

City of Woonsocket, RI

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 | 6:00PM
Location: Teleconference via Zoom, Meeting ID: 824 7239 6981

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Finlay called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

II. Attendance Review:

Members in Attendance:

1. Ken Finlay, Chairman
2. Roji Eappen, Vice-Chairman
3. Jon Pratt
4. Wendall Gardner

Members not in Attendance:

1. Ron Miller, Secretary

Others in Attendance:

1. Kevin Proft, Administrative Officer
2. Theresa Dunigan, Recording Secretary

III. Remote Meeting Announcement:

The chairman reviewed the Remote Meeting Announcement:

General Proceedings

1. Each agenda item will be read in-full to ensure it is clear what matter is before the board.
2. Members should request permission to speak from the Chair prior to speaking. The Chair should recognize the Member by name.
3. Members will identify themselves each time before they speak.
4. All votes should be conducted by roll call.

Public Comment

1. The public will be muted by the meeting administrator until the Chair opens the floor to public comment, at which point all members of the public will be unmuted.
2. Members of the public wishing to comment should use the “raise hand” tool on their zoom screen so they may be called on by the chair to speak. If this method proves to be too challenging, the meeting administrator will mute all members of the public and then unmute each member of the public one-by-one and ask if they have a comment.
3. Members of the public wishing to comment should state their first/last name and address for the record, then state their comment.

Documentation

1. Documents associated with the items being discussed at the meeting are available to the public on the Planning Board's webpage on the Woonsocket website. <https://www.woonsocketri.org/planning-board/pages/meeting-files>

Technical Difficulties

1. If remote access is interrupted for all participants and cannot be restored within 10 minutes, the remainder of the meeting items will be continued to the following meeting.
 - a. The board will preemptively vote to continue items not addressed due to potential technical difficulties to the next meeting to avoid the need to re-advertise said items. The date of said meeting must be included in the motion to continue.

IV. Correction/Approval of Minutes:

Motion to APPROVE THE AMENDED MINUTES for December 1, 2020 meeting with noted correction:

Member Pratt

Second: Member Gardner

Discussion: Chairman Finlay requested the repeated word "the" at the top of page 3 be deleted.

Vote:

Chairman Finlay	Yes
Vice-Chairman Eappen	Yes
Member Gardner	Yes
Member Pratt	Yes

Motion Passed **4-0-0**

V. Meeting Business:

- A. *Election of Planning Board Officers | The Planning Board will elect its slate of 2021 officers.*

Chairman Finlay turned over the meeting to Vice-Chairman Eappen for the discussion and vote for the Chairman position.

MOTION TO NOMINATE Member Kenneth Finlay for the Chairman position: Vice-Chairman

Eappen

Second: Member Gardner

Discussion:

Vote:

Member Finlay	Abstained
Vice-Chairman Eappen	Yes
Member Gardner	Yes
Member Pratt	Yes

Motion Passed **3-0-1**

Vice-Chairman Eappen turned over the meeting to Chairman Finlay.

MOTION TO NOMINATE Member Eappen for the Vice-Chairman position: Member Gardner

Second: Member Pratt

Discussion:

Vote:

Chairman Finlay	Yes
Member Eappen	Abstained
Member Gardner	Yes
Member Pratt	Yes

Motion Passed **3-0-1**

Chairman Finlay spoke with Member Miller prior to the meeting, and Member Miller expressed interest in remaining as Secretary.

MOTION TO NOMINATE Member Miller for the Secretary position: Member Gardner

Second: Vice-Chairman Eappen

Discussion:

Vote:

Chairman Finlay	Yes
Member Eappen	Yes
Member Gardner	Yes
Member Pratt	Yes

Motion Passed **4-0-0**

- B. *Annual Report of the Planning Board | According to the Woonsocket City Charter and Rhode Island General Law, the Planning Board is required to “submit an annual report to the mayor, summarizing the work of the preceding year with recommendations as to plans and actions for future development.” A report was never completed for 2019 due, in part, to the COVID-19 epidemic. The Planning Board will review a draft, combined 2019 & 2020 Annual Report of the Woonsocket Planning Board and may vote to approve the draft report at this meeting.*

Member Pratt highlighted a typo in the second paragraph. Mr. Proft said the report is a summary of:

- Planning Board Members and Staff over the past two years
- All subdivisions (major, minor, and administrative) that have passed
- Any subdivisions that have not yet met their agreed conditions for final plan approval
- Design review overlay district items (signage and complete reviews)
- Ordinances that required Planning Board involvement
- Subdivision Amendments
- Two resolutions for the Historic Structures Floating Overlay District

- Plans/Actions for Future Development
 - Comprehensive Plan Update
 - Regulatory Reforms – Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations
 - Natural Hazard Training for Member Gardner
 - Brownfields Program
 - Truman Drive Bikeway
 - Downtown Grocery Store
 - River Street Park at Market Square

Mr. Proft noted that he will include an additional section for future annual reports to provide information on the outcomes of the Ordinances that the Planning Board provided recommendation to the City Council on.

