

**RICHMOND SELECTBOARD
PUBLIC HEARING
GATEWAY ZONING
March 9, 2015 MINUTES**

Members Present: Taylor Yeates; Bard Hill; Ellen Kane; David Sander; Lincoln Bressor
 Absent: None
 Others Present: Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager; Linda Parent, Town Clerk; Polly & Dave Sobel; Rob Hintze; Katherine W. Gluck; Paul Hauf; Bob Marquis; Betsy Hardy; Ian Bender; Bob Reap; Mary Houle; Wright Preston; Peter Mumford; Larry Bohlen; Jack Linn; Chris Granda; Fran Huntoon; Rod West; Fran Thomas; Glenn Glasstetter; Christy Witters; Don Morin; Tyler Merritt; Gabriel Firman; Gary Bressor; Matt Dyer; Jackson Bressor; Jon Kart; Denise Barnard; Mark Fausel; Jean Bressor; John Hamerslough; Rich First; Jeff Forward; John Beeman; and Ruth Miller was present to videotape and live-stream the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15.

This was the second public hearing on the proposed amendments to the Gateway Zoning District, held at Town Center.

Taylor Yeates called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Welcome

Mr. Yeates opened the meeting and introduced newly-elected Selectboard member Lincoln Bressor.

2. Public Hearing on Proposed Amendments to Gateway Zoning

Mr. Yeates explained the history of the zoning amendments, and that the Selectboard had received the amendments from the Planning Commission in November of last year and the Selectboard held their first public hearing on December 11th. Following that, some changes had been made, and this public hearing was warned following the February 17th meeting.

The Manager presented a slide show of the changes, which included changes to the Use Table which corresponded to the changes in section 3.4.2 of the zoning section. These included adding business yard, tavern, food processing, garage/repair, private club and research laboratory and removing the maximum floor area requirement for businesses. Removed were restaurant and retail, with the addition of max 3,000 square foot of retail associated with a light manufacturing use. There was also the 60% residential/40% commercial requirement – meaning for any residential use, 40% of that size was to be added as commercial use. Commercial use could be 100%.

The Manager also reviewed the new standards from section 3.4.4 including the larger building size based on a 17,000 square foot footprint where before it was maxed at 10,000 square feet.

The Manager then reviewed changes to section 3.4.5 including the revised parking rules to prevent parking in front of buildings on Route 2 and keeping the requirement that buildings have the appearance of wood or brick.

1
2 Following this, the Selectboard took public comment.
3
4 Fran Thomas said the business yard and garage/repair should stay out of the Gateway.
5
6 Gabriel Firman asked what was the difference between a restaurant and a tavern? Mr. Yeates read the
7 definitions from the zoning regulations.
8
9 June Heston asked for an example of light manufacturing. Mr. Yeates said a woodworking or
10 furniture shop.
11
12 Tyler Merritt said that the larger building size and allowance of hotel/motel use could allow a Motel 6
13 to come into the Gateway, which we don't want.
14
15 Ms. Kane said that the elimination of parking in front of the building plus the 200' setback would
16 eliminate a Motel 6 from possibly locating there.
17
18 Jon Kart asked if the DRB has reviewed this and commented? Clare Rock said they were aware of the
19 proposal but had not formally weighed in.
20
21 Mark Fausel said that there was a brief discussion with the DRB surrounding enforcement.
22
23 Cara LaBounty, a member of the DRB, was invited to attend their meetings and she was aware of the
24 proposals.
25
26 Gary Bressor said that in 26 acres we don't want to see 10% of it used as a hotel, we should take out
27 hotel as a use. The Gateway was not a great place to raise kids, so is residential the best use? We
28 shouldn't compete with businesses in the village.
29
30 Catherine Gluck and Rod West agreed that hotels should not be allowed here.
31
32 Cara Labounty said to keep hotels in, since there was no where else a hotel might locate in Richmond.
33
34 Don Morin talked about large building sizes and flat roofs and felt that large, flat roofs did not meet
35 the character of the town.
36
37 June Heston urged the Selectboard to keep restaurants and retail in the Gateway.
38
39 Bob Reap talked about flat roofs, and pointed out the Masonic block and Harringtons, and said that if
40 they were broken up they might not be noticeable.
41
42 Patty Brushett asked why the pitched roof was eliminated? Mr. Yeates talked about large buildings
43 and difficulties with pitched roofs. Ms. Kane explained that some time last year, the State wanted a
44 site for an agricultural laboratory and this was the type of building they wanted to build.
45
46 Denise Barnard spoke about competition with the village and felt that competition was good and there
47 was enough market for businesses to thrive.
48

1 Wright Preston said he owned a commercial building in Bennington with his wife, and Bennington
2 planned for commercial expansion north of town. When that was allowed, downtown had vacancies
3 and rental rates plummeted. We need to be careful.

