

**Planning Board Work Session  
September 28, 2010**

A work session of the South Kingstown Planning Board was held on Tuesday, September 28, 2010 in the Council Chambers at the South Kingstown Town Hall, 180 High Street, Wakefield, RI.

The work session was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Maria Mack.

Planning Board attendance:

Mack - Present	Clendenen - Present	Riendeau – Present
Morrison – Present	Kenerson – Present	Castovillari - Present

Mr. Vincent Murray, Director of Planning and Ms. Nancy Letendre, Special Legal Counsel, were also present.

**1. Comprehensive Plan Update Process, Status Discussion, Draft Document Review, Etc.**

Draft documents of the Land Use Element have been circulated to Board members; a plan introduction is being drafted which includes demographics, historic vignettes, a discussion of the local economy, the context of the current plan as well as the context of previous plans. Board members have also received the first draft of the Economic Development Element and working drafts of the Natural and Cultural Resources Element and the Open Space and Recreation Element. A second public workshop will be scheduled when the Board has most of the draft elements in hand. Specific to the Economic Development Element the Planning Board discussed items such as edits, perceptions, zoning and appropriately scaled employment opportunities, the Town’s vision, the changing economy, URI’s proposed research and development park, the special management districts and the farmers’ markets. The Planning Board agreed to add positive statements to the Comprehensive Plan (having learned from other towns’ mistakes) relative to controlling commercial development in the town so as to avoid big box stores and large commercial stretches of roads and preserving the small town atmosphere and quality of life in South Kingstown. It was noted that the Economic Development Element would be referred to the Economic Development Committee for review and comment following the initial round of edits by the Board, staff and consultants.

**2. Discussion of Potential Amendments to Zoning Ordinance Section 504.1 (Concerning Special Use Permits for Residential Construction, OWTS within 150’ of Wetland Areas)**

Originally the Conservation Commission and staff were working on changes that were needed to bring the Zoning Ordinance language in line with RIDEM regulations and changes in nomenclature (ISDS became OWTS [Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems]). The Planning Board and staff have been working recently to strengthen this section of the ordinance to better address marginal lots of record that came forward as Special Use Permits before the Zoning Board. The Conservation Commission recommended that impervious surface coverage be limited to 8% of the buildable area of the lot as well as limiting the number of bedrooms. Staff suggested that the impervious surface limit should be 15% as is the percentage written in the Jamestown Zoning Ordinance. Discussion ensued relative to elevated impervious surfaces (e.g. decks), groundwater issues, DEM waiver of the OWTS design three foot

distance requirement, and various other document edits. Mr. Murray mentioned that Nate Kelley of the Horsley Witten Group had suggested minor edits to the 504.1 language that would help address storm water runoff management to better protect wetlands and adjoining properties.

He noted that the Town Council will conduct a public hearing on these Zoning Ordinance changes possibly this winter following the Planning Board's consideration of the changes and formal recommendation to the Town Council.

### **3. Discussion of Zoning Ordinance, Article 8, Sign Ordinance (Focus on Provisions Pertaining to LED Signs, Electronic Messaging Boards and Sandwich Board-type Signs)**

Ms. Letendre stated that any changes to the Sign Ordinance to address LED issues would not affect the two new LED signs already in place in Town.

Mr. Murray stated that CVS has signed a use stipulation agreement and has also agreed to evaluate the amount of light being emitted from the sign. He noted that the Building Official had asked the owners of Wakefield Prescription for similar consideration without result. The Planning Board does not agree with the Building Official's interpretation of the LED sign ordinance which allowed Wakefield Prescription to install its LED sign. Discussion ensued relative to interpretation and enforcement of the existing sign ordinance.

Another issue that has arisen is the prolific use of sandwich boards. Members opined that they have become a danger to pedestrians, a distraction to drivers, and a visual pollutant.

The Economic Development Committee will discuss the Sign Ordinance on September 30 and make recommendations to the Town Council on LED signs and sandwich boards.

Mr. Murray volunteered to draft a statement from the Planning Board to the Town Council asking for an extension of the prohibition on LED's and sandwich board signs to allow more time for discussion by and input from the various boards.

### **4. Discussion of "Yield Plan" Definition and Standards for Subdivisions and Land Development Projects**

Ms. Letendre stated that currently yield plans are required for Flexible Design Residential Projects, Inclusionary Zoning projects and should be required for Comprehensive Permits. The Planning Board needs to improve the definition of "yield plan" adding definitions for environmental and physical constraints to development and a list of items that are required for yield plans. She has crafted a proposed definition for yield plans which would include the statement that physical constraints to development would also include wetlands, groundwater, existing buildings and infrastructure on the site. Mr. Murray feels that this definition will give the Planning Board a much stronger position in the subdivision approval process. A brief discussion ensued regarding view shed constraints.

## **5. Other Items of Interest and Concern**

Mr. Murray noted that at last night's meeting, the Town Council accepted the Growth Management Report.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m. by unanimous consent of the membership.