

BARRINGTON PLANNING BOARD

Regular Business Meeting Minutes

7 PM, Tuesday, April 4, 2023
Council Chamber at Town Hall
283 County Road, Barrington, RI

1. Call to Order.

Chair Roni Phipps called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

2. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum.

Present: Lawrence Bacher, Bill Kurtz, Greg Lucini (Vice Chair), Alexander Mueller, Brian Rua, Rick Simms

Absent: Brian Rua

Also Present: Teresa Crean, Town Planner; Isabelle Gillibrand, Planning/Zoning Assistant; Philip Hervey, Town Manager; Andrew Teitz, Town Solicitor.

3. Consent Agenda

3.1 Approve Minutes – March 7, 2023 Regular Business Meeting

MOTION: Chair Phipps, seconded by Vice Chair Lucini, made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 7, 2023 Regular Business Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

3.2 Approve Minutes – March 28, 2023 Special Meeting

MOTION: Member Rua, seconded by Vice Chair Lucini, made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2023 Special Business Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Old Business

4.1 Discuss and Act: Recommendation to proceed with design concept development for 25 Watson for April 26, 2023 Special Meeting of the Planning Board.

Present: Don Powers, Union Studio

Town Planner Crean reviewed the materials for review, including the March 28, 2023 minutes and a memorandum from the Town Manager distributed to the Board on April 4, 2023. Crean said that public comment would be taken in between items 4.1 and 4.2, and noted that Don Powers from Union Studio is present to answer questions if needed.

Chair Phipps expressed that the goal of the discussion is to agree on a plan that works well for the Town as a whole, and that it is a united effort. The Board then moved into discussion.

Member Kurtz said he thought the meeting on March 28, 2023 was helpful, but disappointed of the adversarial comments toward the consultants. Kurtz noted he has worked with both residential and commercial projects, and how he has seen the “not in my backyard” (NIMBY) concept before, but also how if the density depicted in the Proposed Concept from Union Studio were across the street from him he would be upset too, it is too dense, too fast a process, and is not keeping with the neighborhood. Kurtz then talked about what is driving density, saying that he believes the Town overpaid for the land and the existing building is an obstacle. Kurtz noted the high carrying costs, and explained the Board’s input and involvement with the Capital Improvement Program and how the upkeep of the property takes away from other Town services. Kurtz reiterated his disappointment in the adversarial comments towards the consultant, and that the information that was given was a standard land plan, though he did not believe it fit with the given neighborhood. Kurtz explained that he sketched a proposal for discussion, and he handed out copies to the Board members and several copies to the audience.

Member Kurtz reiterated that the Town bought the property for control, but now the Town is in the land development business, and that the driver for the purchase was affordable housing and senior housing. Member Kurtz said that land should not have been bought without a feasibility study.

Member Kurtz reviewed his plan, and noted one of the public comments stating looking for the “best and highest use,” which is the intent of his idea. He went through the plan one element at a time, which included:

- A connector road between Fremont and Watson avenues.
- Two R-40 lots closest to the waterfront (A1 and A2).
- Four lots along Watson Avenue (B1 through B4).
- Six lots along Fremont Avenue (C1 through C6).
- Reserve land in the middle with the 12 lots surrounding the property. This reserve can either be used later for development, saved as open space, or another option.

Member Kurtz said he cannot see why the Town cannot move forward with subdividing the property, and the need to move forward as to not lose more money. Kurtz further discussed the lot costs, and how that plays into the affordability goal. Kurtz reiterated that this plan is a contribution for discussion purposes. Kurtz said he is not prepared to move forward with the Union Studio Proposed Concept but hopes his ideas can help move forward.

Member Mueller asked for more explanation about Kurtz’s comment about paying too much for the property. Member Kurtz explained it comes from the cost of developing the lots, the liability of the monastery building (such as demolition), and the carrying costs to the Town. Member Kurtz reiterated that what is driving the density is the land cost, that for a developer to buy the land as a package is a hard sell with this market, and that the Town is digging a financial hole. Member Mueller asked about the Town doing the demolition itself. Member Kurtz noted that it has been estimated at about \$1 million for demolition with considerations like asbestos and other environmental concerns. Member Kurtz said he does not believe developers would go for \$500,000 a lot.