Vice-Chairman Eappen pointed out an inconsistent language used in the officer term information on the first page of the report, and Mr. Proft said he would correct the wording.

Mr. Proft informed the Board that a member of the City Council requested the final report to the Council as a communication item after the Mayor has reviewed the report. The Chairman said the report is a public document.

Motion to APPROVE the combined 2019 & 2020 Annual Report and submit to the Mayor: Member Gardner

Second: Vice-Chairman Eappen

Discussion:

Vote:

Chairman Finlay	Yes
Vice-Chairman Eappen	Yes
Member Gardner	Yes
Member Pratt	Yes

Motion Passed 4-0-0

VI. Administrative Officer's Report:

The members reviewed the written Administrative Officer's report prior to the meeting.

Chairman Finlay asked if Horsley Whitten (the firm hired for the Comprehensive Plan Update) have visited the city yet. Mr. Proft said the meetings have been over the phone. Vice-Chairman Eappen asked if the Board members will be updated as certain milestones/deliverables are completed. Mr. Proft replied that the Board will be updated as the Comprehensive Plan is the responsibility of the Planning Board. There will be a steering committee that will meet regularly after the preliminary information-gathering phase. A Planning Board member will be included in the committee, and Mr. Proft said he could include information in his monthly Administrative Officer's Report. In addition to the committee, there will also be public outreach sessions.

Mr. Proft confirmed the Comprehensive Plan's overall tone will be more innovative & readable, and a vision-oriented planning document coupled with appendices to include the nuts and bolts required by state law. Scott Gibbs, the previous Interim Director of Planning (resigned at the end of December), was a driving force for the unique approach to the Comprehensive Plan and will still be involved in crafting the overall build of the Plan.

Vice-Chairman Eappen asked if there are ways to future-proof the Comp Plan to avoid it being out of date the next time a disruptive technology is introduced. Mr. Proft said that was a good point and will be taken into consideration throughout the process. He will speak with Horsley Whitten about what steps can be proactively taken to help support the Plan in the coming years. There were no further questions.

Chairman Finlay said the development at Diamond Hill Road/Social Street began putting up steel for the Family Dollar building. He was pleased at the speed of the developers.

Mr. Proft informed the Board that the Oak Grove developer, Eric Yeghian, provided the January report as required in a Phase IV bond approval condition. He read the report to the members and stated Mike Debrousse confirmed the accuracy of the report with a note that erosion control must follow the approved construction plans as the work continues. Chairman Finlay requested the minutes note the report was received two weeks prior to the meeting.

VII. Next Meeting Date:

Tuesday, February 2, 2021 | Online via Zoom

VIII. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn (6:41 PM): Member Gardner

Second: Vice-Chairman Eappen

Discussion: None

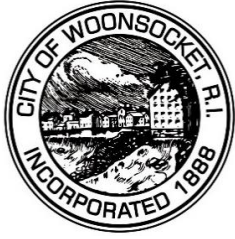
Vote:

Chairman Finlay	Yes
Vice-Chairman Eappen	Yes
Member Gardner	Yes
Member Pratt	Yes

Motion Passed 4-0-0

Addendum

Annual Report of the Woonsocket Planning Board - 2019 & 2020



City of Woonsocket, RI

Department of Planning & Development

To: Lisa Baldelli-Hunt, Mayor
Cc: Woonsocket Planning Board

From: Kevin Proft, City Planner

Date: December 30, 2020

Re: 2019 & 2020 Annual Report of the Woonsocket Planning Board

According to the Woonsocket City Charter and Rhode Island General Law, the Planning Board is required to “submit an annual report to the mayor, summarizing the work of the preceding year with recommendations as to plans and actions for future development.” A report was never completed for 2019 due, in part, to the Covid-19 epidemic. The following is a combined 2019 & 2020 Annual Report of the Woonsocket Planning Board. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Board Members

Membership on the Woonsocket Planning Board remained relatively stable during the past two years. In May 2019, Ron Miller filled the vacancy created upon the resignation of Rebecca Capwell in late 2018 and continues to serve. In November 2019, Wendall Gardner filled the vacancy created upon the resignation of Stephen Crisafulli in September 2019 and continues to serve. Kenneth Finlay, Roji Eappen, and Jon Pratt served throughout 2019 and 2020.

