



TOWN OF BURLINGTON
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
MAY 12, 2021

RECEIVED

By Town Clerk's Office at 11:51 am, Jun 21, 2021

Members Present: Chairman Brenda Rappaport, Vice Chairman William Gaffney, Ernest Covino, Michael Espejo, and Barbara G. L'Heureux

Members Absent: Joseph Impemba and Clerk Paul Raymond

Staff Present: Planning Director Kristen Kassner, Senior Planner Elizabeth Bonventre, Assistant Planner Brady Caldwell, Principal Clerk Jennifer Gelinis

1. Call the Meeting to Order

Chairman Rappaport called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM. Ms. Kassner stated that the Town of Burlington will be holding the May 12, 2021 Planning Board as a virtual/electronic meeting due to the current State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 crisis. As such, the Governor issued an Executive Order on March 12, 2020 authorizing remote meeting under M.G.L c. 30A, Section 20. Mr. Caldwell stated that this meeting is being held via Cisco WebEx. The public can join the meeting via the WebEx link posted on the Town's website, or they can call in by dialing 617-315-0704. The meeting is being broadcast live on BCAT, and on cable networks and residents can email questions to Planning@burlington.org or on Facebook live.

On a Roll Call for attendance for the Planning Board: Chairman Rappaport voted present, Vice Chairman Gaffney voted present, Member Espejo voted present, Member Covino voted present, and Member L'Heureux voted present.

2. Special Planning Board Meeting to Discuss Town Meeting Warrant Article 33 of the May 2021 Town Meeting

Chairman Rappaport stated that Article 33 was submitted as one article but the Board voted on the clusters separately. Ms. Kassner stated that the Planning Board presented this article but 2 out of the 3 clusters were not voted favorable on. We have options to: vote on Article 33 as printed in the warrant, provide a motion to amend the article to Town Meeting and ask them to vote by Cluster; motion to amend Article 33 by removing Clusters B & C or to take no action and let the vote stand as it was made. The Board should have statements prepared in support of and in opposition of for Town Meeting. The statement of opposition could include concerns with height of the building and lack of current infrastructure. The Board voted unanimously in favor of Cluster A. Ms. Kassner stated that the job of the Planning Board is to hold a public hearing and make a recommendation. It is up to Town Meeting to decide.

Vice Chairman Gaffney stated that he thought since two of the three clusters were voted down, then the article would not move forward. We could amend the article for just Cluster A but that would be embarrassing that the article sponsored by this Board was not voted favorable on two of the clusters.

Member L'Heureux understands the concern of Vice Chairman Gaffney but we could handle this in two steps and move forward with Cluster A now and bring back Clusters B & C in September because they wanted to spend more time on these two clusters. The Land Use Committee has supported the entire article and it seems like there is a lot of support of this article and we could just let Town Meeting decide.

Member Covino stated that we did not vote on the article as submitted and we should take a vote on the entire article as a whole.



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Vice Chairman Gaffney stated that he is not in favor of voting for the article as a whole and they just received information today from staff that he has not yet had a chance to read.

Member L'Heureux stated that it was originally presented as all three clusters together and we instructed staff to separate the clusters. There was a lot of time and review of each cluster and she agrees with Member Covino and we should see how the entire article is voted.

Member Espejo stated that he would like to vote the article as submitted.

Ms. Kassner stated that the role of the Planning Board is to hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to Town Meeting. The options are to: vote on Article 33 as printed in the warrant, provide a motion to amend the article to Town Meeting and ask them to vote by Cluster; motion to amend Article 33 by removing Clusters B & C or to take no action and let the vote stand as it was made. Ms. Kassner that the information provided today was information on new grants from the State that help communities to be able to target funds available. What was sent was an expression of interest that was sent to the State and their response. It was not directly related to the IH rezone articles. It was feedback from the State to match grant opportunities.

Frank Monaco, Town Meeting Member – Mr. Monaco stated that he spoke with the Moderator and it appears it may be a late night tonight and asked if the zoning articles could be postponed to Monday night. If this article is defeated, the properties would remain IG and he does not see how that would be an improvement.

Member Covino stated that he also spoke with the Moderator and he also said that if it is getting late, he will ask Town Meeting to continue the zoning to another night.

Rick Parker, Town Meeting Member Precinct #7 – Mr. Parker echoes Mr. Monaco's question. He has confusion of how the process works but the Master Plan talks about diversifying businesses and we need to get the tool set to get Life Science into Burlington. Cluster A would be inviting for a big company but Clusters B & C are more for small Life Science businesses that maybe are just starting out but could grow. The Board of Health has said that they will oversee the Life Science safety concerns and he was surprised that the Planning Board did not support this article as a whole. We are going to miss out on additional commercial base if this is not approved.

Kelly Pappas, Town Meeting Member Precinct #5 – Ms. Pappas stated that traffic has always been an issue and Life Science is proven to have less traffic and we need to get day time workers back into the community.

Member Covino stated that he was at the last Board of Health meeting and they spoke about this subject for about 45 minutes. The Life Science may be a by right use under zoning but they are still required to get permits and have oversight from the Board of Health.

Bruce Morey, Town Meeting Member Precinct #1 – Mr. Morey stated that he is concerned about the mixed message being sent. He thought this was a no brainer and should have been approved. The normal business offices are not coming back. This is the right time to change the zoning to try to get Life Sciences into Burlington.



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Melissa Tintocalis, Economic Development Director – Ms. Tintocalis stated that article allows Life Science in these areas but it also diversifies and produces complimentary uses and what the market preferences exist. This would also comply with the Master Plan. Since the pandemic there has been a decrease in office demand by 15% - 20% and this change will help us try to fill the empty office space and get people back into Burlington that will help boost the service industry also.

Sean Curtin, Town Meeting Member Precinct #6 – Mr. Curtin stated that he works in construction and they are repositioning old office space for Life Sciences in other communities (Waltham, Watertown, Cambridge, etc.) and Burlington is already behind.

MOTION - Member Espejo made a motion to vote in favor of Article 33 as written. The motion was seconded by Member Covino and voted 4-1-0. On a roll call vote: Chairman Rappaport voted Yes, Vice Chairman Gaffney voted No, Member Espejo voted Yes, Member Covino voted Yes, and Member L'Heureux voted Yes.

Vice Chairman Gaffney stated that he feels this vote was forced.

MOTION - Member Covino made a motion to adjourn the May 12, 2021 Planning Board meeting at 7:03 PM. The motion was seconded by Member Espejo and unanimously voted 5-0-0. On a roll call vote: Chairman Rappaport voted Yes, Vice Chairman Gaffney voted Yes, Member Covino voted Yes, Member L'Heureux voted Yes and Member Espejo voted Yes.

*Respectfully Submitted by Dawn Cathcart,
Recording Clerk*