Vice Chair Lucini referred to the table in the top right, and asked where he got the figures, and Member Kurtz reiterated that he estimated those from his experience. Member Kurtz also noted the land bank option, though the Town would continue the carrying costs. Member Kurtz reiterated how difficult it is for departments like the police to get \$300,000, and how that is a lot to the Town to spend to maintain the existing building.

Vice Chair Lucini noted Member Kurtz's plan is an interesting one, and there have been no plans shown yet that look like it. Lucini posed the question of "is the Town trying to make money?" or "is the Town trying to meet other needs of the Town?" and how this similar philosophical question came up with the former Zion property and is now similar with 25 Watson Avenue. Lucini said that he liked aspects of the plans, such as the public parking and open space, but how that may not meet some of the other goals from the Town. Vice Chair Lucini said senior housing tends to be denser as typically seniors do not want additional maintenance, and reiterated the question of making money versus meeting other needs of the Town and bringing more value to the Town as a whole. Lucini reiterated that he thought the park and public parking were excellent ideas, noting public shoreline is limited in Town, and said he liked the through street between Fremont and Watson avenues. Lucini said how the park and parking would benefit the whole town but recognizes that if money back is the goal how it may not be feasible.

Member Kurtz said his plan is character with the neighborhood, agreed with needing to answer the question posed by Vice Chair Lucini, reiterated that his plan is a potential solution to move forward, and how two magnificent lots overlooking the bay is best bet to gather some return.

Chair Phipps echoed the question and intent Vice Chair Lucini posed, and the Board needing to be clear on that. Chair Phipps reiterated that preserving the Monastery was deemed not financially feasible, and the areas of consensus being senior housing and open space. Phipps said that starting again after a year of the process would be a lot to process. Member Rua said he felt unsure if 12 units would be enough.

Member Bacher explained how the Comprehensive Plan discusses that Barrington needs more senior housing, how he was part of the Senior Housing Committee in the 1990s, noting Barrington Cove and Atria because of that, and said he felt unsure what point the Town calls success and moves onto something else. Bacher said he read through every document on the process, and that the consultants were clear that there is a need in the market for mixed-age housing and active senior housing. Bacher explained that active senior housing means there are activities and amenities, and that none of the designs depict those. Bacher asked what the likelihood that 36 households (proposed on Union Studio's Proposed Concept) would sell their current house to move into these units, that the Town is not a senior destination, and the Town is not built with features like walkability. Bacher noted that senior housing has been marketed for about 20 years with the former Zion property, but how that has gone nowhere. Bacher said the Board should re-examine the goal of senior housing and noted the affordable housing need. Bacher said Member Kurtz's idea would not be a bad outcome. Member Rua agreed with the generational-living concept Bacher discussed.

Member Mueller asked Member Kurtz some clarifying questions about his design. Kurtz provided additional context, and reiterated being conscientious of the neighborhood with the street scene.

Member Simms noted the difficulty of moving the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, and the challenge it presents. Simms outlined several of the goals, including senior housing, and compatibility with the Town and individual neighborhoods. Simms noted how dense senior housing is hard to meet in both these instances. Simms then referred to open space and expressed his concern about how people would use that, noting aspects like parking, length of parking, and how many spots, and said that if he were a neighbor he would be concerned. Simms noted the property has a great view but reiterated that it would need to be policed and maintained, and that there are both positive and adverse points to open space. Simms reiterated that part of the intent of the purchase was to preserve some open space, and reiterated the question of whether the Town bought it for a positive for the community or to make money. Simms concluded by stating how the Planning Board can recommend, but ultimately it is up to the Town Council.

