

MINUTES

**PLANNING BOARD
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

CITY HALL, MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE

7:00 PM

**APRIL 3, 2014
Reconvened from
MARCH 20, 2014**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Ricci, Chairman; John Rice, Vice-Chairman; Jack Thorsen, City Council Representative; David Allen, Deputy City Manager; Richard Hopley, Building Inspector; William Gladhill; Elizabeth Moreau, Michael Barker, Jay Leduc, Alternate and Justin Finn, Alternate

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Colby Gamester;

ALSO PRESENT: Rick Taintor, Planning Director

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III. PUBLIC HEARINGS – NEW BUSINESS

*The Board's action in these matters has been deemed to be quasi-judicial in nature.
If any person believes any member of the Board has a conflict of interest,
that issue should be raised at this point or it will be deemed waived.*

G. Proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance as follows:

- (1) Create a new Central Business C (CBC) district, encompassing the area currently zoned Central Business B west of Maplewood Avenue and Middle Street;
- (2) Create a new Central Business Piscataqua (CBP) district, encompassing the area currently zoned Central Business A north and east of Market Street and Bow Street;
- (3) Delete Section 10.535.13 – Increased Building Height by Conditional Use Permit;
- (4) Amend Section 10.531 – Table of Dimensional Standards – Business and Industrial Districts, to establish dimensional standards for the proposed CBC and CBP districts (including reducing maximum building height in the CBC district to 35 feet); and to establish maximum building footprints of 4,000 sq. ft. in the CBA district, 30,000 sq. ft. in the CBB district, 3,000 sq. ft. in the proposed CBC district, and 4,000 in the proposed CBP district;
- (5) Add a definition for the term “building footprint”; and
- (6) Amend Section 10.440 – Table of Uses, to assign the same permitted uses and restrictions to the proposed CBC district as currently designated for the CBB district; and to assign the same permitted uses and restrictions to the proposed CBP district as currently designated for the CBA district.

(This item was referred to the Planning Board by the City Council at its January 13, 2014 meeting.)

The Chair read the notice into the record.

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION:

Mr. Taintor stated there were six proposed items which were given to the Mayor on January 6th by Councilor Kennedy. Some of the work being done by Character Based Zoning will supersede these.

The first item is to create a new Central Business C (CBC) District encompassing the CBB area west of Maplewood Avenue and Middle Street. The zoning regulations in that area are not the same as the rest of the CBB district because of the transitional requirements for lots that are within 50' of a residential district. If they went with the proposed CBC district they would actually be going backwards as they would be getting rid of the side and rear setback requirements. They would be increasing building coverage and eliminating the open space requirement. He pointed out if it is critical to reduce the maximum height from 40' to 35' it would be better to change the number in the zoning table than to create a new CBC district. The other part is that the City Council has asked Staff to come up with a proposal for character based zoning in that area and that would be more desirable than just going with the existing zoning regulations.

The second item was to create the new Central District Piscataqua District. That area is part of the Character Zoning so this would be going backwards. It would be an isolated business district without any design standards. He recommended against this.

The third item was to eliminate the Conditional Use Permit and the Planning Board has already discussed that and made its recommendation to the City Council. The City Council is moving forward with it's third reading Monday night.

The fourth item is to establish dimensional standards for the proposed CBC and CBP districts and maximum building footprints for all of the central business districts. This would again undermine the Character Based Zoning.

The last item is to establish building foot prints. There currently are building footprint standards in the Character Based Zoning Ordinance, comparable to the CBA and CBB districts. He pointed out the proposed footprint standard of 30,000 for the CBB district is actually twice as much as they are proposing for the CBZ and it is more than twice the size of the building at 51 Islington Street. He felt this was a good concept but needs more work.

To add a definition for building footprint seems fine.

Item 6, the Table of Uses, has to do with establishing those new districts, which are not necessary as all of the area is within the CBZ areas or will be by the end of this year hopefully.

In summary, they expect that the City Council will pass the third reading on CBZ Monday night and will vote very soon to have funding for the expanded CBZ.

