



Town of Danvers
Planning Board

Danvers Town Hall
One Sylvan Street
Danvers, MA 01923
www.danvers.govoffice.com

Planning Board Members:

Aaron Henry, Chairman
Kristine Cheetham
Margaret Zilinsky
William Prentiss
James Sears

Senior Center/25 Stone Street
September 10, 2013
7:00 p.m.
MINUTES

Aaron Henry called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Planning Board members James Sears, Kristine Cheetham, Margaret Zilinsky and William Prentiss were present. Planner Kate Day was also present.

MAPC/PLANNING BOARD DISCUSSION:

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is working with the Danvers Planning Department and the Planning Board on a study of the Industrial-1 zoning district near the intersection of Pine and Holten Streets. The district is bounded by the Rail Trail to the south, Burroughs Street at Holten Street to the north, and Pine Street to the west. This triangular shaped area includes twelve parcels, including Menino Brothers along the Rail Trail, the large five-story mill building across from A1 Prime, Remphos Lighting, and the ARC building at the northeastern corner. The purpose of the study is to look at potential options to allow additional uses in this district as it seems to be transitioning from exclusively industrial uses to a mix of residential and commercial uses. The redevelopment of the former Methodist church property at 78 Holten Street is an example of a mixed-use building, with a café planned for the ground floor and six residential apartments above. Several other buildings along Holten Street show the same pattern of use, with small offices, services and other businesses on the ground floor and residential units above. Based on this trend, MAPC is preparing a study of a potential overlay zoning district that would allow more such mixed-use projects on a by-right basis (current industrial zoning does not, in fact, permit any residential uses which compels applicants to seek variances and zoning relief).

Henry addressed the Board stating that the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is doing a study for the I-1 area across from McKinnon's Market. He explained that this area was chosen due to the recent development such as site plan applications that have come through the Zoning Board of Appeals. Henry thought they would have more residents present this evening from the neighborhood. Henry said they were trying to determine whether they should change this area to an Overlay District versus doing a Base Zoning Change. The community in the past has expressed some hesitancy for creating an Overlay District, even though he felt that it fostered a better opportunity for private land owners and the Town.

Sam Cleaves, from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), appeared before the Board to present an overview of the project. Also present were Joan Blaustein, Chris Kuschel and Tanya Paglia. He indicated that they will look at images of the district bounded by the Rail Trail, Burroughs Street at

Holten Street, and Pine Street. Cleaves said that they would break into group discussions, and the MAPC would take notes.

Cleaves showed the presentation recapping that this is a study funded by the Barr Foundation Grant for the purpose of learning more about this area along with the roles of the downtown areas which are taking on a significant importance as the demographics are clear that people want to live downtown and be more connected within walking distance, minimizing the need for cars. Studies show that connectivity and ease of getting around are important.

Cleaves explained that a six-acre area was selected along with a ½ mile radius around this area which includes the Holten Street, Pine Street and Rail Trail area. He said that they started looking at model overlays back in 2009 and 2010. He felt this would be a great model to serve the rest of the downtown area. The 78 Holten Street project is being constructed with great access to the Rail Trail. They felt it was a good place to start with an Overlay District since they can play with the model and tweak it.

Cleaves described the vision including ideas such as alternative transportation, connections and development, Rail Trail and the T Bus system. He stated that the connections with bikes and peds are going to try to be expanded. He pointed to the development at 78 Holten Street as a good start for balancing uses. This will become a nice area with high quality amenities, and the zoning is a preview of the upcoming development. There are many allowed uses in this area, but no mixed uses by right. The initial thinking is to start with an Overlay District and add in the physical connections that will be worked into the area.

Cleaves showed the demographics of the area as well as the ½ mile radius around the area. This area comprises eighteen percent of the town's population, and he showed the age groups residing in this area. The 18-34 age group is large in the Town of Danvers, and the idea is to provide a place to live through all phases of life.

Cleaves described the housing and income in Danvers. There is a ninety-five percent occupancy rate, and of the 2,200 residential units, two-thirds are owner occupied. He stated that the median household income is about \$70,000.

Cleaves showed the development interest in the area with the ARC Building, Rail Trail and 78 Holten Street, and he showed a model of what 78 Holten Street would look like once completed.

Cleaves stated that most transportation in the area is by car. There is an informal use of the bike path because it is not a formal street. As suburbs become more interconnected, more public transportation will be used.

Cleaves said that the audience would break up into groups to discuss the strengths, opportunities and challenges of this area.

Henry asked what happened at the meeting held earlier in the morning at Town Hall.

Blaustein stated they had two groups discussing strengths, opportunities and challenges. People indicated that they liked the mixed uses that were in the area now and there was skepticism about Overlay Districts. People asked why this was a priority area? They said mixed use can be done through variances, so why change zoning for these few parcels. She indicated that people liked the historic buildings along with the neighborhood feel (Tapley area) which is mixed use now. Blaustein stated they tried to explain to the group that this could not be done today without the approval of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Paglia stated that people came around realizing that the variance process was daunting and expensive, and the group indicated that they would like to see setback requirements eliminated.

Paglia stated that there was also concern for parking requirements.

Jeremy Lee from Hotwatt recapped the morning's discussion, and noted that an overlay zone is a preferred alternative to any change in the current I-1 zoning.

Day stated that there were 20-25 people at the meeting earlier that day. There was good representation from the business people in the area.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Henry moved to adjourn. Cheetham seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Francine T. Butler

The Planning Board approved these minutes on September 24, 2013.