Chair Phipps summarized Member Kurtz's plan of 12 lots with reserve space in the middle. Vice Chair Lucini noted the park component of Union Studio's concept and Member Kurtz's vision was what he envisioned while leaving the meeting on March 28, but comes back to the question of value or money back and the Board needs to make that choice. Vice Chair Lucini agreed with Simms's concerns about the park, but responded how those concerns like nighttime shenanigans already happen today and that the Board should not be afraid of nice things.

Chair Phipps moved the discussion to the money back or value and overall benefit to Town as a whole debate, reiterating that the Board has to move the conversation regardless. Vice Chair Lucini noted potentially offering two to three options for the Financial Town Meeting (FTM), and noted how he does not want to shoehorn the Town into one option as that has not worked previously, and how if the residents vote to sit on a decision for another year, then the people have spoken. Member Rua noted the idea of putting the property back on the open market. Vice Chair Lucini reiterated his plan. Member Mueller asked if selling the property also requires a vote at the FTM. Solicitor Teitz noted that Vice Chair Lucini's plan of two to three options will not be feasible, as the more plans there are the less consensus there is and more muddled the vote becomes. Solicitor Teitz reviewed that the problem for the 2021 FTM it was the purchase was time sensitive, and in 2022 that there was no option or answer should the voters say yes to the option of demolition. Solicitor Teitz reviewed that the Board was charged to recommend a plan, whatever that may be, posing the question "is the Town authorized to tear down the building and do x?" "x" being whatever plan is put forward. Vice Chair Lucini responded that no plan would move forward, and his concern of that without options there will always be the objection of "what else?" Solicitor Teitz noted needing to separate the vocal neighbors and the Town in what people will support. Solicitor Teitz noted that the Town is not fixated in getting all the money back, from his understanding, though does not want to spend \$4 million on a park, so there is the idea of achieving some of the other goals and provide housing to recoup some of the funds. Solicitor Teitz noted the park on Member Kurtz's plan likely not feasible due to location of being surrounded by residential lots, but reiterated it is the Board's call to make a recommendation to the Town Council who will ultimately decide how to move forward.

Member Bacher noted there has been no one from the public to stand up and be in favor of any of the plans presented thus far, and how there has not been representation from the rest of the Town, and how there may not be large interest. Bacher said he does not see a passing vote on a plan with

30 people speaking against it, and that having options is not a bad idea. Bacher said there are options of:

- Selling the property, and hope a developer is happy to work with R-40 zoning, potentially incorporating an affordable housing component.
- Use the parcel for recreation or a park. Bacher noted he is unsure it has use as a recreational property, and he is not aware of the Recreation Department expressing interest, though he knows there is an interest in fields in Town. Bacher said how this could also become conservation land and the Town accepts sunk costs.
- The Board takes a plan and tweaks it as best they can. Bacher noted finding a balance of what works for housing while being respectful of the neighborhood.
- If none pass, the Town is stuck holding a piece of property.

Member Kurtz said that the concept should not be framed as get all the money back or move on, and reiterated the intent of his design is to be more in character with the neighborhood, which he believes is step number one. Member Kurtz explained that subdividing the land buys the Town time to figure out what to do with the existing building. Kurtz said that his main focus was to be clear on what is driving the density, and that is the price the Town paid for the property. Kurtz noted that the 53-unit number referred to throughout public comment at the March 28, 2023 meeting came from financial feasibility study, but that figure was never supported by the Board. Member Kurtz said that selling the land outright and as one parcel relinquishes control.

Member Mueller said he felt a sense of confusion in which the plans can be evaluated, and how the conversation feels like going back to the drawing board with the intentions of the purchase. Mueller shared Bacher concerns how in six to eight weeks the Board goes from the “back to the drawing board” conversation, to presenting anything specific that is the product of thoughtful consensus, and how it feels in the final hour the Board has to do something. Member Mueller asked about putting off any demolition of the building to a later date as a compromise. Vice Chair Lucini said that the lots will be more valuable once the existing building comes down. Member Mueller said that a developer would be confined to the conditions of the ordinance, but because the Town has the land there is more control and opportunity, such as selling off in pieces.