Mr. Taintor's recommendations were

- (1) That the City not vote to establish a new CBC district, because that would increase the allowable density of development in that area.
- (2) Vote to recommend that the City Council not vote to establish the CBP District because that would be taking it out of the CBZ and getting rid of all design standards.

- (3) Vote to reaffirm the Planning Board's vote of February 20, 2014 recommending that the City Council amend the Conditional Use Permit criteria rather than deleting the section.
- (4) Vote to recommend that the City Council not amend Article 5 in the dimensional standards.
- (5) Vote to recommend that the City Council add a new definition of building coverage as proposed.
- (6) Vote to recommend that the City Council not amend Article 4 by inserting use regulations for the proposed CBC and CBP districts.

Items 1, 2, 4 & 6 all relate to creating these new districts and they all go together.

He noted whatever recommendation they make tonight will not get to the City Council meeting on April 21, 2014 and that would be after the April 16 Planning Board meeting. They can act tonight and if something happens they don't expect on Monday, they would have a change to reconsider it again.

Councilor Thorsen felt that Mr. Taintor's approach is appropriate. Items 1, 2, 4, 6 are really dependent on the CBZ. He would recommend they postpone any discussion or decision on those issues until after the City Council decision on CBZ. Item 3 is germane and should be dealt with and Item 5 is certainly germane.

Ms. Moreau asked if CBZ defines a building footprint. Mr. Taintor indicated it does not, which is why it is a good idea. The definition is copied from another section of the ZO so it fits in well.

The Chair opened the public hearing and called for first time speakers.

Jerry Zelin, of 70 Kensington Road, felt this issue arises because of a collision of two factors: a lack of any meaningful City Planning for the north end and lower Islington Street because of their process for a developer to "vest" which they "fiddle" with what they are going to do. He feels something should be done in the interim because developers will come in through Design Review and become vested.

Joe Calderola, 170 Dennett Street, handed out plans to the Board relative to the CBC section in reference to the maximum building footprint massing aspect. This is a pressing issue so that they don't get buildings that are out of scale for Islington Street. He also felt there was a big difference between 40' and 35'.

Lawrence Cataldo, 133 Islington Street supported Mr. Calderola's comments on massing. He is concerned with areas being developed on Bridge and along Islington Street and felt they are areas that are essentially unprotected.

Clare Kittredge, 27 Franklin Street. She supports efforts to protect their fragile neighborhoods from poorly controlled development and to encourage more human scale development. Suggesting they wait for CBZ to protect the North End and Islington Street will be too late.

Chairman Ricci called for second time speakers.

Joe Calderola discussed massing for the North End and Islington Street and setting some controls.

Jerry Zelin spoke about the lack of adequate planning for the North End. He did not speak to lower Islington Street as Mr. Calderola discussed that.

Paul Mannle, 1490 Islington Street, stated his concern was to protect Islington Street. He believed CBZ should continue all the way down to Bartlett Street and it would be easier to work with just one zoning district, rather than the existing five districts.

The Chair called for third time speakers.

Joe Calderola pointed out what he thought would be appropriate footprint and height limits for Islington Street.

Jerry Zelin discussed the proposed footprint limit and proposed a two step process for design review.

Esther Kennedy, 41 Pickering Avenue, thanked the Board for reviewing these thoughts and ideas. She wanted to reiterate and thank Mr. Taintor for going through everything in detail. She realizes this came to them before the CBZ and Conditional Use Permit came to the City Council so it is a little redundant. The reason she wants to keep this going is to look at the massing and square footage on Islington Street. Also, the North End needs CBZ but they need to do something now. She is coming to them for expertise to come up with ideas. She agrees with Councilor Thorsen to see what happens Monday night at the City Council meeting.

The Chair asked if anyone else was present from the public wishing to speak to, for or against the petition. Seeing no one rise, the Chair closed the public hearing.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

Deputy City Manager Allen agreed with Councilor Thorsen to take the four items off and table them. He made a motion to postpone items 1, 2, 4 and 6 to the April 17th Planning Board meeting. Councilor Thorsen seconded the motion.

