

**CITY OF GLOUCESTER**  
**PLANNING BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**October 16, 2014**  
**7:00 P.M.**

**Kyrouz Auditorium, City Hall, 9 Dale Avenue, Gloucester**  
**Richard Noonan, Chair**

**Members Present:** Rick Noonan, Chair; Mary Black, Vice Chair; Shawn Henry-Absent; Henry McCarl; Linda Charpentier; Doug Cook; Joe Orlando

**Staff:** Gregg Cademartori, Planning Director; Matt Coogan, Senior Planner; Osha Saylor, Recording Clerk

Mr. Noonan opened the meeting at 7:05pm and welcomed the new clerk, Osha Saylor.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

**I. NEW PUBLIC HEARING**

In accordance with MGL Chapter 41 and the Planning Board’s Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land in Gloucester, the Planning Board shall review a Definitive 5-Lot Subdivision Plan for the land located at **52 Whittemore Street** (Assessors Map 21 Lot 7) submitted by Cape Ann Forge Trust.

Mary Black recused herself.

**David P. Biancavilla, Senior Associate, BSC Group, 15 Elkins St, Boston, MA.**

**Mr. Biancavilla** is representing John “Jay” McNiff, owner of the property. He noted a correction to the agenda: it is a 5-Lot division.

Mr. Biancavilla reviewed the previously approved existing conditions from the 2008 initial development proposal. He stated this is a 3.3 acre site on the Annisquam River at the end of Riverside Ave and Whittemore St. He gave the history of the land from the 1800-1980, and specified all contaminants from historical usage have been removed to prepare for this residential development.

He continued with the existing conditions survey plan, notating the old vetting and erosion plans started back in 2008 for the original 18 condominiums development. The existing Order of Conditions was reviewed, and includes a re-stabilization of the shoreline.

Mr. Biancavilla stated he is in front of the board with a sub-division to amend the existing Order of Conditions with the Conservation Commission, and is on the Conservation Commission Board’s agenda for the October 22, 2014 hearing next week. The new proposed sub-division will be 5 lots, totaling 468 linear feet in the R-10 Zone for duplex housing on this site. He anticipates 10 units at maximum, with two residential units on each block as a single structure. The proposal has the road accessed off the end of Riverside Ave. The same vetting is currently under approval and will

still include pedestrian access to residents of the neighborhood. He also stated the proposed development will include drainage for the roadway with a discharged basin overflowing into the Annisquam; the same pathway in the back that was approved by Conservation Commission in 2008; town water and sewer; two-story units with walkout basements in the rear and plantings in between units.

Per the ITE standards of traffic analysis, he anticipates minimal changes from the 2008 reports for 18 units, with only 8 trips in the AM at peak travel times and 6 trips at peak PM travel times. This is an increase of traffic by 0.5% on Washington St.

The city has required Whittemore St be relocated to its proper location. It was stated that utilities are to be moved to Whittemore, along with three-way stops to slow traffic and pedestrian crosswalks. The city and construction developer will work out the agreement for the work to be done. Part of the project is to protect the shellfish in the area by reducing the sediment and improving draining conditions before they discharge into the water. The proposed landscaping was reviewed with minor changes for the 2008 proposal. The intent is to enhance and soften the residential structures with a mixture of trees including evergreens.

**Mr. Cook** commented that this is a raw site with a clean slate for the developer. It is important to make it as soft as possible to look natural and fit in.

**Ms. Charpentier** confirmed with Mr. Biancavilla that this previously contaminated area has been cleared and has no activity use limitations on this property. She also questioned the ITE figures.

**Mr. Biancavilla** confirmed peak time trips are based on an average from Traffic Engineers (ITE), based on residential uses and their guidelines, but will verify and provide more information to the board.

**Mr. Cademartori** reviewed the process and confirmed the initial application was received about three weeks ago; it was noticed in the Gloucester Daily Times and to abutters of the project. It was referred to Board of Health for public hearing on Nov 6<sup>th</sup> and has been distributed to the Conservation Commission and other city departments for review. There were issues raised and addressed before the board approved the preliminary plan. Currently the utilities for the city are not on the layout where they belong and there is a concern for safety and slower traffic in the area. The next step is to stake the area and set a date for a site visit to physically see the plans.