Vice Chair Lucini asked Town Planner Crean and Solicitor Teitz about a choice vote, whether FTM or otherwise, and other legal considerations. Solicitor Teitz referred to the Town Charter, and that the FTM must make the decision, and that the majority of the people in attendance make the decision. Solicitor Teitz noted only way to do a choice vote would be to hold a series of votes, which may take several hours.

Don Powers of Union Studio wanted to remind the Board that Union Studio was engaged to start a dialogue, not a formal presentation of a final plan, but noted he came into the meeting with incorrect assumptions. Powers said the intent was meant to draw comments with being on the higher end of the density, and that the second step is to create a middle ground between the Board’s comments and the public comment for one more discussion at the April 26, 2023 Special Meeting. Town Planner Crean added to that, and that when the item was assigned to the Board, the Town Council authorized a \$25,000 contract with Union Studio in the same meeting and noted the remaining contract amount to be utilized. Powers said he believes another cycle will be helpful to

merge the public and the Board comments. Powers said how renderings are suspect in the public process but thinks that the appropriateness of the solution is not synonymous with what exactly is on the ground now, and requests leeway until fully represented. Powers stated that Union Studio will not come back with the original Proposed Concept, and now has a better idea of what both the Board and public want to see.

Member Bacher noted that the Board is not a developer and not responsible for designing, and that a developer will have their own ideas. Bacher explained further that the Planning Board is to set the use and the density, such as how land is reserved, how many buildings permitting, will the existing building stay or go, and the like. Bacher said that no developer will respond to an RFP so specific that does not financially work out, reiterated how density and use need to be the primary focuses for the Board, and that a lot design will not answer their questions.

Member Kurtz said he believes the question is more fundamental than that, saying it comes down to whether the Town is selling lots or one piece of property. Kurtz reiterated that the Town owns the building. Kurtz asked if the Town is able to subdivide the parcel to create lots to provide options by providing bite-sized pieces. Kurtz reiterated not approving of the Watson streetscape in Union Studio's Proposed Concept, but needing a path forward. Solicitor Teitz clarified that the Town could subdivide the parcel, but no lots could be sold without FTM approval, though noted there could be blanket approval of lots. Member Bacher agreed with Member Kurtz that subdividing the lots could pass as the neighborhood should recognize it is the best result they could expect, and the other people in town would be happy to see there is progress. Member Bacher said that though Kurtz's plan does not address housing needs, senior housing, and public access, Bacher felt uncertain whether the other schemes could get approved. Powers noted the Board's point of not wanting to overdesign, but noted how it has been done in other municipalities and provided examples from work Union Studio has done in the past. Powers said the process does not have to be binary of either design the structures or sell the lots, and how there is middle ground.

Vice Chair Lucini noted finding a compromise of value to the Town while finding something that fits more in character with the neighborhood. Lucini noted the potential for R-25 lots on Freemont and Watson, filling the middle with single-story senior housing that cannot go under R-10 zoning requirements. Lucini said he believed this is what would strike the biggest balance. The other option would be selling the lot and walking away.

Member Mueller asked how many units are needed to satisfy the intent of the purchase. The Board discussed that it was not defined. Town Planner Crean noted that affordable housing wise the Town is at about 3 percent. Member Mueller noted the question is hypothetical as the senior housing amount was not defined in the purchase. Vice Chair Lucini harkened back to the point of considering the likelihood of filling the units if all were designated to senior housing and that it may take a while to fill the units. Member Bacher said how the Board can express concern for senior housing in their recommendation, but not restrict, reiterating that study shows there is not a market. The Board discussed the difference between Senior Residential Village that the former Zion property is zoned as and the general topic of senior housing.