The motion to postpone Items 1, 2, 4 and 6 to the April 17th Planning Board meeting passed unanimously.

Deputy City Manager Allen made a motion on Item 3 to accept Mr. Taintor's recommendation to reaffirm the Planning Board Vote of February 20th recommending that the City Council amend the Conditional Use Criteria in Section 10.535.13. of the ZO rather than delete the section. Ms. Moreau seconded the motion.

Mr. Taintor pointed out that since the City Council will be voting on this before their recommendation goes to the City Council, they might want to postpone until after the City Council votes.

Councilor Thorsen felt that the City Council is probably paying attention to tonight's meeting and looking to see how the Board votes. He would vote against it and continues to hold his original position.

Mr. Gladhill indicated he would be voting against the motion only because he would prefer to see version two remain on the books. Also, if Harborcorp is vested, it will be vested on the version two of the Conditional Use Permit.

The motion to reaffirm the Planning Board’s vote of February 20, 2014, recommending that the City Council amend the Conditional Use Permit criteria in Section 10.535.13 of the Zoning Ordinance rather than deleting this section, passed with a 7-2 vote with Councilor Thorsen and Mr. Gladhill voting in the negative.

Deputy City Manager Allen made a motion to recommend that the City Council amend the ZO to insert a new definition of building coverage as proposed. Mr. Rice seconded the motion.

Ms. Moreau noted they are adding the definition but is there really anything there to define it. Mr. Taintor responded it will be used if CBZ is adopted.

Mr. Hopley wanted to confirm that the language for that is found on Page 9 of Councilor Kennedy’s Memorandum.

The motion to recommend that the City Council amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section 10.1530 – Terms of General Applicability, by inserting a new definition of “building coverage” as proposed passed unanimously.

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H. Proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to require conference centers, convention centers and event centers to provide one off-street parking space per 2 persons of rated capacity. (This item was referred to the Planning Board by the City Council at its January 13, 2014 meeting.)

The Chair read the notice into the record.

SPEAKING TO THE APPLICATION:

Mr. Taintor stated this is more complicated than it looks as parking is treated differently in the DOD than the rest of the City. Currently, parking for Conference Centers is separate from places of assembly of worship and neither apply in the downtown. There is not a lot of research available on this but he found was a very rigorous and thorough report done by the City of Toronto. Several areas of the City in Toronto would be comparable to the downtown in Portsmouth. After doing all of the math, the ratios between 2 and 4 people per 100 s.f. gross square area are between .65 and .93 parking spaces per 100 s.f. If you are at the highest density of occupancy of a conference center, you are getting close to 1 parking space per 100 s.f. Looking at this City wide, or outside the DOD, there isn’t a difference between the two. The policy doesn’t change much and for that reason he would recommend staying the way it is. The second question which wasn’t raised and was probably behind the proposal, was what should be done in the downtown. One issue to consider is should the basis for general conference center be changed from GFA to rate of capacity and Mr. Taintor felt it was good the way it is. The second issue is whether that general standard should apply in the DOD as well as other areas of the City.

He does not have a recommendation at this point. The questions are should they change from the s.f. base to the person base, should they apply it to the downtown, what constitutes an event center and how do you apply the parking standard to it.

Mr. Leduc asked how he factored out the transportation from the Toronto report. Mr. Taintor stated that Toronto has a transit oriented type of development and the conference centers are highly serviced

by public transit and that is why they were making their decisions for less parking requirements in the downtown. His interpretation was based on the rest of the City.

Councilor Thorsen asked how they come up with the rate of capacity during design time. The rate of capacity of Whole Foods would be less than a casino next door. Mr. Taintor pointed out that Whole Foods is not a place of assembly and does not use a rate of capacity. In places of assembly, rate of capacity can change from day to day and that is what he was talking about with "game playing". Mr. Hopley confirmed that every occupancy has a capacity design standard but the thrust of the codes is not parking related but rather is exit related. The design professional needs to design worst case scenario. Then bathrooms are next, based on same occupant load. Assembly occupancies are challenging as they depend on how the seats in a hall are set up. In a conference center the analysis has to be done several ways to come up with a maximum load. Mr. Taintor added that when the Planning Board is looking at a plan, they don't know what the occupancy is so it is easier to look at square footage. Chairman Ricci agreed 100% with that statement.

