



**129 Parker Street Ad Hoc Committee Minutes
Town Building, Michael J. Gianotis Meeting Room (201)
Wednesday, November 6, 2013
7:00 P.M.**

Committee Members Present: Eric Smith, AICP; Bernard Cahill; Ron Calabria;
Ken Estabrook; Amy Hart; Eugene Redner; Lynda Thayer

Others Present: Kevin Sweet; Karen Sullivan; Richard Rankin; Bob
Depietri; Oliver Robinson; Angus Jennings; Bill
Crenshaw;

Michelle Booth; Nancy McCormick; Meghan Cole;
Tom Gorman

Mr. Smith called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Introduction of Committee Members and Others: Members of the Committee introduced themselves. Ken Estabrook, member of the Maynard School Committee and former Planning Board member. Amy Hart, Maynard resident. Lynda Thayer, Maynard resident. Ron Calabria, Maynard resident, past member of the Finance Committee. Eric Smith, Maynard Town Planner. Eugene Redner, member of the Finance Committee. Bernard Cahill, Chairman of Planning Board.

Kevin Sweet, Town Administrator; Karen Sullivan, Maynard resident. Richard Rankin, ci design. Bob Depietri, Capital Group Properties. Oliver Robinson. Angus Jennings, planning consultant. Bill Crenshaw, Board of Selectmen. Michelle Booth, Maynard resident and direct abutter. Nancy McCormick, Maynard resident. Meghan Cole, Maynard resident. Tom Gorman, Maynard resident and abutter.

Review of Project Background and Current Status: Mr. Jennings stated the 129 Parker Street property is a strategically important piece of land to the Town and is one of the few, large, developable parcels in Town. How it is developed will matter a great deal to the Town's financial health and infrastructure. He stated he is an independent consultant and was retained by the Town to help get to a decision point.

The current situation is there is a landowner who would like to develop the property and a town that has taken actions through zoning and permitting indicating that redevelopment would be positive but the developer found the current regulatory framework does not work from a market standpoint in terms of what is feasible today. They will have to find a balance between what the Town would like to see happen and what the developer can commit to make happen. The Board of Selectmen

had completed a lot of work last year and the proposal was rejected by Town Meeting, so they agreed having a committee to work on this issue would be helpful.

Mr. Jennings stated workshops were held and he did not come away from them with a sense of clarity on the Town's side of what they want to happen, but there are a range of outcomes that are within the realm of things the landowner and developer could do in the areas of commercial and residential. He stated what needs to happen going forward is for the Committee to dig deeper on some of the issues raised.

Mr. Jennings stated the landowner and developer are experienced, there is a market cycle, and they know what they can finance and get done in a relatively near term timeframe if the permitting was in place. They are eager to keep this moving forward. The Board of Selectmen share an objective of determining what they want and getting it done. He stated a 40B eligibility letter was filed a few weeks ago and their goal is to arrive at a plan that will receive Town Meeting approval, either through the existing NBOD bylaw or modifications to zoning. He felt the Town has more to gain by setting out what it wants and proactively achieving it, rather than not acting and waiting to see what happens.

A Committee member pointed out that he does not feel the Committee wants to spend a lot of time looking at Chapter 40R projects, but are looking at a NBOD style project. Another member stated he would like to spend some time looking at 40R as there are three paths the developer could take and a 40R could overlap with what the Committee is doing.

Discussion of Committee Charge/Work Scope: Mr. Sweet provided direction on the Committee's charge of broadly supporting a vision for the property for redevelopment and potential recommendations. He stated members who are on other boards will serve as liaison to bring information back to their respective groups.

Mr. Jennings stated they will need a member to serve as Chair of the Committee going forward. Mr. Estabrook stated he would act as Chair for this meeting but would like a member of the Committee to consider accepting the role of Chair. He asked the Committee members to discuss what their initial goals are for work.

Mr. Redner stated he would like to see the project to move ahead with the Town voters' approval, as the parcel has been sitting for many years. He is unsure if the property owner can work exclusively within the NBOD or whether the NBOD is not effective now that the paperwork has been filed for the 40B. Mr. Calabria stated he is interested in seeing something positive happen to the site. He would like to see something they can all view as an asset to the Town in addition to being profitable for the developer. Something that would be viewed as part of the Town, as opposed to separate from the Town. Something that would improve the Town but not harm the Town, specifically as it relates to traffic, etc. Something that has a very positive impact on the tax base.

Ms. Thayer stated she agrees with the goals already outlined and would like something positive for all parties involved. She would like to explore potential other uses for the site, not strictly retail and residential. Mr. Cahill stated his goal would be to arrive at a single agreed upon concept plan. It is his understanding that there will be anywhere from three to five concept plans that can be hashed out and reviewed as a Committee. He would like to be able to ask questions in an informal setting and get those answered. Ms. Hart stated she would like to see something that enhances the Town and brings the community together, as well as enhancing the retail shops downtown. She also would like to see things like open basketball courts and snowfields, tracks, or playgrounds.

