



TOWN OF WESTON

Planning Board Meeting January 13, 2021
 Document Prepared by Dana Orkin

Video Recording: <https://weston.vod.castus.tv/vod/?video=b1287d9e-a114-4b40-9dcb-421c632881e2>

Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM

Planning Board Members	Present	Staff Members	Present
Alicia Primer (AP) - Chair	yes	Imaikalani Aiu (IA) – Town Planner	yes
Leslie Glynn (LG)	yes	Dana Orkin (DO) - Asst. Town Planner	yes
Steve Oppenheimer (SO)	yes	Dave Conway (DC) - Consulting Civil Engineer	no
Sue Zacharias (SZ)	yes	Kim Turner (KT) - Consulting Landscape Architect	no
Alex Selvig (AS)	yes		

Italics indicate formal action taken

1.0 Public Comments

Josh Feinblum, 528 Glen Road, thanked the PB for their work.

2.0 New Business

2.1 Prioritization and Scheduling of Possible Planning Board Initiatives

Overview: AP stated that she foresaw three categories: zoning changes, rules and regulations, and sustainability. IA presented a spreadsheet showing which projects each PB member wanted to prioritize.

Discussion:

SZ asked what the PB’s mission statement was.

AP stated that it was to promote the semi-rural culture of the Town.

SZ stated that the project initiatives would have to reflect the mission statement just discussed.

AP stated the PB needed clear rules and regulations. She mentioned that tree removals and private irrigation wells were not clear enough.

AP stated that they would like to work on codifying the rules and regulations with the help of a consultant.

LG stated that each site and project are different and that the PB needs to apply some level of subjectivity. LG asked where the PB rules were. IA stated they were in the rules and regulations, design guidelines, and standard conditions in Certificate of Actions.

IA stated the consultant would be working on styling and organizing the guidelines into an easy to find way.

SO stated they needed to organize the rules and modify certain rules related to lumen counts and irrigation requirements.

AP stated they should find a way to incentivize the construction of smaller homes.

SZ stated they should start considering smaller compact areas of development on lots as an incentive to developers. She stated this would promote the preservation of open space.

Katarina Wilkins stated that there were great advantages living in compact areas. She mentioned the neighborhood feel that the developments could provide.

AP suggested a sub-committee to tackle this. Suggested a different review process for smaller houses than what the RGFA Site Plan review provides.

LG stated that the PB and Town Counsel could do research on this. Stated DO and IA are a good resource for the Town to use as well.

AP wants to reward/incentivize the construction of smaller homes.

Laurie Bent, Select Board, stated that other Towns have incentives such as tax breaks.

AS stated that clustered developments may not be realistic without alternative transportation options in Town.

IA added transportation to the list of prospective projects.

Al Aydelott, former PB chair, stated they used to have a clustered zone in Weston. He stated that they do have two multiple dwelling districts (A & B) in the bylaw. Stated the Town passed a clear-cutting bylaw. He did not know why it wasn't shown in the zoning bylaws or what happened to it. (It can be found in the zoning bylaw in Section VI.A.5.) Stated that they already have a clustered zone in Town called the Active Adult Residential Cluster (AARC).

AP stated that the current zoning bylaw needs to be updated and that the one online was dated 2015.

SZ stated recycling and reuse was an important topic the PB should address

LG stated she attended a meeting with MassRecycles and the DEP, and the byword was to "deconstruct" and not "demolish" to reuse the materials.

Phoebe Beierle, Sustainability Committee, stated Weston's Climate Action plan would include goals around deconstruction and reuse of construction materials.

LG stated that the construction of some of these larger houses is taking years and has an impact on the Town's infrastructure and neighborhoods. She stated that noise generation, construction hours, dust, and traffic were all adverse effects of long-term developments.

AP asked if changing construction hours would be a bylaw change.

IA stated that it would.

LG offered to have a zoom call with the Building Inspector on construction hours and schedules.

Aydelott stated that historically, construction projects had to be managed by a licensed builder. Stated that the rules have changed and that they no longer have to be managed by a licensed builder. Aydelott asked for clarity on this from the Building Inspector.

SZ offered that the PB adds a condition where the builder's contact needs to be distributed to the neighbors for any construction complaints.

AP wanted the building inspector to inform the PB who the enforcing party was for construction projects.