### **Public Comment**

#### **Linda Richardson, 24 Riverside Ave**

**Ms. Richardson** explained her home is three houses up from the proposed project. She is concerned about safety with traffic in the area and the cleanliness of the public waterway path. She has already noticed an increased level of traffic since the other businesses were put in by the forge and is concerned that adding 10 units and potentially 20 cars will significantly increase traffic during peak times. She also stated that Riverside Ave allows parking on both sides of the street, but there is not enough room for two lanes of traffic to flow with vehicles parked on both sides of the street. She is concerned the new project will increase her taxes and have an overall negative impact on her quality of life. Ms. Richardson later expressed her concern regarding wetlands in the area and **Mr. Cademartori** confirmed the project has also been put on the Conservation Commission's agenda for October 22, 2014.

**Gabe Onorio, 31 Whittemore Street**

**Mr. Onorio** has lived here for over 35 years and owns buildings that abut the proposed new roadway along with Jim Morris. He is not opposed to new developments in the area and the plans look great. He is concerned about the loss of his driveway and traffic safety issues. He has monitored traffic to report: there are 500+ cars on this road each day and the stop sign does not work consistently; only 1 out of 5 cars stop. Mr. Onorio made two suggestions for solutions to his concerns with traffic: 1) convert Whittemore to a one-way to allow for his property line to stay intact with a narrower roadway or 2) close the road so Riverside Ave is used for residential purposes only, with no commercial traffic to cross over to Whittemore Street.

**Ann Gilatti-Allen, 26 Riverside Ave**

**Ms. Gilatti-Allen** has lived in the third house up from the bottom of the street for 59 years. She commented on the history of Riverside Ave back when Mr. Faulk on Gloucester Ave removed the barrier to Riverside Ave for his commute. She stated there is a petition from the early 1990's for stop signs and signage for dangerous turns, and a second proposing the make Riverside a dead end street, but the petitions never got resolved. She is very concerned about the safety of her neighborhood and has had a child hit by a vehicle and seen animals killed. She thinks the development will cause the neighborhood harm, as they cannot support an increase in traffic and already have issues with Greely's and taxi vehicles. She wants Riverside Ave be a dead end street. **Mr. McCarl** asked that Ms. Gilatti-Allen make a copy of petition and submit to the clerk's office to be considered.

**Susanne Altenberger, 66 Atlantic Street**

**Ms. Atrimer** uses the property as a boater and observes the shoreline. She is very concerned that this development is only the beginning of a highly gentrified area that used to be industrial. She wants to know how long it will take before more massive developments occur and destroy the beautiful scenery along the shoreline.

**Frank Ventimiglia, 15 Riverside Ave**

**Mr. Ventimiglia** stated he is not against the development, but concerned about the cost to the city to make the required changes. Mr. Cademartori confirmed there is no estimate yet. Mr. Ventimiglia is concerned about traffic and the validity of the ITE traffic analysis. The vehicles traveling to Whittemore are not abiding by the 2.5 tons signage on Washington St. and there is unauthorized traffic on Riverside Ave. There are cracks in his walls, power lines and wires that have had to be replaced due to these vehicles. He wants something done about the traffic and speed monitored, and does not advise the city spend the money to add the 10 units to Whittemore Street.

**James Morris, 30 Riverside Ave**

**Mr. Morris** has a deep understanding of the development of this street; his father and uncle purchased a cow pasture back in 1926 and built Whittemore St. and Riverside Ave. He generally supports the McNiff's projects and wants the derelict land utilized. He is concerned for his family's safety entering and exiting his garage with the city's current plans to remove his driveway for the Whittemore Street relocation. He is also concerned about the cost of possible betterment assessments for this project, and does not see the value in such practices, given they were previously done in the 1960's. He expressed concern regarding the flooding issues in his backyard and does not see any storm drains in the plans on the east side. The proposed reconstruction of the street is higher than the discharge point of the surficial runoff of the ephemeral brook on his property, and will undoubtedly cause substantial flooding in his backyard.

Mr. Morris expressed great concern about the safety of his family with the current state of traffic on his street and submitted a petition from 22 residents on Riverside Ave requesting that “Riverside Ave be made free of any connection to Whittemore St in this subdivision.” The petition was received by the Planning Board and will be submitted to the Clerk to be recorded. He stated that if he loses his driveway with the development approved as is, he would like permission to park on the street of the connector; the 2.5 ton limit signs to be enforced; and the children & pedestrian signage to be replaced and made more visible.