4
5 Jack Linn asked what competition there would be with three lots? He was ok with flat roofs.

6
7 Tyler Merritt said that as far as retail and restaurants, competitors weren't the only issue here.

8
9 Mary Houle spoke of Richmond being touted as being a "walkable" community, but only for those
10 living in the village. For the majority of residents living outside of the village, they had to drive to
11 where they needed to go.

12
13 Betsy Hardy asked what max square feet in size meant. The Manager explained that previously the
14 business use could only use 5,000 of space but a building could be larger, housing multiple businesses.
15 Some Gateway property owners felt that 5,000 of space was too small for modern businesses, so that
16 restriction was removed. Thus, the space was capped on buildings only, not uses.

17
18 Fran Thomas said that "the appearance" of wood or brick should be struck, to make sure that wood or
19 brick was used. Ms. Kane said that the Selectboard liked that a developer could use alternative
20 materials to make the appearance of wood or brick – such as what the Richmond Market did.

21
22 Gary Bressor said that the best thing to happen to the village in 20 years was the Richmond Market
23 and we needed to be concerned about competition with businesses in the village. There was a
24 discussion of planning, the Town Plan and the village.

25
26 Cara LaBounty asked if we could amend the ordinance before voting? Mr. Yeates said he would
27 prefer to warn another hearing first. There was a discussion about timeframes. Mr. Yeates said that
28 we had 120 days to warn a hearing, not 120 days to take an action. We could take an action within
29 one year of receipt of the amendments. However, he wanted to make decisions tonight. There was
30 additional discussion.

31
32 Ian Bender asked fi the zoning passes as is, does the DRB or Selectboard feel they are vulnerable to
33 whatever someone wants? There was a discussion.

34
35 Bob Marquis talked about retail and restaurant uses and he didn't like being told where he could eat or
36 shop. This is creating monopolies in town.

37
38 Paul Hauf said he was the chair of the Richmond Economic Development Committee and they
39 strongly supported commercial development in town and needed to create an area for new jobs.

40
41 Don Morin talked about the Cumberland Farms store and how that didn't fit in with the character of
42 the village. It had a flat roof, and he wanted to keep pitched roofing in as requirements for buildings.

43
44 Tyler Merrit agreed that we needed more planning process, and felt that Bob Reap's plans were good
45 but if we open to retail and restaurants it would open us up to a Dollar General, which we don't want.

46
47 There was more discussion. Clare Rock informed the audience that law required any new applications
48 now to meet the proposed regulations, so there was no way for someone to "beat the clock." John
49 Hamerslough wanted a pedestrian walkway to connect the Gateway to the village.

50

1 There was also some discussion about timing of the water line project – when it would start and end.
2 Ms. Kane said our estimates were that it wouldn't be active for the park until 2017. There was
3 discussion about the recent vote on the bond for the water line project. Mr. Yeates explained again
4 that the requirements for that project were the approval of the bond, a contract for service with the
5 mobile home park and obtaining advantageous grant/loan funding from USDA rural development.
6 The zoning was being discussed on the assumption that this water line project was moving forward.

7
8 There were a number of people that spoke of the difficulty in this process but thanked the Selectboard
9 for taking the time to include all opinions. Mr. Yeates declared the hearing closed and asked the
10 Selectboard how they would like to proceed.

11
12 There was some brief discussion, and Ms. Kane offered a motion to approve the amendments to the
13 Gateway Zoning as presented and finalized on February 3, 2015 and was seconded by Mr. Hill.

14
15 Mr. Bressor did not agree with the 17,000 square foot footprint building size but the trade off was the
16 elimination of restaurant and retail uses. He was generally willing to approve the measure but agreed
17 that it was not ideal. There was some other minor discussion, but the motion carried 5-0.

18
19 Mr. Hill thanked everyone for coming and Mr. Sander said the tone of the discussion here was good.

20
21 **3. Adjourn**

22 Motion by Ms. Kane to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Hill. So voted.