- Kenneth Finlay
 - Chairman, January 2019 - Present
- Roji Eappen
 - Member, January 2019 - May 2019 | Vice-Chairman, May 2019 - Present
- Stephen Crisafulli,
 - Secretary, January 2019 - September 2019
- Ron Miller
 - Member, May 2019 - December 2019 | Secretary, December 2019 - Present
- Wendall Gardner
 - Member, November 2019 - Present
- Jonathan Pratt
 - Ex-Officio Member, January 2019 to Present

Personnel

The Planning Department has continued to have turnover at both the Director and City Planner position. In June 2019, Kevin Proft was hired as City Planner after the resignation of Ian McElwee in March 2019. In April 2019, Steven Lima was hired as Interim Director of Planning & Development after the resignation of Joel Mathews in February 2019. Scott Gibbs served as Interim Director of Planning & Development in the time between Mr. Mathews resignation and Mr. Lima's appointment. In April 2020, Mr. Gibbs served again as Interim Director of Planning and Development after the resignation of Mr. Lima in January. Mr. Gibbs plans to resign in January 2021.

City Planner

- Ian McElwee
 - January 2019 – March 2019
- Kevin Proft
 - June 2019 - Present

note: Steven Lima served as Interim City Planner between Mr. McElwee's and Mr. Proft's tenure.

Director

- Joel Mathews
 - January 2019 – February 2019
- Scott Gibbs
 - February 2019 – April 2019
- Steven Lima
 - April 2019 – January 2020
- Scott Gibbs
 - April 2020 – Present

Subdivisions & Land Development Plans

Administrative

- 72 Mowry St, rear (Lot 11-349) & (Lot 11-164) | revise property lines | June 21, 2019
- 234 Patton Rd (Lot 57-61) & (Lot 57-88) | revise property lines | September 4, 2019
- 74 Broad St (Lot 10-174), 34 Jenkes St (Lot 10-182) & 50 Jenkes St (Lot 10-214) | revise property lines and add access easements | May 2020
- 0 & 46 Thomas St (Lots 16-140 & 344) | revise property lines | November 20, 2020
- 62 Eleventh Ave (Lot 2-220) & 0 Chapel St (2-229) | revise property line and add access easement | September 1, 2020 (conditions of approval remain outstanding)
- 793 & 805 Manville Rd (Lots 29-208 & 209) | revise property line | August 31, 2020
- 0 Prince St (Lots 38-561 & 562) | lot merger | October 19, 2020
- 0 & 37 Garden St (Lots 35-50 & 124) | lot merger | November 16, 2020
- 122 Clinton St (Lot 14-403), 0 & 77 Federal St (14-224 & 404) | lot merger | December 1, 2020 (conditions of approval remain outstanding)

Minor

- Combined Preliminary and Final Plan Approval for a 250-kw solar energy system at 235 Singleton Street (Lot 7-17) | Applicant: Singleton Group LLC | August 6, 2019
- Preliminary Plan Approval for a two-lot subdivision of developed land so that the existing buildings each have their own lot at 18 Oak Hill Ave (Lot 21-17) | Applicant: Casey Tenney | September 3, 2019 | Administrative Final Plan Approval: October 25, 2019
- Combined Preliminary & Final Plan Approval for a two-lot subdivision of developed land to create a new, developable lot at 1725 Mendon Road | Applicant: Mike Drainville, D&G Properties, LLC | November 14, 2019
- Preliminary Plan Approval for a two-lot subdivision for the construction of two 2-family homes | Applicant: Ramon Sosa | October 6, 2020 | Administrative Final Plan Approval: October 30, 2020

Major

- Combined Master and Preliminary Plan Approval for the extension of Manila Avenue approximately 160 feet to provide frontage for 4 existing lots | Applicant: Colluch Organization | September 4, 2019 | Administrative Final Plan Approval: November 19, 2019
- Master Plan Approval for the commercial development of 1099 & 1139 Social Street (O'Reilly and Family Dollar) | Applicants: Randy Miron, Bohler & GREP 1099 Social LLC | March 3, 2020 | Preliminary Plan Approval: June 2, 2020 | Administrative Final Plan Approval: October 8, 2020
- Combined Master and Preliminary Plan Approval for a light-manufacturing facility (RESH) at Lots 51-1, 51-108 & 51-109 off Park East Drive | Applicant: Redevelopment Agency of Woonsocket | July 9, 2020 | Administrative Final Plan Approval: Pending – Applicant must address conditions of approval
- Combined Preliminary and Master Plan Approval for a two-lot subdivision of industrially-zoned land to create a new, developable lot at 85 Fairmount Street | Applicant: Mizner Holdings, LLC | September 1, 2020 | Administrative Final Plan Approval: October 19, 2020