**Allyn Smith, 18 Riverside Ave.**

**Mr. Smith** has been a resident on Riverside Ave. for 37 years. He has watched the commercial development on Whittemore St. and has seen the neighborhood change. He agrees that Riverside Ave residents deal with traffic and parking issues from Washington St and Greely’s Funeral home, but he is in favor of the proposed project. Mr. Smith believes this will be an aesthetically pleasing development and is much smaller than other developers have attempted to do on this same property in the past. He doesn’t believe the drains can be fixed and thinks it is unnecessary for the city to pay to reroute the road.

**Pattie Page, 3 Tidal Cove Way**

**Ms. Page** owns property at 4 Gloucester Ave and stated that she hopes, as part of the Chapter 91 requirements, this development will require public access to the waterfront. She asked the board to adjust the proposed plans to include additional access for the local community so they can transport their hand-carry water vessels to the water. This would be an immediate community waterfront access to serve the Riverside Ave, Whittemore St, Hayward Ave, and Gloucester Ave residents only.

**Mr. McCarl** commented on the tremendous traffic issues reported on Riverside Ave because of Whittemore St. The board needs to seriously consider cutting off access to Riverside Ave to address the dire situation. This is an issue unrelated to the current development but needs to be addressed. The whole neighborhood would be served if the city stops the commercial access through Riverside Ave to Whittemore St.

**Mr. Noonan** asked Mr. Biancavilla to also confirm in his reports if the traffic analysis includes the peak travel times for school pickup & drop offs. Mr. Biancavilla estimated the reports from 2008, based on 18 units, include 100 trips per day and the exact travel hours are in the report, which he will provide to the board at the next meeting.

**Mr. Cademartori** stated there are issues with enforcement and restrictions of use enforcement, which need to be addressed. He confirmed the traffic commission and also the city council handle parking and traffic issues for Mr. McCarl. The board will research how these two roads are regulated and provide an update at the next meeting. He asked that Mr. Biancavilla provide an updated traffic analysis beyond peak traffic times to reveal anticipated volume/counts. He expressed the need to separate the existing issues from the concerns for the proposed development. He stated that connectivity is usually a positive, considering access to hydrants, etc. Making Riverside Ave a one-way street may be a solution to improve access, while alleviating limitation for emergency response. He would like to see the proposed roadway changes staked out for a site visit to help work through some of these issues. Mr. McNiff confirmed they can stake reference points on the roadway over the weekend and the board set the site visit for next **Thursday, Oct 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00am.**

**Motion: To continue the public hearing to the November 6, 2014 Planning Board meeting.**

**1<sup>st</sup>: Joe Orlando**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Doug Cook**

**Vote: Approved 6-0**

## **II. Other Business**

### **1. Discussion Regarding PIRC CDP Update**

Mr. Noonan was absent for the last board meeting and asked Mary Black to co-moderate.

**Mr. Cademartori** reviewed updates from the last board meeting to the status of the Community Development Plan (CDP) put together by the Plan Implementation Review Committee (PIRC). He explained there was significant discussion about how to make this PIRC document a functional resource. This is currently a static document and has not been updated since its submission a year ago, and some data is close to three years old. If it is updated, there is concern about the frame of reference and the consistency of the document. He informed the board the next step is to accept or reject the submission from the PIRC, and decide how they would like to move forward with its recommendations. He noted there is commentary from planning board representative, Michael Rubin with potential direction on a plan of action.

**Ms. Charpentier** asked about a current master plan the Planning Department may already maintain. Mr. Cademartori confirmed there is no all-encompassing plan like this, only specific area and subject matter plans, like the natural resources section of the CDP. She also asked for clarification if this document is still current. Mr. Cademartori confirmed the goals and objectives should be unchanged. Many projections were based on the 2000 census, which does make several sections less relevant now. There have been community changes over the past 14 years, including demographic and in the school systems that are not reflected in the document.

### **Elizabeth (Liz) Steel, 19 Marshfield Street**

**Ms. Steel**, Chair of the Plan Implementation Review Committee (PIRC) asked the board to keep this topic open to allot time to review Mr. Cademartori's comments from the last board meeting. She passed papers to the board, highlighting sections of the document that directly respond to Mr. Cademartori's comments from the last meeting. Ms. Steel called attention to the first section of page 3, which outlines the goals of the PIRC and the need for ongoing stewardship; page 118, strategy 3; and page 121 on roles and responsibilities, second and third sentence. This explains the PIRC does not see the task complete, but at a stopping point and looking for guidance on how to proceed.