Councilor Thorsen felt they need to determine what the maximum design for the building is and then build off of that point. Once built, they can put in more exits or bathrooms but, if they go with square footage, will that relate in any way to the maximum capacity number. In other words, will the two correlate well together.

Mr. Taintor stated that was what the analysis of the Toronto case was all about. They backed into a per square foot basis using maximum occupancy as one of their factors. The difference between the different parts of the City was based on the general density and general availability of transit. That is what changed from the core where they talked about only having ¼ or ½ parking space for 100 s.f. or rest of City where they were talking about 1 parking space per 100 s.f.

Councilor Thorsen felt the question is how close they get to the 2:1 ratio in terms of parking and occupancy. It was felt they get close.

Mr. Taintor went back to Mr. Leduc's question about the rest of the City in Toronto, they were using an auto/road split of 80%. Portsmouth may be a little higher and they could add 10%, bringing the parking ratios up to .7 per 100s.f. and just about 1.

The Chair opened the public hearing and called for first time speakers.

Joe Calderola, 170 Dennett Street, had the same question about the relationship between the square footage and the occupancy. This was submitted in the hopes of influencing the concern that Harborcorp would make the parking situation worse. If Harborcorp is vested, this would be a guide for them about what the City would like to see. Harborcorp is the elephant in the room.

Clare Kittredge, stated that Portsmouth is a small City and not the size of Toronto. There is a broad conception that it is choking on traffic already and it is widely perceived that there is a parking shortage. Bringing in 750 people will surely aggravate the parking problems. She would encourage the developers of the conference centers to use satellite parking.

Jerry Zelin, 70 Kensington Road, stated the DOD is a district that encompasses the built up downtown and the north end. They may have to think about whether the same parking requirements make sense downtown vs. the north end where there is plenty land for developers to provide parking. His research shows that many areas outside of Portsmouth where many people would arrive by car for conference

center, the land use restrictions are 1 parking space for every 2 projected conference attendees. Harborcorp plans show 700 banquet style seating and 1200 theater style seating.

Dick Bagley, 213 Pleasant Street, having worked in Toronto, felt there was little resemblance to Portsmouth. He went on line and looked at other City ZO's and looked at Upper Darbey, outside of Philadelphia, and their ZO reflects that parking is a very important issue and the regulations are laid out for every type of building they have. He also looked at West Hollywood, which was probably a bad example, but had similar regulations. Upper Darbey came up with fixed seats and square footage with 28 spaces per 1,000 s.f. He felt the question was the context that the Planning Board was being asked to consider. It seems this is a very difficult way for the community to give input to the Planning Board but he felt Rick's research was superficial.

Zelita Morgan, 39 Richards Avenue, stated that Mr. Zelin made many of her points. Downtown is already built, Portsmouth is not Toronto and their challenges are very different. The square footage doesn't add up. The best approach to a new conference center is to be more diligent. The City needs to do an independent traffic study for the Harborcorp project. The bottom line for her is whether developers or residents will be paying for the parking.

The chair called for second time speakers.

Joe Calderola wanted to say there is a way to differentiate it by creating the North End District that would not apply to downtown. The Harborcorp parking engineer stood in front of TAC and included their analysis based on 1 parking space per 100 s.f. He doesn't think 100 cars is going to be enough for a 750 s.f. conference center. This is a very important decision.

Dick Bagley stated that this discussion obviously is about Harborcorp. Harborcorp has separated Whole Foods so it is not really part of the discussion. They already have an open parking lot that will be taken away if they build the hotel. Echoing what has been said, there has not been an analysis by Harborcorp that covers both facilities. An analysis should be done on their full facility, including the existing hotel across the street. He also stated that Deputy City Manager Allen and Rick Taintor both report to the City Manager and are making all of the recommendations.