Town Manager Hervey spoke to the density concern on Watson Avenue. Hervey reviewed some of the points discussed in the memorandum provided to the Board, noting R-25 lots and an number of

smaller lots that appeal to seniors. Hervey referred to the through street depicted by Union Studio between Freemont and Watson. Town Manager Hervey said to stop the design process now is too soon and encouraged the Board to go through one last design iteration with Union Studio. Town Manager Hervey discussed empty nesters and referred to an example of a Union Studio project in Concord, Massachusetts, noting this type of housing is appealing, especially in the northeast.

Chair Phipps asked about affordable housing. Town Manager Hervey noted affordable housing lots can be sold, referring to examples on Narragansett Avenue. Chair Phipps agreed with Town Manager Hervey in moving forward with another design iteration to incorporate the various comments and reiterated no one on the Board agrees with the 36 units. Town Manager Survey referred to Bacher's points about the RFP, noting weighing criteria.

Member Simms noted that the new plan concept in the memorandum received by Town Manager Hervey falls in line with Member Kurtz's sketch and reviewed the areas which have overlap. Town Manager Hervey said the through-street was an option to consider. Chair Phipps noted the major difference in the that the Town Manager's idea is for the whole site while Member Kurtz's is lot by lot. Member Mueller noted one has the public space where Kurtz's design proposes turning those into the larger R-40 lots.

The Chair opened the meeting to public comment.

Carla DeStefano, 23 Pine Avenue, explained that she is Chair of the Housing Board of Trustees, a former Ad-Hoc Committee member, and lives on the other side of Town. DeStefano said there are a lot of people in town talking, and thinks it is important the rest of the town is aware and engaged. She said she is a nonprofit developer and noted the importance of discussion of public policy. DeStefano noted that the Proposed Concept is a bit dense but likes the idea of being denser than the houses on Watson, and that there are smaller lots much like it about an eighth of a way. DeStefano stated the need for more housing in Rhode Island. DeStefano concluded that if the intent is to make money back to sell it to the cemetery, and that senior housing is not just to Barrington residents.

Jason Phillips, 9 Stanley Avenue, stated that he moved to Barrington in 2008 after deployment. Phillips explained how he has been researching how the property can benefit veterans. Phillips noted there has been discussion about demolishing the building, but then explained how he is working with professionals from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and the University of Rhode Island (URI) to work on a project which combines indoor farming with apartments for veterans. Phillips believes the existing building would be a great fit to combine the two, would be a low footprint, and would be used as a pilot test for other cities. In terms of funding, Phillips said there are Veterans Health Administration (VHA) funds for innovative projects like this. Phillips recognized the proposal is a long shot, but there is a willingness to explore this veteran's initiative.

Mark Hanchar, 25 Frederick Drive, wanted to expand on his comments from March 28, 2023. He distributed a handout with the following options:

- Land banking option with two soccer fields with open space facing south.
- Land bank option, but keep chapel as the recreation center.

Hanchar said that the Town is still looking at highest and best use with recreation fields and a recreation center. Hanchar explained the depiction more in depth. Hanchar concluded by stating that it would take a significant amount of time (over 15 years) to make the money back in taxes collected on housing.

David Rizzolo, 30 Clarke Road, explained that he is part of a residential architecture firm in town, has lived in town for 20 years, and is a member of the Zoning Board. Rizzolo said that Kurtz's plan is the first plan that he has seen that looks at the neighborhood, and how that is the direction the Town should look at. According to an real estate agent Rizzolo said he consulted, R-40 lots would go for about \$750,000 to \$800,000 per lot, and R-25 lots at about \$550,000. Rizzolo said that he believes the Town does not have to look at a loss with this, and that the real estate agent said these are conservative numbers.

Ed Hawrot, 6 Watson Avenue, thanked the Board for the discussion, noting Kurtz's plan. Hawrot said that the Board has been put in a difficult position, the plan needs more discussion, and recommend that there be no specific recommendation made at this meeting. Hawrot concluded by noting the Comprehensive Plan's reference to preservation of scenic areas.

