

**LOWELL PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
JULY 10, 2014**

President Kelley called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Recording Secretary Dianna Cade called the roll. Members answering the roll call were Richard Kelley, James Konradi, Elias Carras and Donald Parker. Craig Early, Matt Felder and Robert Philpot were not in attendance. Also present were Department of Public Works Director Greg Shook, Planning Consultant Jim Mandon, Town Engineer Craig Hendrix and Chief of Police, Town of Lowell, Eric Matson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Carras made a motion to approve the June 12, 2014 regular meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Konradi and carried with four ayes.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Kelley stated that the first order of new business was to discuss Town Standards. Mr. Mandon stated that he was going to defer to Mr. Parker on which Town Standards that we are going to be talking about tonight. Mr. Mandon stated that the ones that he is familiar with are the standards that are within the subdivision code #155.195 Principals and Standard of Design. Mr. Mandon stated that the subdivision code covers the design principals that are imposed on private developers when they are putting in the Town's infrastructure. He discussed the different design standards that are covered under this code. It covers every aspect of the Town's infrastructure that are installed by private developers. Mr. Mandon stated that I understand that Craig Hendrix is also working on Town Standards. Mr. Mandon stated that he wants to make sure that the two are consistent. Mr. Mandon stated that he was not sure what standards Mr. Hendrix was working on and he asked if we were changing them or complimenting them. Mr. Carras asked when the last time was that we changed them. Mr. Mandon stated that the zoning and subdivision code were approved the same year. Mr. Mandon stated that it was the document that was approved about two years ago after a public hearing that included the changes that were made to the comprehensive plan from Ball State. Mr. Parker asked Mr. Hendrix what standards he was working on. Mr. Hendrix described the standards that he was working on and explained that they were construction standards. Mr. Hendrix stated that the design standards specify how big your street should be, the standards that he is working on specify how thick the asphalt should be on that street. Mr. Hendrix explained that the standards that he is working on, the Town adopts them, but you can easily change them or modify them. Mr. Hendrix explained that the construction standards are not an act of the Town Council. Mr. Carras asked about building materials that are currently being used by other Towns. Discussion followed.

Mr. Mandon stated that the difference between the two standards is that the subdivision code is design standards and Mr. Hendrix is working on construction standards which include specifications. Mr. Parker stated that some of the things that he is concerned about and what prompted this, was that this meeting tonight was going to be canceled and

he feels that we need to have meetings and discussions. Mr. Parker stated that just because what was written by Ball State did not apply and we went and changed it does not mean that those are the standards that we want to have. Mr. Parker discussed the standards for the base of subdivision roads. Mr. Shook stated that was what Craig Hendrix was working on. Discussion followed on standards for roads.

Mr. Parker stated that his concern is, that we need to move quicker on these construction standards. Mr. Parker stated that he feels that we missed the start of the construction season. Mr. Parker stated that we know we need to increase the standards for paving, we realize that they are okay, but ideally if we want to keep the Town from having to go back in two years and doing road repairs we need to increase the standards. Mr. Parker asked how do we get this done. Mr. Parker stated we need to get the balling rolling on some of these standards that are more important. Mr. Parker stated that he knows of four or five houses that are being built in Town and we do not have the standards in place to talk about rear and side yard drains. Mr. Parker asked what should we be prioritizing and how do we get them done I know there is whole list of them. Mr. Parker stated we need to educate this Board on why they these standards are beneficial and we need to get some of these implemented. Mr. Parker stated the road standards need to be implemented by next March when the season starts. Mr. Mandon stated that I agree that we should work on these standards, but I think that we should keep the design standards separate from the construction standards because they are completely different. Discussion followed. Mr. Mandon stated that the staff could review the design standards and present recommendations at your next meeting. Mr. Mandon stated that the design standards that are in the subdivision code are rigorous, they are well done and are pretty tough standards to meet. It costs the developer a lot of money to comply with these standards, the Town's infrastructure benefits, and you save money on maintenance. Mr. Parker stated that the developer passes his cost to the home buyer. Mr. Mandon stated that the construction specs are written by the Town's Engineer, the design standards are written by the Town's Planner. Mr. Parker stated that he would be more concerned about the design standards. Mr. Parker asked if those are the standards that are imposed on developers when you have new housing starts or new subdivision development. Mr. Mandon stated yes, it does not tell you how to put the road in, it tells you where to put the road, what kind of curbs are allowed, what kind of radius, what type of grades and so on.

Mr. Parker asked about the procedure on bonds. Mr. Mandon stated that there is a very rigorous procedure for bonds, and that it has not been applied to any new subdivisions since it has been passed.

Mr. Parker asked if Mr. Mandon and the staff could suggest some revisions to some of the more important standards that need to be changed. Mr. Parker stated that the standard for the base on subdivision roads should be top priority. Mr. Parker stated that in The Oaks of Cedar Creek subdivision the roads are crumbling and some of the other subdivision roads are in the same disarray. Mr. Parker stated that the Town is having to fix the roads within two to three years of development. Discussion followed on materials and design standards of roadways.