AP asked when they could expect a report back from the water group.

IA stated he did not think they would have a report until their demonstration landscapes were complete.

SZ stated DPW has started using smart water meter readers to assess water usage.

SZ believed it would be years away before they had a report on the water studies.

IA stated there was enough data to apply a Town-wide policy on irrigation requirements.

LG stated the PB should look into incentivizing smaller lawns.

AP suggested allowing MWRA irrigation if lawns were of a certain size.

AS stated the PB's standards for a private irrigation well was to lessen the impact on Town resources, which have burdened the Town in years past.

AP stated that the Town wanted to amend the zoning bylaw to remove restrictions of communication tower dimensions and have it become an unregulated use. IA stated that a communication tower was allowed by right, but currently the zoning dimensions needed to be followed.

AP offered to have a conversation with the Select Board regarding this.

LG stated that they should continue this discussion.

AP stated the bylaw should add the words "municipal use".

IA suggested that the PB could review under limited site plan approval if the proposed tower extended to a certain dimensional requirement.

SZ asked what the PB was going to do about lighting regulations.

IA stated they would put out an RFP for a lighting consultant.

AP asked if they wanted to look into regulating accessory apartments more.
SO stated it could be included into the Historic Overlay discussion.

AP stated that they were shooting for May Town meeting to address HHOD/Accessory apartments and the rules and regulations initiative. Incentivizing smaller homes and promoting net-zero energy houses could be targeted for Fall Town Meeting.

IA stated the discussion on construction impacts may require a Town vote. Stated the communication towers would also require a Town vote.

AP suggested that lighting be added to the rules and regulations initiative.

IA stated recycling, reconstruction, demo initiative would require a Town Meeting vote.

Public Comments:

Katharina Wilkins, Sustainability Committee, stated that Weston Ahead is the Town's Sustainability and Resiliency Plan.

Harvey Boshart, Select Board, stated that AS brought up a great point that the PB rules should be publicized a lot better. Asked what the process was for reviewing something such as impervious surfaces. IA stated the PB would hold a public hearing and review each application.

Adam Marcus, 104 Westcliff & 55 Love Lane, asked how the PB would collaborate with homeowners on properties that were listed in the Historic Overlay District.

AP stated they would have a public hearing on January 20th in which they can address that topic.

Gerri Scoll, Council on Aging, wanted the PB to consider that caregivers and various other persons may need to stay in accessory apartments.

AP read a note from Kristin Barbieri, which asked the PB to work more closely with the Tree Advisory Group (TAG).

LG stated that she had not met with TAG in a while, and stated that TAG has done a wonderful job working in the private and public tree advisory groups.

AP addressed a question from Weston resident Tom Timko about clear cutting by stating there were two tree groups in Town working on establishing a tree policy.

AS moved to adjourn, SZ seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Zoom Chat Box:

Diana Chaplin: Can we add Towers both water and communication?

Katharina Wilkins: Heh - everything is sustainability in this day and age :-)

Katharina Wilkins: I do have a question - could it be a general policy to begin with resident education before coming up with a new rule that will surely have a very specific purpose?

Lori Hess: Can the amount of non-permeable surface on a property be part of the discussion?

Katharina Wilkins: Not feedback but before punishing 'bad' behavior, getting people to avoid this behavior in the first place

Katharina Wilkins: By understanding its purpose

Alex Selvig: Lori Hess, we are very concerned and proactive with proponents on permeable vs. impermeable surfaces.

Town of Weston: Lori, this is something that Steve was particularly concerned with. I (or you can remind him) when we come to a time for additional initiatives. Note it's on the bottom of my list.

Lori Hess: Good to know--thanks

Diana Chaplin: We also have a lot more awareness about invasive plant and even animal species

Lori Hess: So 'limit lot Coverage' = non-preamble surface discussion.... Got it!

Katharina Wilkins: We would love to partner - Weston Ahead has a lot of the components being discussed here

Tom Timko: can we include the issue of clear cutting

Town of Weston: Tom we are currently working on this under the Private Tree Protection initiative.

Lori Hess: TAG would also love to partner in the sustainable planting work.

Josh Feinblum: Beyond trees alone, I wonder if there's a place that carbon neutrality in the discussion, especially for much larger homes.

