town commission, such as Historic District Commission or P&Z. The publication included a town map with the Weston seal. Paul questioned the advantage of having a village district. Ms. Connolly stated village districts could curtail inappropriate development. Ms. Connolly stated any thing built across from the town center would be discussed during the regulations.

Ms. Connolly said that P&Z would work with the Historic District Commission if anything does develop from Weston Village. Ms. Weinstein stated she felt Weston Village did not receive a warm welcome at the Town Planning meeting. Ms. Connolly stated if this is done it would need to be presented in the town plan. The town plan can be amended at any time but every ten years it has to be done. If a formal application is presented before P&Z, a public hearing must be held. The town plan will mention there was an interest to expand the town center and provide more services since the town has grown.

Lynne thanked Ms. Connolly and provided her with six historic district maps of Weston and the state statutes under which the Historic District Commission operates. Ms. Connolly stated if a proposal came for Mr. Guidera's property there would be a public meeting, a public notice and a town hearing. Ms. Weinstein asked Ms. Connolly to contact her if a public hearing will be held on this.

Paul asked Ms. Connolly if the zoning in the town center can be changed from residential to commercial. The center is controlled by zoning but what is around the center toward Norfield Road is in the historic district. Lynne stated the Historic District Commission's jurisdiction is over things that are visible from the public right of way, parking, street signs, street posts and visible exterior alterations. The Historic District Commission will work closely with P&Z if something is brought forward as a formal application.

Ms. Weinstein stated the Board of Selectmen will need to be aware of what the Historic District and P&Z Commissions are each doing in regards to Weston Village. Minutes from this meeting will be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen.

3. Minutes of previous meeting: Paul Deysenroth moved to accept the December 2nd minutes. Roland Poirer seconded motion. All in favor 5-0.
4. Old Business: none
5. New Business: Lynne stated how pleased she was with Ms. Connelly's attendance and advised the commission to continue to be aware of Weston Village in the future.
6. Adjournment: Paul moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Lynne seconded motion. All in favor 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Sundlof