

**BRUNSWICK PLANNING BOARD  
JANUARY 29, 2013**

**MEMBERS PRESENT PLANNING BOARD:** Chair Charlie Frizzle, Vice Chair Margaret Wilson, Dann Lewis (dismissed at 7:55), Dana Totman, Richard Visser and Steve Walker

**MEMBERS PRESENT VILLAGE REVIEW BOARD:** Chair Emily Swan, Elisabeth Marr, and Brooks Stoddard

**STAFF PRESENT:** Anna Breinich, Jeremy Doxsee and Town Attorney Pat Scully

A meeting of the Brunswick Planning Board was held on Tuesday, January 29, 2013 at the Municipal Meeting Facility at Brunswick Station, 16 Station Ave. Vice Chair Margaret Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Workshop:** The Planning Board and the Village Review Board will hold a workshop session to discuss amendments to the Town Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 2, Section 216, Village Review Overlay Zone. Topics will include current ordinance issues to give staff guidance for drafting amendments and time schedule.

Anna Breinich began by reviewing that this workshop is a time for both the Planning Board and the Village Review Board to discuss board composition, review criteria (demolition and non-demolition) and jurisdictional considerations and to give feedback to staff on the direction that they wish staff to continue drafting the ordinance. Anna stated that staff would also be providing examples of options being discussed to the Board members. Anna reviewed the Village Review decision tree. Pat Scully added that the way this is being presented allows both Boards the opportunity to approach the revision with a blank sheet; back to basics.

Village Review Composition

Margaret Wilson stated that Village Review Composition seems broad and open ended but asked if it needs to be more specific. Emily Swan replied that the ordinance used to be specific but it became difficult to find individuals to fill those slots. Emily stated that she does not see that the open-endedness has weakened the Board and pointed out that Elizabeth Marr does live in the Village Review District and Brooks Stoddard holds an Architectural Engineering degree. Discussion between members of the Boards on whether to be prescriptive as to the composition of the Village Review Board; if so, how many seats should be prescribed or should they leave the composition of the Village Review Board as is. Anna Breinich added that in researching other towns, more are using the professional qualification standards as a base to then say “in the absence of”. It was agreed at this time that someone who resides within the Village Review Overlay Zone should hold a seat on the Village Review Board and that the Town should be a more active in recruiting members for the Village Review Board. It was decided to play up the need for an architect, historian, construction/engineering individual as well as a resident but to remain open and not prescriptive.

### Jurisdiction

Margaret Wilson asked what the Village Review Board should be looking at geographically; what are their categories. Anna Breinich reviewed the geographic overlay zone that the Village Review Board currently covers. Members discussed whether the Village Review Board should also cover those structures listed on Brunswick's Top 100 Historic Structures as well as those listed in the National Register District and Nationally Registered properties. Margaret Wilson stated that it is hard to talk about what the jurisdiction should be without know what the purpose is and stated that the current ordinance has a specific purpose in the Village Overlay Zone. Dana Totman pointed out that it wasn't the Council's charge to consider adopting a Village Review District but to review the Village Review Board ordinance. Charlie Frizzle suggested implementing a set of design guidelines for the Village, as it is established, and implementing them the way that the Planning Board implements the Cook's Corner Design Guidelines. Emily Swan replied that it is easier to apply design guidelines in an area that is changing all the time whereas the Village is varied and it would be difficult to contain all the options that would be available in one set of design guidelines. Anna Breinich clarified that Cook's Corner has Design Standards and the Village Review Zone has Design Guidelines which are not part of the Town Ordinance. Emily stated that given the time restraints and the charge by Town Council, she does not believe that this is the time to go beyond what the Comprehensive Plan has prescribed in terms of jurisdiction; in terms of standards there is a lot to discuss. Margaret asked what protection applies and who enforces the protection for the Nationally Registered Districts in Brunswick, Federal Street and Lincoln Street; Brooks Stoddard replied that it is mainly educational and the only protection is if a building is going to destroy or impact the street using federal funds, then the State Historic Preservation Office will step in. Margaret reiterated that it only applies if they are using federal funds for the project. Steve Walker reviewed pages 43 and 50 of the Comprehensive Plan in terms of expanding the Village Review jurisdiction and asked if members of the Village Review had any interest in doing what it prescribes. Emily replied that she didn't think there would be any objection but doesn't think that this should replace the Downtown Zone; Brooks agreed. Margaret asked if they should they cover all the buildings in the district to preserve the character or if are there some buildings that don't need to be looked at; Emily replied that this could result in gaps in the historic fabric. Discussion among members on contributing and non-contributing structures. Margaret asked if members wanted to refine the ways that they are looking at buildings in the existing or expanded Village Review Zone or do they want to attempt to be more expansive and protective of those other locations outside the Village Review Zone. Dana Totman asked if the Planning Board could assume the responsibility of doing the historical review and considerations for those outside the Village Review Overlay Zone and during the ordinance rewrite expand and enhance the discussion and review. Margaret added they could also increase the protection for those outside the zone during the rewrite. Discussion among members on Brunswick's Top 100 Historical Structures; are there more, possibly creation of a definition approach town wide or possibly a floating overlay or performance standard that would apply to a specific historic structure. Anna clarified that Brunswick's Top 100 Historic Structures survey is town wide and not just in the Village Review Zone. It was decided to hear more from staff about the different approaches and examples they have from other towns.

Non-Demolition Review Criteria

Margaret Wilson asked members of the Village Review Board for specifics in the standards for new construction, additions or alterations that were difficult to reconcile or too ambiguous. Emily Swan replied that if the standards are clear enough then they should work in all the areas but added that consistency with neighborhood character in scale and style, preservation of neighborhood character and streetscape which are listed in the purpose section should be standards. Emily added that if the standards are too vague they may not withstand scrutiny or not provide enough guidance to applicants. Pat Scully agreed that in working with some of the current standards it has been tough and stated that his concern is whether or not the current standards go far enough to make it clear what needs to be shown to justify a yes or no vote from the Village Review Board. Charlie Frizzle asked why there needs to be a separate board to review historic preservation when the Planning Board reviews many of the same questions in Sections 411.10, 411.14, 411.15; Emily replied that the Planning Board doesn't review changes that make the village what it is or don't fall within the Planning Board purview. Margaret Wilson asked if there are specific things that they feel change the character; what are the really protecting against or is it fine tuning the detail. Discussion among both Boards on how to more effectively apply the Design Guidelines. Pat Scully stated that he sees potential problems with the last two standards in Section 216.9.a.1.d and e. Emily replied that provision e was to fix provision d. Members felt that the last two provisions could be removed.

Demolition Criteria

Charlie Frizzle said that if you are dealing with historic preservation on a designated historic structure, demolition needs careful scrutiny but for non-contributing structures, even in the Village Review Zone, doesn't need much if any review. Margaret Wilson noted that there is nothing in the ordinance with respect to economics and viability and asked if standards should be added addressing these. Emily Swan reviewed the Narragansett demolition criteria and stated that she likes this example. Emily noted that there is lack of community thinking for demolition and that the zoning downtown constricts the options that landowners have.

Members reviewed the staff proposed timetable; Anna Breinich replied that the table is very aggressive and would like to see a complete first draft by the end of February.

Adjourned

This meeting was adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

Attest



Tonya D. Jenusaitis  
Recording Secretary