

MILFORD PLANNING BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES ~ DRAFT

March 2, 2021 Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room, 6:30 PM

**Members Present:**

Doug Knott, Chairman  
Tim Finan, Vice Chairman  
Paul Amato, Member  
Janet Langdell, Member  
Pete Basiliere, Member  
Susan Robinson, Member

**Staff:**

Lincoln Daley, Com Dev Director  
Jason Cleghorn, Town Planner  
Darlene Bouffard, Recording Secretary

**Members Excused:**

Laura Dudziak, Selectmen's Rep.

**MEETING PREAMBLE DURING COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

*Good Evening, as Chairman of the Planning Board, I am declaring that an emergency exists and I am invoking the provisions of RSA 91-A:2, III (b). Federal, State, and Local officials have determined that gatherings of 10 or more people pose a substantial risk to our community in its continuing efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. In concurring with their determination, I also find that this meeting is imperative to the continued operation of Town government and services, which are vital to public safety and confidence during this emergency. As such, this meeting will be conducted without a quorum of this body physically present in the same location.*

*At this time, I also welcome members of the public accessing this meeting remotely. Even though this meeting is being conducted in a unique manner under unusual circumstances, the usual rules of conduct and decorum apply.*

*Public comments will be limited to three minutes per person. Any person found to be disrupting this meeting will be asked to cease the disruption. If the disruptive behavior continues thereafter, that person will be removed from this meeting.*

*Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting must and will be done by Roll Call Vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their name, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know Law.*

Members and staff were polled individually: T. Finan was in his office alone; J. Langdell at her home in the room alone; P. Amato was at his home in the room alone; P. Basiliere was at his home in the room alone; S. Robinson was at her home in the room alone; D. Knott was in his office alone; L. Daley was in his office alone; J. Cleghorn was home in his office alone; D. Bouffard was home in her office alone.

**1. Call to order:**

D. Knott called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. indicating that tonight is a work session. L. Daley indicated that he provided a list of items the Planning Board accomplished in the last two years and items the Board wants to work on and also some housekeeping items.

**2. Work Session – 2021/2022 Goals & Objectives:**

L. Daley indicated he has identified goals and seeks guidance of what the Planning Board is thinking are the top priorities for this year and into next year. Some of the items include:

Housing Diversity – the housing diversity around town, recent subdivisions in the Residence A district have a minimum lot size of 15,000 sf, this discussion was about houses being built that fill the building envelope and then relief is being sought for accessory structures. In response to this, the Planning Board might want to consider smaller building envelopes. Another thought is to provide incentives for cluster developments for more town open space. The town may want to offer incentives for affordable housing for example. P. Amato asked for an

example. L. Daley said adding more open space for the town could be accomplished by clustering housing a little closer, right now our ordinance is pretty restrictive. P. Amato added that brooks or wetlands should also not be part of any lot. L. Daley agreed, indicating having historic features on a lot minimizes usable land. J. Langdell said in 2016 or 2017 the Planning board talked about housing diversity. In concord, a bill is going through about mini housing, asking if members think it will pass? J. Cleghorn said the housing bill being considered would prohibit towns from not allowing tiny homes by right. J. Langdell thinks there are some challenges in NH and it might be part of the diversity we might consider. L. Daley said in Peterborough, they allow up to 3 accessory units on one property; one of the challenges is that it might change the character of the neighborhood. That would be considered multi-family housing and could offer some diversity.

P. Amato said estate lots are typically larger lots and would only allow one home, but maybe we could look at allowing more than one home on those lots? L. Daley said there are a few estate lots currently in town and we have not addressed that in the ordinance; we can see how that all goes through legislation. D. Knott asked is there any benefit to the tiny homes? L. Daley said one challenge could be sharing a septic system for example. It could be looked at like The Reserve units. P. Amato asked about Hutchinson Point, those are smaller units. L. Daley said tiny homes are even smaller than those units, if they are on town water and sewer, tiny homes might work in Milford. J. Cleghorn asked if the Planning Board would want him to put together a presentation on tiny homes if that legislation goes through? D. Knott answered yes. J. Langdell said yes and said a lot of work was previously done with NRPC on that, so that could be used. L. Daley said the Telegraph building on School Street is coming before the Planning Board for a senior housing Site Plan. The maximum allowed density is only two units based on the property size. L. Daley has been asked by other residents about multi-family, but the ordinance is too restrictive, we need increased density in the downtown and we need to open up mixed use developments. The trade-off is parking. L. Daley feels that is not insurmountable and can be addressed. J. Langdell said maybe look at density to be used a certain distance from the oval but still be in Residence A. L. Daley agreed and appreciated that comment. J. Langdell said that would also help with pedestrian connectivity.

Oval District: D. Knott asked if there is any data that came in from businesses about having their employees park at the Police Station lot and not downtown? J. Langdell said the generations coming up have more people walking or riding bikes instead of using cars. L. Daley said people generally will walk about 500' from the parking but younger people are more willing to walk farther. We may want to have certain requirements for parking based on use in the oval. There has been some push back from the businesses downtown about parking in front of their businesses. L. Daley also is looking at parking facilities that might require some capital outlay. There are opportunities that the Town should consider. D. Knott noted another idea is to utilize parking areas that are not used 7 days a week or who might be interested in building a downtown parking lot or garage? J. Langdell added that a combination of both could also be considered.