Design Review Overlay District

Sign Reviews

- Abacus | 25 John A Cummings Way (Lot 22-177)
- Beauchemin Lumber | 334 Social Street (Lot 22-169)
- BL Beauty | 66 Main Street (Lot 14-86)
- CLS Plasma Center | 1500 Diamond Hill Road (Lot 46-29)
- Cube Smart | 1700 Diamond Hill Road (Lot 46-13)
- CVS – wall signs | 1054 Cass Ave (Lot 48-44)
- CVS – window signs | 1054 Cass Ave (Lot 48-44)
- Dollar Tree | 401 Clinton St (Lot 22-180)

- Dominos | Social Street (22-191)
- Metro by T-Mobile | 1079 Social Street (21-142), 278 Main Street (14-72), 403 Park Avenue (15-254)
- Oak Street Health | 2000 Diamond Hill Road (Lot 52-1)
- REPM | 600 Cass Ave (Lot 39-6)
- Rise Prep Mayoral Academy | 30 Cumberland St (Lot 36-8)
- Seven Hills | 68 Cumberland Road (Lot 36-10)
- Weight Watchers | 1500 Diamond Hill Road (Lot 46-29)

Full Design Review

- 43 Railroad Street – renovation of one deteriorated mill building into mixed-use residential/commercial (architectural review only – site review still required) | Lot (14-205)
- Citizens Bank ATM | 2000 Diamond Hill Road (Lot 52-1)
- Consumers Propane – construction of new warehouse structure | 139 Hamlet Ave (Lot 28-151)
- Fairmount Solar – 1 MW solar array on brownfield site | 85 Fairmount Street (Lot 8-24)
- Family Dollar and O'Reilly Auto Parts – commercial development | 1099 & 1139 Social Street (35-22 & 35-24)
- Lee's Block – replacement of upper story windows | 66 Main Street (Lot 14-86)
- Mendon Road Solar – 1 MW solar array off Park East Drive | 0 Mendon Road (Lot 50-4) (conditions of approval remain outstanding)
- Millrace Complex – renovation of three deteriorated mill buildings into mixed-use residential/commercial | South Main Street and Island Place (Lots 14-114, 371 & 387)
- Singleton Street Solar – 250 KW solar array | Singleton Street (Lot 7-17)

River Corridor Overlay District

- Millrace Complex – renovation of three deteriorated mill buildings into mixed-use residential/commercial | South Main Street and Island Place (Lots 14-114, 371 & 387)
- Narragansett Electric Company – fence replacement around electrical transfer station (Lot 15-21)
- Fairmount Solar – 1 MW solar array on brownfield site | 85 Fairmount Street (Lot 8-24)
- Singleton Street Solar – 250 KW solar array | Singleton Street (Lot 7-17)

Petitions

The Planning Board provided advice and recommendation to the City Council on the following Ordinances and Resolutions:

- Ordinance 18-O-66 – In Amendment of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Appendix C, Entitled “Zoning” Various Technical Changes.
 - Added regulations pertaining to Brewpubs
- Ordinance 19-O-05 – In Amendment of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Appendix C, Entitled “Zoning” Section 4.5

