



# City of Westfield

## PLANNING BOARD

William Carellas, Chair  
Cheryl Crowe, Vice Chair  
Robert Goyette  
Jane Magarian  
Philip McEwan  
Raymond St. Hilaire  
John Bowen  
Bernard Puza, Associate  
Richard Salois, Associate



March 17 2020

Chairman Carellas called the regular meeting of the Westfield Planning Board to order at 7:00 pm in the City Council Chambers, 59 Court Street, Westfield, MA. He noted there was no ability to accept public comment and no hearings would be conducted. (The meeting was televised on Community Access TV/Channel 15 and livestreamed through the City's website)

PB MEMBERS PRESENT  
 MEMBERS ABSENT

### STAFF

- William Carellas, Chair
- Cheryl Crowe, Vice-Chair
- Robert Goyette
- Jane Magarian
- Philip McEwan
- Raymond St. Hilaire
- John Bowen
- Bernard Puza (Associate)
- Richard Salois (Associate)

- Jay Vinskey, Principal Planner
- Christine Fedora, Secretary

A. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (on any matter not the subject of a public hearing)  
Chairman Carellas noted there was no audience in the room.

B. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES  
Member Goyette MOTIONED, seconded by Member Salois to approve the Minutes of 02/04/20, 02/18/20. All in favor.

C. Review of plans not requiring approval under Subdivision Control Law.

Planner Vinskey noted that the plan follows a special permit granted for lot size averaging and meets those requirements. Member Salois MOTIONED, seconded by Member Goyette to approve. All in favor.

D. Posted Public Hearings (and possible deliberation & decision)

- Zoning Map Amendment - 150 Tannery Rd. - Rural Residential to Residence B

Member Salois MOTIONED, seconded by Member St. Hilaire to continue to April 21. All in favor.

- Site Plan/Stormwater - 230 Southampton Rd. - commercial development

Member Salois MOTIONED, seconded by Member St. Hilaire to continue to April 21. All in favor.

- Zoning Ordinance Amendments (petitions of the Planning Board) – to require:
  - a special permit for any Marijuana Establishment within 500 feet of a park
  - more detailed site information, including grading, as part of the building permit process

The Board considered continuing to April 7 if their delay would jeopardize these amendments. Vinskey noted that they only would be making a recommendation to the City Council, who already had their hearing. As proposals from the Board, the Board's position can be inferred and in any case the Board's delay or inaction does not bind the Council and is not fatal to the adoption of these. It was then voted to continue both hearings to April 21.

E. Other business

- Request for Site Plan Extension – Root Rd./Parcel 62R-24-1G

Vinskey summarized the matter, stating the approval would be lapsing though the lot was cleared and apparently being used for some equipment storage as well as overflow Root parking. He felt that if it lapses, the lot should not be used for anything and arguably should be restored/revegetated to a natural state. He reminded the Board that they were very specific in their permit that they did not want a standalone parking lot, but overflow was allowable if the school facility materialized. St. Hilaire noted the lot was cleared before any approval for such; clearing in the aquifer district requires a special permit. With the approval to lapse on March 20, Carellas inquired as to the length of extension requested; normally the Board sets a limit.

Members expressed an inclination not to extend the approval, particularly due to the use as an unapproved parking lot, but wanted to hear from the applicant to allow them to make their case. Vinskey noted there was no specific requirement that it be acted on before the lapse date, and the Board could extend it at a later date, as it has done with some other requests. It was voted to table the matter to a future meeting when the applicant can attend. Vinskey clarified that it will technically lapse, but could be resurrected by the Board's action.

- Hunters Slope/Mountain Road Estates – subdivision closeout/release

Vinskey informed the Board that this was an older subdivision that had never been closed out. A bank holding the letter of credit inquired as to the status. There was a performance guarantee of about \$20K held due to a swale not being built. The City Engineer has reviewed, is not concerned as time proved no detriment, and he provided a letter recommending release. Vinskey noted there were a few subdivisions that have never been closed out; this was one. Member St. Hilaire MOTIONED, seconded by Member Salois to release the performance guarantee. All in favor.

- Sammy Lane/Pinewoods Subdivision – thru-traffic concerns/prohibition

Vinskey noted that this was a closed-out subdivision, but still a private way. It is being used as a cut-through between Southampton Road and Servistar. The Board, as original approving authority,

is being requested to consider a gate to eliminate this. Members expressed some concerns about gating off the street to all traffic. Vinskey stated he was not clear on what real authority the Board still holds, but it could at least make a recommendation. It was mentioned that, not being a public way, traffic enforcement is limited (email from Sgt. Saunders). Upon a motion by Member St. Hilaire, seconded by Member Goyette, the Board recommended that the homeowners petition the City for acceptance as a public way, such that enforcement or other mechanisms can be employed by the City's authority. With such public way status, Vinskey confirmed the Board took no exception to the gate, one way or the other.

- Public art planning

With Member Crowe (proponent) absent, it was decided to postpone this matter.

- Updates to Open Space Communities (Sec. 5-60) and Transfer of Development Rights (Sec. 5-90) zoning ordinances

With these matters having been identified by the Open Space Plan to be updated, Vinskey summarized Open Space Communities concept. The Board was receptive to adding incentives to encourage more open space protections. These included bonus/additional lots for creating open space subdivisions or affordable/income restricted housing, and/or allowing open space subdivisions by right rather than special permit. The Board agreed to explore an Open Space Communities update further.

Regarding Transfer of Development Rights, Vinskey explained it is generally sending rights from the Rural Residential areas to business areas, but the ordinance is generally not so restrictive as to make TDR necessary. He suggested TDR is still difficult to employ in practice, but suggested since it is on the books, the Board could look at trying to make it more applicable and relevant to Westfield, possibly by adding an impervious coverage trade in the aquifer district, where impervious coverage is limited. The Board agreed to explore a TDR update further.

- FY21 budget/master planning

The Board reviewed its proposed budget for the next fiscal year, including a \$125,000 item for master planning. Vinskey noted it and it may be possible to leverage other funds/grants that could reduce the actual cost.; he also mentioned that this funding could be cut from the final budget. Member St. Hilaire MOTIONED, seconded by Member Goyette to approve the proposed budget. All in favor.

- Future meeting/public hearing schedule

It was decided to skip the April 7 meeting unless a time sensitive matter requiring action arose.

F. Announcements/Future agenda items

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39.

