

MILFORD PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING
December 13, 2011 Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room, 6:30 PM

Present:

Members:

Janet Langdell, Chairperson
Tom Sloan, Vice-Chairman
Paul Amato
Kathy Bauer
Chris Beer
Steve Duncanson

Staff:

Sarah Marchant, Town Planner
Shirley Wilson, Recording Secretary
Dan Finan, Videographer

Chairperson Langdell called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. Chairperson Langdell then introduced the Board, explained the process for the public hearing and read the agenda.

In accordance with the requirements of NH RSA 675:3, the Milford Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday December 13, 2011, at 6:30pm in the Board of Selectmen's meeting room at the Town Hall. The purpose of the public hearing is to discuss proposed amendments to the Town of Milford Zoning Ordinance as follows:

1. **Addition of the Commerce and Community District to Article VI, *Overlay Districts***
2. **Addition of the West Elm Street Gateway Corridor District to Article VI, *Overlay Districts*.**

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairperson Langdell explained that the word "Corridor" in the West Elm Street Gateway Corridor District posting should not be included, it is just the Gateway District.

S. Marchant gave an overview of the two proposed overlay districts; the West Elm Street Gateway District and the Commerce and Community District. The Planning Board is generally charged with preparing a community supported Master Plan that guides future town growth and land use. Milford serves a population base of 65,000 from the surrounding area through jobs and business and even though Milford is a community of 15,000 we are somewhat of a hub of activity. Milford will grow and we must grow to stay a dynamic and active community, so as part of developing the Master Plan and as outreach to the larger community we recognize that future development must be accommodated smartly through conservation of energy, protection of the natural environment, generation of positive property tax revenues, job creation and additional economic development growth all the while preserving Milford's character. The Planning Board has been working with the Selectmen, EDAC, and the Land Use Subcommittee, Recreation Commission, Conservation and the TIF District Board along with several other groups to try to take a long range perspective look at the West Milford Area in a master planning sense to see how it could accommodate Milford's future growth

An overlay district is an area that has been designated due to special qualities that we want to either enhance, preserve or protect and in these two instances, it specifically pertains to commercial, industrial and mixed use development for new building construction, additions and alterations. Overlay districts basically convey a framework that lays on top of zoning to ensure that development is compatible with the historic and cultural aspect of Milford while providing flexibility for innovation, architectural creativity and basic functionality.

Article VI, Overlay Districts; West Elm Street Gateway District

S. Marchant used a plan dated 11/8/11 to describe the outline of the district, which incorporates a large amount of Milford's developed commercial and industrial infrastructure. In addition it is on some of our major roadways and has access to town utilities. The Planning Board started a year ago by sending surveys to the business and property owners in the district and hosted a breakfast, thanks to Hitchiner Mfg. We got some great feedback on what was important as far as design guidelines go and what they'd like to see to make this area a strong gateway into Milford and the larger community. The same survey was then distributed to various town boards, commissions and the general public, over the summer, to get a wide variety of feedback from people outside of the district. The survey became a useful database that the Town, the Planning Board and the EDAC Land Use Sub-committee were able to utilize in developing the design guidelines for this proposed district. These

guidelines were created to manage traffic flow and address access management because traffic is a major topic for future development. These design guidelines also provide elements for site design and layout to ensure that this area will fit within the community's character as defined in the Master Plan. This district has some vacant land, but it is a prime candidate for redevelopment and will partner with the Commerce and Community District.

Article VI, Overlay Districts; Commerce and Community District

S. Marchant explained the outlined area from the Commerce and Community District plan that also includes the EPA superfund site and the former police station land. The proposed district incorporates the Brox property which the Town purchased in 2000 and the Board of Selectmen signed an agreement with the Andover Group/Eccotech in March to market and potentially sell and develop this property as well as the Tax Increment Financing District (TIFD) which was put in place during the mid 2000's to encourage economic development. The CCD is largely comprised of vacant parcels without much basic infrastructure and was designed to encourage economic development on a very large scale because all the infrastructure, roads, utilities, open space, natural resources, and stormwater needs to be considered first. The Planning Board has used form based code instead of traditional zoning to try to insure the large scale review first and then onto the smaller development to avoid piecemealing the property. The district is designed to expand the allowed uses to include everything from office, industrial, and wholesale to hotel, retail, education, agriculture, energy, housing and recreation uses. It will be administrative process focused and lays out an entirely new administrative structure to potentially expedite the review of land use applications as a carrot to draw development to this area. The administrative process will be one piece of the framework for the overlay district which includes a tremendous amount of details about the design elements to first master plan the area and then to allow for the flexibility of developing the small scale sites. It will be unique to Milford and this surrounding area although several other New Hampshire towns have used this.

This is the first public hearing and we will hold another on January 3, 2012. We are hoping to encourage people to look at this information, ask questions and solicit comments and feedback. The documents are located on the Town website www.milford.nh.gov in Planning and GIS under Ordinances or under Agendas to obtain the packets. J. Langdell added that postcards will be sent out for the January hearing.

Chairperson Langdell acknowledged the EDAC Land Use Sub-committee (LLU) consisting of Chris Costantino, in attendance and Heather Leach, Sean Trombly, George Infanti and herself as Planning Board representative. This group took on a challenging adventure to look at the West Elm Street area; a project that has been on this Board's long term list since we adopted the Nashua and Elm Streets Corridor District. They took the lead and engaged, along with staff, the NRPC through the iTRAC program to get additional professional consultation assistance. NRPC was very instrumental in terms of helping with the public outreach and creating the database, the survey and the guidelines, so this was really a team effort and it allowed the Planning Board to focus our time and efforts on the Commerce and Community District to have both of these proposals come forward this year.

Chairperson Langdell opened the discussion for public comment on all the proposed zoning amendments; there was none.

K. Bauer stated this has been a huge project with a lot of details to be understood and the Community Development Office, in particular Sarah, has really done a good job and we appreciate all her hard work. The Planning Board has been meeting about every week and we've had some terrific discussions both agreeing and disagreeing on this very complicated but great idea for development in West Milford.

J. Langdell noted that these districts are still a work in progress and more details will be brought forth at the January meeting, including possible modifications to the naming of the West Elm Street Gateway District.

P. made a motion to table the hearing to the January 3, 2012 meeting. S. Duncanson seconded and all in favor.

The public hearing was adjourned at 6:50PM.

MINUTES OF THE DEC 13, 2011 PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING APPROVED DEC 20, 2011.