Jerry Zelin felt the Planning Board should have all relevant information. When Harborcorp met with Portsmouth Advocates, their argument was when they have conferences many people will be staying in hotels and conference attendees will be hotel guests. They are double dipping if they are expecting Harborcorp to provide parking for those same guests. If guests stay in another hotel, the question would be how much parking do those other hotels provide. That would require a lot more information and making an assumption about the number of people attending a conference and where they are staying.

The Chair asked if anyone else was present from the public wishing to speak to, for or against the petition. Seeing no one rise, the Chair closed the public hearing.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE BOARD

Moreau – She feels they need to look into this more to make sure they have the right number. She is thinking they could postpone to April to give them a chance to do some research on zoning in other areas.

Ms. Moreau made a motion to postpone to the April Planning Board meeting. Mr. Gladhill seconded the motion.

Mr. Rice wondered if a Work Session would be appropriate with an opportunity to review further research. Maybe they could look at towns such as Concord or Dover.

Mr. Taintor was skeptical about copying things from other communities. We have tried, especially outside of the downtown, to limit how much parking a developer is to provide because they want to avoid parking lots such as Wal-Mart. Also they are environmentally bad. He was not only looking at other ZOs but he was trying to find a rationale for why they did it. The issue is a complex one. One is what is the number they should put in the parking table. Our ZO has a table that goes on for 4 ½ pages of parking regulations. The second question is do they apply that in the DOD. The third question is whether they should contract the DOD. That is a really big zoning change as the whole idea of the DOD and the downtown zoning was to make the Northern Tier like the downtown. What they are hearing from residents now is that they do not like that and they would like to keep it different than the downtown. He feels by talking about this one little piece of parking they are actually talking about a much bigger issue.

Mr. Taintor was happy to have a work session but it would be in sometime in early May. And they would have to decide the scope of what the Work Session is.

Chairman Ricci felt it almost sounds like spot zoning. Mr. Taintor agreed, they are looking at a very narrow scope. The other piece was that this goes back to policy. 2012 the City Council adopted a policy, based on building a new garage, that residential uses would provide their own parking and commercial uses would have parking provided by the City. This is the opposite of that. At that time Portwalk 3 wasn't started and people are now looking at development differently. This calls some policy questions into question.

Mr. Barker stated that he felt the Toronto study was perfect. 80% of attendees were not using public transportation. He thinks there may be other factors that are different but it wasn't out of line to use that very well done study as a basis for discussion tonight. He stated that the parking issue is almost unbearable in the City and the current garage is antiquated and was built before the hotels were built. There are many developments with little parking spaces. He agrees with Chairman Ricci that this is more than a motion today and requires a lot more thought and discussion. This is a really big issue for them and the City Council.

Councilor Thorsen was in favor of doing more study on this. He brought up the issue of maximum capacity because of the Toronto study. The idea that they are at .93 which is the maximum that was on the table doesn't sound accurate to him. He felt it would be really good to determine the target point they are going after.

Mr. Hopley was concerned if Mr. Taintor would have time to complete all of the research, because this is so complex. Chairman Ricci stated that this Board struggles with trying to put black to white and having the ZO and Site Regulations to work for all different scenarios. They will not find the exact answer. If they have some discussion, some really good ideas will come out. He would prefer to postpone this indefinitely as they have so much in front of them he would like to be able to do it right.

Ms. Moreau amended her motion to postpone indefinitely. Mr. Gladhill was acceptable to the amendment.

The motion to postpone this matter indefinitely passed unanimously.

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IV. CITY COUNCIL REFERRALS/REQUESTS

*The Board’s action in these matters has been deemed to be legislative in nature.
If any person believes any member of the Board has a conflict of interest,
that issue should be raised at this point or it will be deemed waived.*

B. Request by the City Council that the Planning Board evaluate the design review provisions established in Section 2.4 of the Site Plan Review Regulations. (This matter was postponed at the February 20, 2014 Planning Board meeting.)

Chairman Ricci stated they previously closed the public hearing. He was looking for a discussion followed by a motion.