Lori Hess: I also like the idea of carbon neutrality discussion especially for the very large homes

Town of Weston: Josh, yes there is and the canopy has been inventoried for carbon.

Diana Chaplin: It is very important when talking about trees to consider the impact of the stormwater rules. It is actually a crossroads between sustainability and human footprint. There is a balance here that must be considered.

Town of Weston: Added transportation to the list.

Josh Feinblum: One of the things I ponder is if we could do something similar for energy that we do stormwater. If you're building a new home that's bigger than what existed before, it needs to be a net zero add in terms of carbon-based energy consumption. Could also use length of site plan review or small increment up on RGFA if homes are energy neutral. E.g., if a new home owner can demonstrate their house (of a certain size) meets certain guidelines as it relates to consumption from the grid, site plan review can be lifted after 3 years instead of it being a perpetual restriction.

Town of Weston: Yes we could look at houses having to be greener the larger they get. I had started to work on something like this in Wellesley. One thing that made it easier there is they have an MLP so data is easier to get and it ties directly to a town service.

Josh Feinblum: <https://www.weston.org/DocumentCenter/View/583/2015-Annual-Town-Meeting-Warrant-PDF?bidId=>

Josh Feinblum: Article 22

Josh Feinblum: AMEND ZONING BY-LAW – SECTION VI.A. – CLARIFY/LIMIT LOT

CLEARING

Josh Feinblum: This the one @Al?

Josh Feinblum: Article 22 Explanation: The purpose of this article is to advise permit applicants of the town's preference for preserving mature trees when possible as a reflection of the town's rural character, and of the potential regulatory consequences of indiscriminate clear cutting. A two-thirds vote of Town Meeting is required for approval of this article.

Lori Hess: 56 deer path lane is about to clear the front lot of trees to put in a new 8000 sq ft home. Can you have them cease and desist on cutting them based on this by law?

barbarafullerton1: There are a lot of smaller houses in town that are getting purchased by developers, torn down, and huge houses are put in. Owners sometimes want to maximize the sale price as was mentioned earlier.

Katharina Wilkins: Laurie Bent is here to talk recycling and waste! But yes - Sustainability is liaising to that working group.

Phoebe Beierle: Weston's Climate Action Plan will include a goal around deconstruction and reuse of construction materials, esp if the Planning Board is interested in this topic.

Town of Weston: Phoebe, lets discuss the best way we can coordinate this effort.

Katharina Wilkins: Funding it an interesting conversation. Grants are available for mitigation as well as climate resilience

Phoebe Beierle: Absolutely. We will have a general goal in the plan but we need help crafting the details.

Diana Chaplin: Are we allowed to have two SelectBoard Members at this Zoom? Is this considered a quorum?

Town of Weston: Yes. Attendance is allowed by a quorum at a noticed meeting of another board.

barbarafullerton1: How would you persuade builders to recycle the building materials instead of throwing the wood into the dumpster?

Diana Chaplin: Ok thank you for clarifying

Town of Weston: Harvey has had his hand raised for a while now.

Lori Hess: Well said Leslie--I couldn't agree more....commercial scale projects in residential neighborhoods. They have enormous negative impact on the neighborhood

Diana Chaplin: Can you imagine the noise and disruption of massive multi family developments

Diana Chaplin: He or she

Town of Weston: He or she?

Diana Chaplin: Yes Al said homeowners and developers are he

Town of Weston: Gotcha, masculine pronoun. I understand.

Diana Chaplin: Thank you

Diana Chaplin: Are wells environmentally friendly?

Diana Chaplin: Our the plantings the board requires, limited water use plantings

Katharina Wilkins: Thanks Alex. Communicating those reasons is key

Diana Chaplin: Unintended consequences. Didn't Wayland have this problem?

Anne Grape: Will it be a 5G tower?

Town of Weston: I believe Sudbury has studied the wells, but I do not know what was the driving issue.

Diana Chaplin: Ok thx for letting me know

Phoebe Beierle: We are also working with the Climate Action Plan to expand env purchasing requirements and develop green building guidelines

Phoebe Beierle: And net zero energy homes!

Phoebe Beierle: The Climate Action Plan will be prioritizing ways we can reduce our GHG emissions. Green Building and energy efficiency incentives will be higher priority for us than upcycling for example.

Phoebe Beierle: Thank you for hosting this!