

**TOWN OF WESTMINSTER
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2015**

Members Present: Chris Potter, (Chair); Kyle Skrocki (Vice Chair); Cathy Mullins (Clerk); Phil Savoy; Eric Anderson

Alternate Member: None required

Others Present: Russ Hodgkins (ZA); Karen Astley (Recording Secretary)

Interested Parties: Lindy Larson, Karen Larson, Janice Wojcik and Patrick Mulligan

CALL TO ORDER: Chris Potter called this meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the Westminster Town Hall and welcomed everyone. A full Board was present. He advised that meetings are tape recorded therefore asked anyone that wishes to speak to identify themselves.

ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA: None.

MINUTES: Kyle Skrocki made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Eric Anderson 2nd the motion. Motion passed with a 5-0-0 vote.

Ex Parte Communications: There were no recusals from the application to be heard.

Interested Parties: All interested parties that signed in agreed to affirm that the evidence they give in the cause under consideration shall be the whole truth and nothing but the truth under the pains and penalties of perjury. Any comments from the public should be directed to the DRB. If the person before you has spoken to something that you were going to speak to please try not to repeat the same information. Everyone will have any opportunity to speak during the meeting.

Deliberative Session: The DRB members had previously agreed to make their decisions in Deliberative Session, if needed, following the public hearings on the applications. It will be scheduled at the end of the Development Review Hearing.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no one present from the public for comment.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW: *DRB Member Cathy Mullins*

Application: #16-16 Expansion of parking lot located off US Route 5 in Historic District. Application will be reviewed under **Section 311 Site Plan Review; Section 442.3 Village District Zone; Article IX Historical Preservation Overlay District** of the 2014 Interim Zoning Bylaws.

Testimony: Russ Hodgkins opened by announcing he would be representing the Town on this application. He explained that the application was heard by the Historic Review Board and the minutes were attached for reference with the HRB opinion. Russ mentioned that the topsoil from the expansion of the parking lot will not be sold but would be stored at the town garage. The parking lot will remain gravel. There would remain a green area on both sides of the parking lot expansion. The use of the expanded

parking lot will be for overflow parking only for town events. The parcel is 0.9 acres in total size. Parking lot will pitch towards the back of the parcel. The Town may build half of the parking lot now and the rest later. There will be no lighting. A sign may be needed to let residents know there is additional parking behind the Post Office.

Patrick Mulligan asked for clarification on how far the parking lot was going to go. He asked whether or not both sides would have a green belt. Mr. Mulligan currently mows town property that abuts his property.

Karen Larson questioned why the widths were different? The right side is 10' where the left side is 20'. Mrs. Larson stated she likes their privacy in the Historic District and was concerned about property value. She also enjoys having horses in the back rather than a parking lot. She asked if a deed could be drawn up with restrictions. Kyle Skrocki stated that the permit would outline all the conditions. The DRB has nothing to do with deeds and that concern would have to be brought to the Select Board.

Janice Wojcik asked Phil Savoy directly how much of the parcel will be disturbed and will this trigger a stormwater permit with the state? Phil stated that because it is less than .3 acres being disturbed then it will not require a stormwater permit. The state does not require a permit for permeable surfaces. Janice did state that car lights do shine into her windows at night and what is proposed to filter this out? Kyle Skrocki stated that the DRB would consider this item and advise the Town to possibly plant arborvitaes hedges to screen the lights.

Janice asked why the Town couldn't have a parking lot at the Institute, sports field or at the Fire Station.

Lindy Larson spoke up about the amount of parking spaces that are intended for this area. He wanted to know if 34 spaces are really needed or could the town live with 12 spaces? Russ Hodgkins stated when the Post Office is open it is difficult to conduct business when there is no parking at the Town Hall. He stated 12-14 spaces during the day would be adequate.

Phil Savoy made mention that as long as the application met all requirements of the Zoning Bylaws, the DRB cannot deny the permit. If the town were to build they should consider doing the whole lot not just half. Kyle Skrocki stated because there is no structure being built there are no setback requirements. Screening will be considered for the abutters to keep out shining headlights when the parking lot is being used.

Chris Potter closed the hearing at 7:45 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Change of Use: Russ Hodgkins brought to the DRB's attention that there could be a potential re-application on a parcel of property located on US Route 5. The DRB had heard the application previously and the permit been extended twice and now has expired. At initial discussion with Zoning Administrator applicant stated 2-3 workers plus office residential home business but it appears there will be five employees with a family member living in the residence. The DRB is familiar with this parcel and applicant.

Applicant will need to come before the board with a “Change of Use” application request.

Violation: The Zoning Administrator, Russ Hodgkins advised the DRB that there is a sign violation in town and there is an appeal which will now be heard by the DRB. This violation will be warned for the January 2016 meeting.

Town Plan: Town Plan, Version 6.2 adopted October 14, 2015 was handed out to all DRB members.

Zoning Bylaws (Interim 2014): Per the DRB, Article I pertaining to legalities which the DRB really have no experience or jurisdiction. Other comments or recommendations from the DRB were made on Article I.

Russ Hodgkins handed out Article II to the DRB and requested they review, mark up and bring comments/recommendations to the next meeting for discuss. Russ pointed out the changes made by the Planning Commission.

Recess to Deliberative Session: DRB moved to deliberative session at 8:00 p.m.

Deliberative Session report taken by Russ Hodgkins: The Chair brought the Board into Deliberative Session at 8:00 p.m. The Board went on a site visit to see the area at night. Upon coming out of Deliberative Session at 8:23 p.m., the Board will make recommendations to the Select Board because they don’t need a permit from the DRB. The recommendations will be as follows: 1). Evergreen landscaping on both sides of the parking expansion would be acceptable to help with head lights when applicable. 2). If the expansion goes beyond ½ way of the available area, lighting should be installed for safety reasons. 3). The parking expansion should be centered better on the lot. 4). A better site plan with the actual locations of the neighbors houses should be drawn by the Town Manager and submitted as an exhibit to support the permit request.

Adjournment: The DRB adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Signature of Clerk

Date

Prepared by: Karen Astley, Recording Secretary

(Note: These are unapproved minutes. Corrections, if necessary, will be found in the minutes of the next DRB meeting).