T. Finan asked if there was any determination from the parking survey done in 2019/2020? L. Daley said using the Library parking lot was one item that came from the survey. The focus on Library parking at that time was with a new Library addition they wanted to wait until any improvements are made to the Library before making any parking changes. Another thought would be to utilize some of the church parking lots, for example, that are open mostly during the day and create shared arrangements with those churches/businesses and how to manage that. L. Daley said it might be different agreements with various businesses. L. Daley is looking at a parking garage and how to fund that and how to manage it. D. Knott asked if there were a private company interested in putting up a parking garage because they could benefit from it, there would need to be a process, but would there be a lot of steps to go through to make that happen? L. Daley does not believe it would be a major issue, it would require a Site Plan for that type of project but it would be an allowable use in a commercial zone.

L. Daley asked if there is interest in looking at the Downtown Improvements Committee again and having a member of the Planning Board participate? S. Robinson and P. Amato agreed to be on that committee. T. Finan asked if it has ever been considered to make Middle Street one-way and have diagonal parking which would add a few more spaces, there was a study done around 2009. L. Daley said things have changed since 2009, maybe now we could fit a few more spaces in there. L. Daley said the oval district and the improvements for safety, access and walkability will include Middle Street and improve access for larger trucks that are currently running over the oval curbing. Tonella Road and Clinton Street near the County Stores plaza should be looked at for possible widening to relieve that congestion. L. Daley also noted that CVS committed to \$175,000 toward a traffic light for Clinton Street, we could look at that and other intersections in that area. The Downtown Improvements

Committee will be looking at that and also at improving circulation in the area. The project lasts 3 years, 2021 is the first year of that project. The second year is the design and the third year is construction. VHP is the engineering consulting firm. L. Daley said we will be sending out a schedule for the involvement meetings soon. J. Langdell asked if Elm and Union Streets will also be looked at? L. Daley said they are part of the downtown area so yes, they will be looked at. We have \$2.1 million for this project; because of the timing when it was approved, the number is a little lower than that.

MS-4 Permit: The MS-4 permit is a 10 year permit; each year the town is required to do certain elements; this year we will focus on re-writing the storm water regulations, we will work with a consultant on that for Planning Board consideration. The goal is to bring forward a regulation for the 2022 town vote for Stormwater Management that the town is required to do maintenance. P. Amato asked what is wrong with the way the Town manages storm water now? L. Daley said the Town regulations currently do not line up with the MS-4 requirements. J. Langdell said Fred Elkind was working on this and we had to wait for the next update, now it is at the point that we need to come into compliance. J. Langdell asked if we have worked with the NRPC group on this? L. Daley said we have been very fortunate to work with them on MS-4.

Master Plan – Housing Chapter and Economic Development section. L. Daley asked what is the Planning Board interest in tackling one of these this year? We should address one of these in 2021. L. Daley wants to prioritize all of these items and identify what is most important. J. Langdell said the Housing Chapter is just an update and that would help manage the housing diversity discussion and then the Master Plan Chapter. P. Amato said we can start with tiny homes and that rolls together into the diverse housing chapter for the town. J. Langdell said since an Economic Development Chapter should be developed, has there been any thought given to rekindling the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)? L. Daley answered yes that is one of his goals short term and that group will be important to get that chapter moving. He also wants to get a proactive approach with the bus and getting guidance on where they see this committee going. L. Daley feels that we should solicit their input as it is essential to get them involved. J. Langdell said it could be a joint effort and have a Selectman member engaged as well as the Town Administrator. P. Amato noted we should frame it that way and present choices to them and talk about the ideas prior to making any decisions. L. Daley agreed.

J. Langdell suggested that stakeholders should meet with the representatives from large and small businesses in town and include Planning Board and Selectmen members to get it moving. L. Daley agreed and we can try to replicate that for EDAC with large and small businesses going forward. It should be a joint project with Planning Board and Selectmen members. L. Daley asked how the Board would like to prioritize the items. P. Amato indicated Housing and EDAC could both get done in one year, maybe two years. L. Daley noted that it is a lot of time involved in EDAC and it is a lot of work. Having diverse housing brings in different generations of people and how housing will attract younger and older people to this community. It is an opportunity for us to look at the population. D. Knott said part of this is for housing and part of this is for recreation opportunities. If businesses do not come, it is hard to develop housing. P. Amato said the business might want to come to Milford but their employees might not live in town. P. Amato said we are one town in the Souhegan Valley that employers draw on. J. Langdell said that NRPC just completed a housing assessment and that data is fresh. The housing and parking conversation could get started in 2021 and then go right into the Economic Development initiatives for 2022.