Mr. Taintor indicated that Ms. Moreau has provided a suggestion that she handed out to the Board. Ms. Moreau looked at their specific Design Review phase (Section 2.4.3 of the Site Plan Regulations). Section 3 has been brought up many times and she felt it was two different sides of a coin in the same sentence. She did not believe her proposal was the complete answer but maybe they could bring this forward next meeting for a recommendation to the City Council.

Chairman Ricci read Ms. Moreau’s proposal into the record:

The request for design review shall include enough of the information listed in Section 2.5.3 (1) and plans displaying enough information as listed in Section 2.5.4 (3) so that the Board is able to review the project. Detailed engineering of infrastructure and utilities are not required at the design review phase, but the information listed in Section 2.5.4 (3) should be displayed in sufficient detail to enable the Board to understand the proposed project and identify potential issues and concerns.

Mr. Taintor mentioned suggestions that have come forward from the public. One suggestion is to require a two step process, preliminary consultation for the conceptual consultation phase before the design review phase. Another is to require the Planning Board to review the plan before scheduling a hearing on design review. He has no recommendations on any of those.

Mr. Leduc asked if this affects the vesting issue. Mr. Taintor stated that vesting is when you advertise for a public hearing for design review. The only reason you would have the conceptual consultation review before design review is to allow public to see it before it is advertised for Design Review and vesting. It’s all about the vesting issue.

Mr. Barker felt, in theory, they could draw a square on a piece of paper and have it vested. What is presented may not be adequate and there is not chance to stop it. He felt that vesting could not occur until they have a complete plan. Mr. Taintor indicated that what was stated in public hearings was that he could accept anything and vest it by virtue of being Planning Director. If he wanted to sneak something in, he could, and that is what this is all about.

Chairman Ricci wanted to have plans submitted, without the applicant present, for the Board to review and determine whether they are complete or not. Mr. Taintor stated that a lot of communities that do not have a Planning Staff do that, and the Planning Board has a meeting, not a hearing, to accept the plans. It would make sense to have a meeting at which they accept the plans and at the next meeting they would advertise for Design Review. That would add a month to everyone's application. Chairman Ricci felt the design review process is great as it promotes dialogue. Mr. Taintor stated that is something that goes well beyond Ms. Moreau suggestion, and it would have them go well beyond Design Review. Chairman Ricci was just referring to the Design Review process.

Deputy City Manager Allen stated his only concern would be to have the definition of completeness. This Design Review completeness is more nebulous and it would almost go back to what Mr. Zelin referred to as the consultation. He doesn't know how they will get around what is complete and what is not complete. Chairman Ricci felt as a Board they will know and he puts his faith into the Board. Mr. Taintor stated vesting is actually advertising a public hearing so they are talking about having an additional meeting before the process begins. Chairman Ricci added that typically design review would be for larger projects.

Ms. Moreau believes that everything they are talking about, a separate meeting, sounds like the conceptual consultation stage. Mr. Taintor stated they would still have to get to another level of details and that would add another month of meetings.

Councilor Thorsen likes the Chairman's proposal. He thought that a two step process would be needed. To get a proper application before the Planning Board and having some means of being able to say it is complete enough or worthy of going forward with design review, that decision at the first meeting is very important. He had reservation for a first step as it felt weak to him, but he felt Chairman Ricci answered that.

Ms. Barker asked what had to happen before publication. Mr. Taintor clarified that what they are talking about is not an application but rather somebody submits a request that gets brought to next Planning Board meeting for review and the Planning Board tells the Planning Director to advertise for public hearing. That way, the Planning Director would not be making the decision. As with any application, he is now accepting an application to see if it meets the basic level of criteria and they advertise it. If they do this for Design Review, which vests a project, maybe they should do it for Site Plan Review also. When they publish any notice, that is what establishes vesting for the project.

Chairman Ricci disagreed and felt that design review is very different.

Deputy City Manager Allen also agreed. A Site Review Application has gone through TAC and technical information has been reviewed in detail.

Mr. Taintor was hearing that they would like him to write an amendment that would include Ms. Moreau's proposal and a meeting to receive the request before scheduling a public hearing. They could schedule this for the May meeting.