**Mr. Cademartori** pointed out that Mr. Henry, who is absent tonight, highlighted these same points in regard to the PIRC CDP. To be fair to the PIRC, before any more work is done the board must decide to either advance the CDP or keep it as is. In order for the PIRC to advance the document, maintain its consistency, and reduce its number of strategies (currently at 125), it will require significant effort and focus from the board and also citizens. If the board chooses to make no further changes, the city's Planning Department will continue to refer to it as an advisory document.

**Mr. McCarl** agreed that an update would require significant citizen input and efforts from community planning development and other planning committees. **Ms. Charpentier** stated she does not see the value in looking to the past and updating the 100-plus-page document; it should be accepted as is and used as a guideline. **Ms. Black** agreed the all-

encompassing CDP should be accepted as is, used as an advisory document, and made available to the public. **Mr. Cook** agreed that factual information may need updating, but general info, such as land use is excellent information and should be put to use. **Mr. Orlando** is in favor of accepting this document as an advisory plan.

**Motion: To accept the CDP provided by the PIRC as an advisory document.**

**1<sup>st</sup>: Joe Orlando**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Linda Charpentier**

**Vote: Approved 6-0**

**Mr. Noonan** asked Ms. Steel to clarify her business with MAPC for the record. Ms. Steel explained there is a meeting scheduled in November to propose and discuss the possibility of MAPC assisting the PIRC to find funding or revenue to accomplish some of the CDP goals. Mr. Noonan asked for clarification about where the outreach was initiated and why.

#### **Linda Brayton, 527 Washington Street**

**Ms. Brayton** is the PIRC Co-Chair and a regular member/attendee of the MAPC meetings. She was aware that the MAPC provide technical resources and inquired from the MAPC Chair about help getting a grant. There is a training session in November covering what is available through the MAPC and Ms. Brayton wants the board and others to attend this training. She would like help from the outside to move the CDP forward.

**Ms. Steel** explained that this topic of funding has been addressed with the Community Development department to no avail. Mr. Noonan would like the PIRC to follow protocol in the future and allow Community Development to take any necessary action. Ms. Black informed Ms. Steel that the PIRC initiating this conversation without consent leads the MAPC to believe they received the authorization to do that. Next time, a formal request should be made to the board before inquiring with a third party.

#### 2. CPA Update

**Mr. Orlando** updated the board on the last meeting. The CPA voted on the distribution of money that will go to several organizations. The recommendations of the CPA will go to City Hall for final approval. The committee has been working with organizations that have received grants and encourage them to write the newspapers to inform the community about the CPA. Issues such as going from 1% to a 2% community have been raised and it is important the community is aware. **Mr. Cademartori** added that the city is waiting on the certification of the allocations from the DOR. This will happen in a couple weeks and then probably go to B&F agenda for disposition on recommendations to the full council.

#### 3. Harbor Planning Update

**Mr. Noonan** reported the CZM and Community Development will have a meeting next Monday, October 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am as part of the CZM process on the review of the city's harbor plan.

#### 4. Announcements

**Mr. Cademartori** announced he, Matt Coogan, Tom Daniel and two members of the Clean Energy Commission selected the Kleinfelder, Inc. proposal for the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment. They are a national engineering firm out of Boston with expertise in this area. They have handled similar projects in the Boston-metro area and the South Shore with good reception. This assessment will occur over the next 6-9 months and then plans will be developed to deal with changes in the environment that will occur over the next 10, 20, and 30 years. There are several projections of how things will look in the

future, for example what the norm will be for high tides and the effect of storms in the future. Once in place, these plans will open the Planning Department up to grant funding for other infrastructure projects queued up by this effort. The Little River Fish ladder project (next to the West Gloucester Water Treatment plant on Magnolia Ave) to revitalize the impaired link between the river and the river shed is an example of an infrastructure project that has been on the drawing board for over a decade. The assessment completion date is on a fiscal cycle and he anticipates the completion date to be: **June 15, 2015**. There will be opportunity for public engagement on a three month cycle until this date and regular updates will be provided to the board.

**III. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: To Adjourn**

**1<sup>st</sup>: Henry McCarl**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Joe Orlando**

**Vote: Approved 6-0**

**IV. NEXT MEETING**

***Next regular meeting of the Planning Board November 6, 2014***

***Planning Board Members: If you are unable to attend the next meeting please contact the Planning Office at (978)281-9781.***