Mr. Estabrook stated he sat down and came up with some ideas of what he felt would be good and what he would like to get out of this process. He stated he sees the Committee's goal as putting together an optimal solution that is economically viable to the developers, protects the interest of Maynard and surrounding neighborhoods, and will pass Town Meeting vote. He sees the Committee as playing a dual role in helping to achieve these goals by participating in the discussion and advocating their own perspectives as well as those of the public and property owner.

Mr. Estabrook stated he does not want to start from square one, as a lot of people have spent a lot of time providing feedback and this feedback should be gathered and reviewed as a starting point. As they focus on a few proposals they may need public comment. He stated the public is looking for this Committee to come up with a concept plan which can be turned over to the Planning Board and the development plan gets turned over to the Board of Selectmen for their action. The Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board through a public hearing process will finalize the plans for Town Meeting. Mr. Calabria recommended creating an inventory of the information they have to determine which items need further review.

Mr. Cahill asked if there is a report available from the visioning sessions that can be reviewed and Mr. Jennings stated there is a report and it is posted on the website. It was recommended that Mr. Jennings and Mr. Smith provide a summary of what the townspeople have said and what the developer has said and use this as a point of departure for the three to five plans.

Mr. Estabrook asked that the Committee come to an agreement on how to proceed over the next couple of weeks. He asked Mr. Smith and Mr. Jennings if they could provide a synopsis of what the townspeople have said, as well as what the developer has proposed for review by the Committee, and how long it would take. Mr. Smith stated he is not available until the week of November 18. Mr. Jennings stated he could prepare this information, using Mr. Smith and Mr. Estabrook for access to information, and have a report prepared in a two week period.

A member pointed out the Town is not united in a collective vision of what it wants for this site. Ms. Thayer stated she does not want the three to five plans to be the same plans they have already seen just rearranged, she would like distinctly different plans. It was suggested that these plans reflect different ideas on how to reduce the impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.

Framing the Discussion: Mr. Jennings stated he has been talking to the developer over the past couple of weeks and they are continuing to work on what will be viable from a use standpoint. He asked that they provide some initial information for the Committee.

Mr. Depietri stated based on input from Town Meeting they determined the people did not like the concept plan as presented. Issues raised were setback, traffic, and uses. Since that time they have explored alternative uses for the site. In addition to retail and housing they have looked at assisted living, senior independent living, hotel, rental housing, for sale non-age restricted housing, for sale age restricted housing, and various athletic facilities.

From their standpoint they need to work within the economic model and have the ability to work with different concepts. Based on feedback from the workshops there seems to be a desire to explore some of the senior housing options. He stated they have met with people that run these facilities to get their take on the market and there is some interest in this location so any plans brought forward would incorporate some of these uses. In the end it is going to be the economic

impact of what everyone in Town will want, and the willingness to tradeoff net bottom line income for some of these other uses.

He indicated commercial and industrial are not going to work on this site. He stated in the office market unless there is a compelling reason for a company to be located in this area they will not consider it. In addition, there is already empty office space in Maynard. He stated they are not excluding medical buildings, as in retail it is common to have a doctor, dentist, or MRI facility, however, they do not feel a large medical facility would come to this location. It was pointed out that there is currently also a lot of empty retail space in Maynard.

Mr. Cahill asked for an explanation on how the brokers reach out to potential customers for the site. Mr. Dipietri stated there is not one broker for the whole project. The Dartmouth Company handles the retail portion of the project and over the last year they have talked with over 150 retail tenants with regard to this project and have determined a group of 30 potential tenants. Residents expressed interest in grocery stores so they contacted the major grocery chains and have a couple who are interested, however, they would want other retailers located on the site with them. He stated they have met with rental and for sale residential representatives, as well as senior housing representatives and have a pretty good idea which they can work into the equation.

Mr. Jennings stated he has spent time looking at the office statistics on Route 495 and there is an enormous amount of vacant office space in the entire region. He stated office tenants have a lot of inventory to choose from and can move into an existing building for very low rent. He indicated he has reports from all the major office companies on the whole region with statistics on vacancy rates and can provide this information to the Committee. It was recommended that Mr. Jennings annotate this information into his summary report.

Committee Work Plan, Milestones, and Schedule of Initial Meetings: It was agreed that the Committee's next meeting will be Monday, November 25 at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Estabrook stated he would like to establish a regular meeting schedule and determined that Mondays or Wednesdays may work for the majority of members.

Mr. Estabrook stated the Committee should select a Chairman. Ken Estabrook was nominated.

Motion made to nominate Ken Estabrook. Motion seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Jennings reminded the members that they should all be sworn in by the Town Clerk and briefed on the Open Meeting Law and ethics requirements.

Adjournment: *Motion made to adjourn. Motion seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*