

Zoning By-law Committee Hearing Minutes (VIA ZOOM)

September 13, 2021

Committee Members Present: Bernard Greene, John Van Scoyac, Roger Blood, Mark Zarrillo, Ken Goldstein, Linda Hamlin, Lynda Roseman, Dan Saltzman, Paula Friedman, Carla Benka, Linda Olson Pehlke

Staff present: Polly Selkoe, Karen Chavez, Jonathan Simpson

Petitioners Present: Janice Kahn, Petra Bignami, Steve Heikin, Michael Zoorob

Co-Chair Bernard Greene opened the hearing. He moved to accept the Minutes of 9/1 with revisions from Linda Olson Pehlke. The ZBLC voted unanimously to accept the revised minutes.

Firearm Use Warrant Article

Petra Bignami, TMM 12, co-petitioner of this Warrant Article, explained the proposed revision – no longer a 150’ buffer zone from residences, rather can’t be adjacent to a residence. There are now 10 possible sites in Coolidge Corner (CC) and 2 in Chestnut Hill.

Janice Kahn, co-petitioner of this warrant article, stated that the CC sites go from the bank, to the post office, to the Urgent Care Center at the corner. Also included as a possible site is the Subway shop and parking lot.

Bernard Greene pointed out that TM might be concerned that these sites are near a marijuana shop and Temple.

Polly Selkoe reminded the committee that prior to this proposed by-law amendment, a gun store could go anywhere in the Town.

Alison texted Polly that Temple Sinai might have a K-12 school which would require a 1,000’ buffer. (This has now been checked out and there is no K-12 school there.)

PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Ananian, TMM 10, Advisory Committee – asked about the rationale for buffer zones to schools. He is ambivalent about this warrant article.

Janice Kahn explained buffer zones are not arbitrary. They are based on research by the Gifford Center.

Bernard Greene moved to approve the revised Warrant Article on Firearm Uses and make a positive recommendation to the Planning Board, along with concerns expressed at the Zoning By-Law Committee.

Ken Goldstein seconded the motion.

The motion was approved (9-1) as below. (Carla Benka had left the meeting and did not vote.)

JS Yes

RB Yes

PK Yes

KG Yes

LH Yes

LP No

LR Yes

DS Yes

MZ Yes

BG Yes

Planning Board Parking Amendment

Steve Heikin explained that Planning Board will not meet again until Oct. 7th for the formal recommendation when if there are revisions they would be made then.

Citizen Petition Parking Amendment

Michael Zoorob explained the difference between the Warrant Articles. The Citizen Petition is broader than the Planning Board's. He is optimistic that there can be a single warrant article.

Steve Heikin asked Jonathan Simpson about the Housing Choice bill. Does it apply only if a special permit is needed.

Jonathan Simpson explained what would be allowed by a 51% vote: Reductions in parking by special permit; and modifications to parking that will lead to an increase in the number of units. It was suggested that in the section of the Citizen Petition the following words should be added at the end "if it results in additional housing units".

Jonathan Simpson aid that this must be decided before Town Meeting.

Paula Freidman stated that reducing parking is ageism. She could only support it by special permit.

Michal Zoorob said this is not anti-car. Households with seniors use fewer cars. The By-law already has reductions for senior housing.

Paul Friedman stated seniors need to be autonomous.

Michael Zoorob explained that there is no restriction on providing parking, it just won't be mandated.

Linda Pehlke said that parking reductions should not be based on providing more units.

Roger Blood asked if you add, “if more housing units are provided” what are you comparing it to.

Steve Heikin pointed out that less parking allows more units.

Public Comments

Ben Bernbaum stated strong support to reducing parking minimums.

Mark Zarrillo said that not requiring a special permit won't allow review of many issues around parking and requiring conditions of approval.

Michael Zoorob rebutted that and said too much parking is being built.

Roger Blood is in favor of reducing parking. He hopes that counterbalancing amenities will be required.

Ken Goldstein favored the Planning Board approach. Parking needs to be reduced, but one size does not fit all.

No vote was taken on the parking warrant articles.

The next hearing was scheduled for Wednesday, September 29th at 7PM.

The Hearing was adjourned.