S. Robinson said the housing situation will change and the Town needs will change. J. Langdell added we know that things will change in the future and we know it will need to be looked at again because situations change. The population in town has changed over the last ten years in part due to the type of multi-family housing in town. S. Robinson said there are rental properties and multi-generational living needs to be considered. J. Langdell indicated we should include looking at estate housing, there was recently an initiative to do a co-housing project, asking if our regulations allow for that and would we want to allow that in the future? P. Amato said without subdividing a lot, what are the options for housing? Right now the ordinance does not deal with that at all, we need to start with the basic needs and then prioritize. S. Robinson thinks that diversity across the spectrum is very important. P. Basiliere said currently it does not allow more than one home on a parcel; the first priority should be parking and bringing something to voters in 2022. P. Basiliere thinks that should be the top priority to resolve. D. Knott agreed we would want a solution on downtown parking for next year. T. Finan agreed but the oval district density and expanding the oval district should come first, then downtown parking. P. Amato indicated the parking committee tried to talk to most businesses and there is not a consensus on if there is even a

parking problem; those were interesting meetings. J. Langdell said the parking study done by NRPC showed that there is not a problem. At least if we have a deliverable as a goal. L. Daley asked what if the outcome is that the town needs to purchase land? That is out of the purview of the Planning Board. J. Langdell said that is why we want the BOS to be involved.

J. Langdell asked about the oval district ordinance and an expansion of the district; we should look at both parking and outdoor seating. D. Knott said we have 9 regular Planning board meetings for the rest of 2021, should we talk about setting work sessions? P. Amato said last year we found there are different ways to get parking spaces other than a parking garage. Parking is not easy to solve. He asked L. Daley to pull together what came out of the parking committee to get everyone up to date at the first meeting, then we can talk about if we want to focus on that in 2021 or something else. L. Daley can pull that together for members. J. Langdell asked how difficult would it be to update the housing situation data in one month? L. Daley said he can do that. J. Langdell asked if we can have both topics on the agenda for the next Work Session but with a time limit. M. Thornton, ZBA member, said Milford has a lot of parking lots on the outskirts of town; we have schools downtown that are not in session during specific times or during certain events. That should be looked at. For the next session, L. Daley will provide an update on housing information and summarize the parking information from the parking committee to start the discussion of parking. D. Knott added there should be a limited time for discussion of each item. L. Daley said the housing update process will be to create the foundation for what the Planning Board can focus on. J. Langdell said the permitted uses, density, oval district and if we should expand -- it at all goes together. P. Amato said that also ties into Economic Development, to which J. Langdell agreed, it dovetails with it. We can lay the ground work to get this going again.

P. Amato said if we can get the BOS members to participate and get input from them at the beginning, it would be helpful. L. Daley indicated the outdoor dining issue has come up now that it is spring, the BOS was approached by Amigos about outdoor dining. Going forward, what is the best approach to accommodate the outdoor dining in Milford? Bedford and Nashua are going to allow it for 2021, by working with their DPW and Planning offices. Georgios has already reached out to Lincoln to ask about the parking lot tent like last fall. L. Daley indicated that the temporary outdoor seating would fall under Planning Board because it affects traffic and parking but after reviewing other communities, we could do an Administrative review that gets reviewed by OCD and Fire staff to ensure it meets the Covid guidelines and ADA to allow it to move forward through November 2021. If it is requested for permanent outdoor seating or expansion of outdoor dining, then the Planning Board would possibly like to have a Site Plan review to make it permanent on the Site Plan. J. Langdell asked are we talking about pandemic-related outdoor seating? L. Daley answered yes, during the pandemic, but this would allow an administrative process instead of a site plan (for pandemic outdoor seating). L. Daley is supportive of this to get the energy back downtown. If it is a request for a permanent outdoor seating arrangement, then it would require a site plan. J. Langdell agrees it is important that whatever the process is, that OCD needs to be part of it and not just the Fire Department. P. Basiliere is in favor of the outdoor dining but if it is going to be allowed all the time, we need to be aware of all the ramifications of that outdoor use and how that affects the other use.

L. Daley asked if the Planning Board is okay with an Administrative review for outdoor dining through the pandemic? D. Knott said he is, until the emergency orders are rescinded. P. Amato said the restaurants need more than 30% in order to stay in business. P. Basiliere indicated we need to ensure that the decisions are temporary and do not become permanent automatically and does not want it to set precedent. L. Daley will go before the BOS to address the outdoor dining for Amigos on March 22. J. Langdell noted that permit will be signed off by both groups (Fire and OCD) and will be temporary.

**3. Other Business:** March 16, 2021 T. Finan will act as Chair in the absence of D. Knott. April 6, 2021 there will be a work session.

**4. Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m. on a motion made by P. Amato and seconded by T. Finan. A poll was taken: P. Amato, yes; T. Finan, yes; P. Basiliere, yes; J. Langdell, yes; S. Robinson, yes; D. Knott yes. The next Planning Board meeting is March 16, 2021.

224 \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
225 Signature of the Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson:  
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228 **MINUTES OF THE 3/2/21 MEETING WERE APPROVED** \_\_\_\_\_

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