Mr. Parker stated that it has been mentioned that when you impose these stricter standards it puts a burden on the contractor. He stated that he personally does not believe that statement, he feels the contractors pass it along to the home buyers. Mr. Parker stated that in the future there could be pressure from the contractors or even local politicians on these standards that we are imposing. Mr. Parker stated that if you want to have good infrastructure then we have to stick to our guns and push for higher standards. Mr. Carras asked what the base requirement was on roads. Mr. Hendrix confirmed what the base was. Discussion followed on sub grade treatment and testing that would be required.

Mr. Hendrix stated that these are not unusual standards. Mr. Kelly asked if the surrounding communities have these type of standards. Mr. Hendrix stated that he is not as familiar with the developmental standards as Mr. Mandon is, but we are not exceeding any other community on construction specifications. Mr. Mandon stated that he agreed that there are varying levels of enforcement for the specifications but that the specifications are similar. Mr. Mandon stated that he believed that you should hold the developer to the same standards that you hold yourself to. Mr. Parker stated that the Town employees are having to fix infrastructure in subdivisions that are only two or three years old. Mr. Parker stated that we should not have to be fixing infrastructure that is only a few years old and the Town should not have to fix these issues, they should be done right by the developer at the onset. Mr. Parker asked if the staff could look into these design and construction standards and evaluate what needs to be changed. Mr. Mandon stated that Mr. Hendrix, Mr. Parker and himself should meet and discuss what changes need to be made to both sets of standards and present something at the next meeting. Mr. Parker stated that he would like to see the top three or five standards evaluated. He stated that the street standards should be addressed as top priority, Mr. Parker stated we now have an agenda for next month.

Mr. Hendrix asked about the bond procedure, he stated that he did forward some information to Dave Westland and was not sure of the status. Discussion followed on the bond procedure. Mr. Parker asked Mr. Mandon, Mr. Hendrix and Mr. Kramer to review the bond procedure and present it to the Board at the next meeting.

Mr. Kelly stated that the next topic would be to discuss the site plan review. Mr. Mandon explained the site review process on the state and local level and what the staff reviews on development. Mr. Mandon stated that we do have an ordinance in place for staff site review, and he discussed the code that we have for site review.

Mr. Parker, referring to a map, asked how do we address the traffic issues, that our police department is going to be dealing with for the next fifteen years because of what we have inherited. Mr. Parker discussed the curb cuts and/or lack of on Commercial Ave. He referenced several businesses including, Bardens Animal Clinic, Burger King, Mi Ranchito, the car wash building and the old Red Line Auto Parts building. Discussion followed on the traffic congestion in this area of Route 2.

Mr. Parker asked if the business that is moving into 1682 E. Commercial will need to provide site plans to the review committee. Mr. Mandon stated no, because he is not expanding the size of the building. Mr. Parker asked how we can correct what is going to be a traffic nightmare. Mr. Mandon stated that traffic issues need to be addressed as one major unit. It would be very difficult to impose restrictions on each individual development and have all that match when you are done. Discussion followed on the parking at 1682 E. Commercial. Mr. Parker asked if they have the tools in place to require the owner of the building to provide a site plan of the remodeling for review. Mr. Mandon stated that we do not have the ability to make them go before the staff with a development plan. He stated that some of these issues can be imposed at the building permit stage. Mr. Parker asked if the Town had the authority to say that the Red Line Auto and the car wash are going to have to use one entrance way. Mr. Mandon replied no. Mr. Hendrix stated that only during the development stage. Mr. Mandon replied that the Town could make the curb cuts but could not make the businesses pay for them. Discussion followed on Route 2 and site review plan procedure.

Discussion continued regarding traffic congestion on the intersections of Route 2 and Burr and Route 2 and Joe Martin Road.

Mr. Parker stated that it took some of the surrounding communities thirty years to fix their traffic congestion. Mr. Parker asked how can we get ours fixed before that. Mr. Mandon stated that most of the communities waited until re-development occurred. Mr. Mandon asked Mr. Kramer if he could see anything about having a change in use of building that still fits into that same zoning classification. Mr. Kramer replied no, he stated that he liked the re-development idea which is a long term fix. Mr. Kramer stated that there is no easy quick resolution. Mr. Mandon asked what we can require developers to do off site and on site and still have that supported legally. Mr. Kramer stated he is not sure. Discussion followed.

Discussion ensued on the traffic congestion at the intersection of Route 2 and Joe Martin Road, involving the Family Dollar and Demotte State Bank.

Mr. Parker stated that the Planning Commission has been successful in bringing stuff to the Town Council. It's a matter of educating the Planning Commission and then the Town Council buys into it. We have to look at these developments as a whole and not just rubber stamp them. Mr. Parker stated that the biggest problem with surrounding communities is traffic. We need to start taking steps so that we do not have to go through these future traffic nightmares.

Mr. Mandon stated that the staff development team has met and has had some very good recommendations put into effect, he cited as examples, the nursing home location and the banquet hall. He stated that you have limitations on existing buildings. Discussion followed on curb cuts on Route 2. Mr. Parker stated that he feels we should meet with INDOT.

With no further questions or comments, Mr. Parker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 PM, seconded by Mr. Konradi and carried with four ayes.

Richard Kelley, President

Elias Carras, Secretary