Debra Nyser, 30 Adelaide Avenue, thanked Member Kurtz for the plan, and noted she would support demolishing the building with the plan. Nyser said that Kurtz's design fits with what the neighbors have been looking for, and understands Rhode Island has a housing issue, but neighborhoods cannot be sacrificed. Nyser agreed with Member Bacher's comment that seniors would not be eager to move, said she believes there is a market for single-family and common-sense housing, and that the look and feel of the neighborhood needs to stay. Nyser concluded by saying that she understands the social issues but the Town needs to live with what they got.

Elizabeth Grieser, 42 Watson Avenue, asked what the reserve section means on Kurtz's plan, reiterated concern from her March 28, 2023 with the potential for an affordable housing appeal. Grieser said she believes selling piecemeal helps maintain control, noted the public feedback is feeling acknowledged at this meeting, and is grateful for such. Grieser said what is going to make the Town vote for a plan is the feedback being acknowledged, and, though cannot speak for everyone, feels the Kurtz "napkin" plan feels the most aligned with the neighborhood's wishes.

Ann Strong, 55 Teed Avenue, said how there are people from other parts of Town, including herself, that care about what happens with the property, and noted she had some questions about process. Strong acknowledged support for Member Kurtz's plan, and how selling lots individually would be the way to go. Strong asked if in subdivisions of multiple lot sizes what protections will be in place, especially for the larger lots, so that they cannot be further subdivided.

Mary Grenier, 10 Watson Avenue, said that control is the big thing, and selling individual lots helps with that. Grenier asked if a special FTM was an option. Solicitor Teitz responded how it is possible, though very expensive and would be up to the Town Council. Grenier referred to the cut through road, noting how a dirt road may be a deterrent to overcrowding.

Ian Burgess, 33 Adelaide Avenue, thanked the Board for their work and said that he feels they have listened to the call for lower density.

Eric Keen, 4 Watson Avenue, expressed support for Member Kurtz's design. Keen suggested not going with a single developer but going for variety.

Loredana Lister, 19 Payne Road, referred to the philosophical question discussed by the Board of doing something nice for the Town, including those that do not live directly in the neighborhood. Lister said how the residents chose to live in the neighborhood, and that a decision for the whole could be bad for those that live close, such as the park and public parking. Lister said she knows there will be a problem with parking, noting that she has friends from Providence and Boston who park in her driveway, and how others do the same. Lister said the neighborhood already hosts a lot of people from around Town, and it is not that they want to keep it closed, but how it is nice the way it is.

Nora Nirk, 4 Watson Avenue, noted that the Town can have it all. Nirk said that maybe not every option has been exhausted for the existing building, some of the land can be saved for a park and parking and referred to restricted-age affordable housing as an option. Nirk said she feels optimistic and more hopeful. Nirk concluded by referring to an endangered salt marsh presentation she attended and noted that she has reached out to an expert to make sure that will not be impacted in any development at the 25 Watson Avenue property.

The Chair closed the meeting to public comment.

Chair Phipps expressed that she loved the veterans' plan outlined by Phillips in the public comment. Town Manager Hervey said it is questionable in terms of feasibility and grant funding. Vice Chair Lucini said how that plan runs into the same housing problem, and there are still obstacles that come with the preexisting building, and the chapel is really the only reusable portion. Town Manager Hervey advised not to go down that path as it is very theoretical, and that that it should only be looked at should all other options fail at the Financial Town Meeting. Town Manager Hervey asked for the Board to proceed with one more iteration with Union Studio. Chair Phipps returned to the conversation of options and priority voting. Town Planner Crean reminded the Board that the decision is ultimately up to the Council.

Vice Chair Lucini asked more about environmental regulations with any development and what requirements would be involved, referring to the shell fishermen. Town Manager Hervey noted how the property is far enough away, and Town Planner Crean reviewed Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) jurisdiction.

MOTION: Member Rua, seconded by Vice Chair Lucini, made a motion to direct Union Studio to create a new concept plan based on recent feedback and professional judgement that incorporates a mix use of single-family lot sizes, including small lots for low-to-moderate income and senior housing, and dedicated open space. Motion carried (5-0) with Members Bacher and Mueller abstaining.

