



PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
Special Joint Meeting with Town Council
February 21, 2023, 6pm
Town Council Chambers – Town Hall
350 East Main Road
Middletown, RI 02842

Board members present:

Paul Croce, Chair
Bill Nash, Vice Chair
Michael Fenton, Secretary
Art Weber
B.J. Owen
Joe Pierik

Member absent:

John Ciummo

Also present:

Ron Wolanski, Town Planner

1. Joint Meeting with the Town Council, re: Discussion of Planning Board activities and Town Council priorities.
 - a. Town Council President Paul Rodrigues called the meeting to order and provided introductory remarks.
 - b. Mr. Croce reviewed topics included in his February 2, 2023 memo to the Town Council, focusing on housing, and implementation and update of the comprehensive plan. Three priority implementation items from the comprehensive plan currently in process include inclusionary zoning, the proposed rural village district, and the proposed historic preservation incentive program. All other Council priorities have been addressed.
 - c. There was discussion of the proposed inclusionary zoning ordinance and amendments regarding accessory dwelling units. Mr. Croce noted the Board's concern about allowing ADUs under the new state legislation, which limits local regulation. Other Planning Board members also expressed concern that allowing them would change the character of single-family neighborhoods.
 - d. Town Council member Tessier stated that ADUs should be considered as a way to address the town's need for additional housing.
 - e. There was a discussion that potential amendments to the state law will be considered during the current legislative session, which address some local concerns.
 - f. Council woman Santos said the Middletown Historic Commission could provide support in identifying historic assets in the town for the proposed ordinance.

- g. Regarding the upcoming effort to draft an updated comprehensive plan, there was discussion of the process. There was general agreement that the establishment of a comprehensive plan update committee be considered. It was suggested that the town Council provide funding for professional support to help with the organizing, drafting, and committee functions of the plan. The Planning Board chair will send a memo to the Town Council requesting establishment of a committee.
- h. There was discussion for the need to maintain good communication between the Planning Board and Town Council regarding initiatives, such as proposed zoning ordinance amendments.
- i. Mr. Weber then raised some concerns to the Town Council, including the need for public water on the east side of town; he questioned the need for term limits for Planning Board and Zoning Board members; and questioned the process regarding appeals of Planning Board decisions, where there is no legal representation to defend the Planning Board's action before the Planning Board of Appeals
- j. At this point several Planning Board members left the meeting resulting in the loss of a quorum and adjournment of the Planning Board meeting.
- k. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Fenton, Secretary