- Altered Public and Semi-Public Uses category of the Use Table.
- Ordinance 19-O-49 – In Amendment of The Code Of Ordinances, City Of Woonsocket, Rhode Island Appendix C, Entitled “Zoning” Sections 15.3 And 16.7 Regulating Zoning Board Of Review Fees
 - Altered fee schedule for Zoning Board of Review applications
- Ordinance 19-O-50 – In Amendment of the Code of Ordinances, City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island Appendix C, Entitled “Zoning” Zoning Board Of Review Procedures.
 - Allowed a Dimensional Variance and Special Use Permit to be granted for the same application.
- Ordinance 19-O-54 – In Amendment of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Appendix C, Entitled “Zoning” Various Technical Changes and Clarifications.
 - Made changes to requirements within the C-2 district and the Downtown Overlay District.
- Ordinance 19-O-60 – In Amendment of the Code of Ordinances, City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island Appendix C, Entitled “Zoning” Regulating Compassion Centers.
- Ordinance 19-O-61 – Amending the Code of Ordinances, City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Appendix C, Entitled “Zoning”, Section 4 and Section 18.
 - Altered Public and Semi-Public Uses category of the Use Table.
- Ordinance 20-O-33 – Amending the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island Amendment #2020-CPA-01 – Change in Future Land Use Map: Parcels 36-76 (Elm Street)
 - Changed parcel 36-76 from Mixed-Use Commercial/Industrial to High-Density Residential on the Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Map.
- Ordinance 20-O-34 – In Amendment of the Code of Ordinances, City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Appendix C, Entitled “Zoning” Zoning Map.
 - Rezoned parcel 36-76 from MU-2 to R-4 (restricted to single family development)
- Ordinance 20-O-36 – In Amendment of the Code of Ordinances, City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Appendix C, Entitled “Zoning” Section 12.5 Downtown Overlay District
 - Limited uses allowed in the Downtown Overlay District
- Ordinance XX-O-XX – In Amendment of the Code of Ordinances, City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island Appendix C, Entitled “Zoning” Various Technical Changes (August 5, 2019)
 - Improved ability of Zoning Official to take enforcement actions against violations, and regulated home occupations and storage of commercial vehicles in residential zones.
- Ordinance XX-O-XX – Amending the Code of Ordinances, City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Appendix C, Entitled “Zoning”, Section 2, Section 12, And Section 18 (August 5, 2019)

- Corrected formatting issues associated with the Historic Structures Floating Overlay Zone.
- Resolution 19-R-63 – Referring a Request for Designation of Historic Structures Floating Overlay District for Property at Woonsocket Assessor’s Plat 6, Lot 1 [Former Fifth Avenue School] to the Woonsocket Planning Board.
- Resolution 20-R-13 – Referring a Request for Designation of Historic Structures Floating Overlay District Property Known as Woonsocket Assessor’s Plat 10, Lot 22, Former National Guard Armory, to the Woonsocket Planning Board.
- Amendment to Section 8 of the Subdivision Regulations relating to apportionment of public right-of-ways.

Plans and Actions for Future Development

The Planning Board and Department of Planning & Development intend to focus on the following areas in 2021 and beyond:

- Comprehensive Plan – The City is developing a new comprehensive plan with the assistance of Horsley Witten Group. The new comprehensive plan should be completed within 18 months (July 2022).
- Regulatory Reform – The current versions of the Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations are, in many respects, ill-equipped to facilitate a smooth and predictable development process and often discourages beneficial development. In the short-term, the Board and Department will work to correct the most egregious issues with the documents. In the long-term, the Board and Department will work to amend critical sections of the document based largely on the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Planning Board Training: Pursuant to RIGL 45-22-7, each Planning Board member is expected to complete two hours of training on development in a floodplain. All members of the Board have completed this training except for Wendall Gardner who came onto the board following the original training session. The City Planner will work with Mr. Gardner to complete this training in 2021.
- Brownfields Program: The City’s Brownfields Program is currently managing a \$300,000 EPA assessment grant and two DEM grants (one assessment, one cleanup) totaling nearly \$400,000. The City has targeted 719 River Street, 20 Privilege Street, 162 Main Street, 1265 Mendon Road, 92 & 176 Sunnyside Ave, and the Seville Dye property on First Ave with these funds. The Board and Department will continue to move these properties forward in the brownfields process and continue to apply for state and federal funding in 2021 and beyond.
- Truman Drive: The City has secured \$25,000 of funding to complete a conceptual and schematic design for Truman Drive. The intension is to convert the road to two lanes and create a linear greenway between the bikeway and the traffic lanes. In 2021, the City will hire a firm to develop these preliminary documents and then apply for money to complete subsequent phases of the

project. RIDOT, the SNEP Network, and Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, among others, have shown interest in funding the engineering and construction phases of the project.

- Downtown Grocery Store: The City has secured \$25,000 of funding to develop a preliminary study to determine the feasibility of a downtown grocery store. The City and Woonsocket Health Equity Zone are considering various models including a co-op, small independent grocer, or a nonprofit store (e.g. Daily Table in the Boston area). In 2021, the City will hire a firm to develop the study. The study will provide the City and HEZ with guidance on next steps in the process.
- River Street Park at Market Square: The City has secured funding from RI Commerce Corporation for improvements to River Street Park (the former Aly's Pub). The funding can only be used for construction and has been extended for multiple years to allow for the City to develop design plans. The Board and Department will ensure the design of the park is completed in 2021 so construction may begin on the project.