5. New Business

5.1 Update on Technical Review Committee's review of Washington Trust Bank signage application.

Vice Chair Lucini reviewed the Washington Trust Application, noting it was a fairly standard application for the Technical Review Committee, and it was approved. Town Planner Crean noted Planning Board does not need to provide input, this is solely an update where the Technical Review Committee is technically advisory to the Board.

5.2 Discuss and Act: Establish a cutoff date for submission of materials to the Planning, Building, and Resilience office for Planning Board packets/handouts.

Town Planner Crean reviewed the schedule for application deadline, explaining the deadline is in place so the Board has ample time to review applications in advance. Planning Assistant Gillibrand provided context from the Zoning Board deadline structure. Solicitor Teitz noted in general the idea is not to get the stuff in dribs and drabs, suggested Friday morning as an option for a written public comment deadline to allow the Board a weekend to review. Town Planner Crean noted there is currently a two-week prior deadline, and Solicitor Teitz suggested making it a three-week prior deadline.

Vice Chair Lucini asked about roll out and notifying frequent applicants of the new policy, and Town Planner Crean said she could reach out to active and frequent applicants. Vice Chair Lucini asked about adding the deadline to the checklist.

Town Planner Crean asked about modifying the checklist and if that affects the Town Code. Solicitor Teitz noted changes on the website and agenda do not require any code amendment, and amending the checklist would need to be formally approved by the Board. Chair Phipps asked about discretion for emergency and timely matters. Member Bacher said that getting materials the day of is too much. Members Simms noted the Watson Avenue is an unusual scenario, and Solicitor Teitz reiterated that this is to normalize deadlines for Regular Business Meetings.

Member Simms asked why a police officer was present, and Solicitor Teitz responded it was due to a rowdy crowd at the March 28, 2023 meeting, and Chief Correia volunteered himself. Member Kurtz asked about the venue of the next meeting, and Town Planner Crean confirmed Council Chamber. Solicitor Teitz clarified with the Board the Technical Review Committee would need to adopt its own policy.

MOTION: Vice Chair Lucini, seconded by Member Simms, made a motion to implement a three-week deadline for Planning Board applications for Regular Business Meetings. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board and staff discussed the written public comment deadline being set for the Friday before the meeting at 11:00 AM, but Solicitor Teitz clarified that is at staff discretion.

The Board began to discuss public comment policy and repeat comments, but discussed disbanded when Solicitor Teitz noted the discussion was too far off from the agenda item.

6. Reports from Planning Board Members: Housing Board liaison (Bacher); Economic Development Commission liaison (Rua); Resilience and Energy Committee liaison (vacant); TRC member(s) (Lucini); Harbor Commission liaison (Lucini); Park and Recreation Commission (vacant); Zoning Board (Simms); Open Space Committee (Morley)

Member Bacher provided an update from the last Housing Board of Trustees meeting where they discussed new housing legislation, including:

- Accessory dwelling units by right on lots more than 20,000 square feet.
- Multifamily housing by right in commercial zones.

The Housing Board also discussed the current process for housing assistance, and whether a pre-approval could be developed so potential buyers could show the seller they had funding and do not have to wait several months.

Member Rua reviewed that the Economic Development Commission discussed 25 Watson Avenue with a motion to sell the property and purchase Zion. The Economic Development Commission also moved to support the Resilience and Energy Committee initiative for solar panels at the Middle School. Finally, the Commission discussed liquor license training requirement.

Vice Chair Lucini reviewed that the Harbor Commission discussed a public access point in Sowams neighborhood and appears that abutting neighbors infringing on public access point.

7. Comments - Board Members, Council Liaison & Director of Planning

Town Planner Crean noted there are several Earth Day/Arbor Day related events coming up in April.

8. Adjourn

MOTION: Member Simms, seconded by Vice Chair Lucini, made a motion to adjourn at 9:52 PM and the meeting was adjourned.