Deputy City Manager Allen clarified that they would get a set of plans that would likely go forward to design review but as a Board they would determine whether the request was complete in a discussion, and not at a public hearing. Chairman Ricci felt it should read that the Board will advise the Planning Director that the application is complete. When the application is advertised, the responsibility lies with this Board.

Ms. Moreau made a motion to postpone to the May meeting for a new public hearing. Mr. Barker seconded the motion.

The motion to postpone this matter for a public hearing at the May Planning Board meeting passed unanimously.

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V. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Presentation of Wayfinding Plan and Program.

Juliet Walker, Transportation Planner, gave a powerpoint presentation. She is not looking for any action from the Board, but rather would like to hear any ideas or suggestions. She reviewed the primary objectives:

- Establishing a shared sense of place within the community.
- Orienting vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic with a system that is both logical and intuitive.
- Increasing accessibility to key destinations and frequently used areas within the community.

The City is working with consultants, MERJE, as some of this expertise goes beyond our in-house planning expertise. They considered how people are getting to the City, how to they get to areas within the City, how do they get to parking rather than circulating to different location, what methods are we providing for pedestrians and what destinations do they need to get people to.

They started with an existing conditions analysis and thought about all of the components of a potential way finding system. Signage is an important part and they looked at what signage currently existed, they looked at parking, evaluated what type of signage was needed, maintenance schedules, recommended management system with the City, and their measure of success with a objectives.

They looked at three different themes: a historic theme, a maritime theme with a working waterfront and a modern theme reflecting arts and culture. They held public meetings, had public input and did an on line survey. Using the design direction, the second option seemed to be preferred with the addition of a local artist and the cultural component, so they combined the different elements that people preferred. Their purpose is for people to readily identify them as Portsmouth signs and they want to be unique to the community.

They are starting to get into implementation and are getting ready to go out to bid. They have the ground work to build the system and just need to identify priorities.

Deputy City Manager Allen commented on the use of the stake holder group and public input, and the consultants going on site to make sure everything could be implemented and maintained. He congratulated Ms. Walker on her thoroughness..

Mr. Gladhill asked how private entities chosen to go on signs. Ms. Walker stated that was a very good question and they will have to work that out. At this point they have a specific list that they will include, which were based on recommendations. Particularly relevant to Portsmouth is the proximity

of the locations. They had an advisory way finding group and that was probably the hardest discussion they had. They know where they are going to start from with the higher destination locations.

Mr. Leduc stated that the sample signs looked very nice and they want them to be recognized as Portsmouth signs. He asked if they had given any thought to branding them with a small logo or emblem. Ms. Walker responded that they did not consider a City emblem because it wouldn't be easily seen. But, there will be locations where it is appropriate to have the Portsmouth brand on the sign.

Mr. Leduc asked if they had any thought on influencing or extending to highway signs or signs in areas that bleed into the city. Ms. Walker confirmed that their scope of work is to look City wide but there are less pedestrian destinations outside of downtown. This was not a regional scope but there is no reason why they couldn't coordinate and reach across borders.

Councilor Thorsen had some prior concerns but believes they might have been addressed. One was the idea of embedding signs in the walkways and he didn't think they were set up for that. The other issue was with all of the signs there was some concern about looking like Disneyland. A lot of signs are going up and they lose the sense of space, such as Market Square. It looks like they have minimized that since previous presentations. Ms. Walker confirmed one of their goals was not to over-sign. That will be an important goal to keep in mind as they evaluate implementation. They still have the opportunity to see how a sign looks in a certain location and decide if it is appropriate. Market Square has been an important area with a lot of discussion.

Mr. Hopley stated they did a very good job and a lot of hard work has gone into this. They need to keep in mind that many signs are slated for public property but if this program results in any signs going on private property they may need to look at amending the ZO to address that.

Chairman Ricci thanked Ms. Walker for a great presentation.

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VI. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There was no report.

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VII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 9:25 pm was made and seconded and passed unanimously.

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Respectfully submitted,

Jane M. Shouse
Acting Secretary for the Planning Board

These minutes were approved at the August 21, 2014 Planning Board Meeting.