

**Obery Street Study Committee  
Minutes – March 2, 2006**

The ninth regularly scheduled meeting of the Obery Street Study Committee was held on February 9, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Otto Fehlow Meeting Room, Plymouth Public Library, South Street. The following members were in attendance Nick Filla, William Marani, Virginia Davis, Larry Conley, Bobbi Clark, and Margie Burgess. Lee Hartmann, Director of Planning and Development, was also in attendance.

Mr. Filla opened the meeting.

Ms. Davis moved to accept the minutes of February 9, 2006. Mr. Conley seconded the motion. The committee voted (5-0-1, Ms. Clark abstaining) to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2006 meeting.

Mr. Filla asked the committee to begin reviewing all of the previously set policies and actions for the goals.

The committee drafted the following policies and actions:

**Obery Street Commercial Goals**

- I. Encourage “park like” or campus style development through the use of boulevard roads and drives, open space, landscaping, and mature trees;

*Policies and Actions*

- 1. Prepare a landscape plan for the entire street.
- 2. Establish landscape design guidelines for development.
- 3. Establish preferred building massing, setbacks, and heights consistent with campus setting development.
- 4. Install pedestrian walkway systems that are safe and inviting to use.
- 5. Link new sidewalk systems to existing sidewalks and pathways.
- 6. Establish crosswalk locations that promote safe pedestrian travel between various neighborhood uses.
- 7. Provide pedestrian links to community facilities inside and outside of the neighborhood.
- 8. Draft zoning regulations that maintain a mix and balance of residential, office and professional uses.

- II. Maintain the Plymouth North High school site as an institutional, municipal and open space complex;

*Policies and Actions*

- 1. If converted from a school, appropriate uses include municipal facilities such as town and school offices, senior center, recreation center, and recreational fields.

2. If converted from a school, explore possibility of renting or leasing building space to businesses and uses that compliment the neighborhood's governmental and institutional uses.
  3. Explore the possibility of creating senior and affordable housing on land not occupied by municipal or recreational uses.
- III. Promote uses that enhance and compliment the economic potential and community significance of the Obery Street area that are in harmony with park like settings;

*Policies and Actions*

1. Encourage small-scale office and professional buildings.
  2. Encourage neighborhood scale residential development.
- IV. Promote road designs that are safe, aesthetically pleasing, and respect the surrounding neighborhood;
1. Invest in and expand infrastructure including parking, decorative lighting, signage, street furniture, landscaping, drainage, utilities and paving.
  2. Explore cross links and alternative traffic flow patterns such as Nook Road to alleviate traffic burdens on Obery Street.
  3. Road improvement work must incorporate safe pedestrian pathways and crosswalks.
  4. Road improvement work must include landscape elements (for example, large trees) that are consistent with the landscape elements found on the lower (Sandwich Street) end of the street.
  5. Encourage road designs with vehicle travel speeds of 20 MPH.
  6. Explore options for traffic calming such as roundabouts and boulevards.
  7. Develop a coordinated and uniform street and traffic signage program.

**Obery Street Zoning Goals**

- I. Provide zoning strategies that are consistent with the commercial, residential, recreation, and environmental goals of the Obery Street neighborhood

*Policies and Actions*

1. Create road and site design standards to encourage park-like development. Such standards should include requirements for open space, pocket parks, and vegetative buffers.
2. Amend the Zoning Bylaws to phase out or limit retail development.
3. Explore the creation of zoning overlay districts to allow limited higher density elderly housing, office uses and professional uses.
4. Develop Zoning Bylaw language to allow higher density residential development as an alternative to typical Neighborhood Commercial Uses (i.e. retail).

- II. Zoning strategies should maintain, strengthen, improve, and enhance the existing sense of the Obery Street neighborhood;

*Policies and Actions*

- 1. Create road and site design standards to encourage park-like development. Such standards should include requirements for open space, pocket parks, and vegetative buffers.
  - 2. Zoning standards should include building, massing, setbacks and heights consistent with campus setting development.
  - 3. Explore higher density single-family residential development between Plymouth North High School and South Street (higher density could be one unit per 10,000 square feet).
- III. Maintain the Plymouth North High school site as an institutional, municipal and open space complex;

*Policies and Actions*

- 1. Make such uses allowed by right.
- 2. Explore allowing uses such as medical, law and professional offices that are accessory to existing neighborhood uses.

**Obery Street Environmental Goals**

- I. Protect and preserve the habitat resources of the County Farm and other surrounding woodlands;
- II. Preserve existing mature trees and green spaces;
- III. Enhance and improve stormwater drainage and allow for natural looking drainage areas;
- IV. Limit the impacts of lighting on the night-time sky;
- V. Enhance the neighborhood character by placing utilities underground.
- VI. Promote traffic calming in new road designs.

*Policies and Actions*

- 1. Develop a “green” infrastructure landscape plan to maintain and enhance our public spaces.
- 2. Support the long-term protection and preservation of the County Farm.
- 3. Encourage the development of a master plan for the County Farm that protects vast amounts of the farm and farm buildings.
- 4. Purchase or protect open space adjacent the County Farm.
- 5. Consider refinements to Plymouth’s Dark Sky (Prevention of Light Pollution) Zoning Bylaw.
- 6. Relocate the State Highway Barn to a more appropriate location. If not relocated, beautify, buffer and landscape the State Highway Barn site.

7. Stormwater runoff is generated from built areas. Sites shall be designed (both new and redevelopment) to both reduce the amount of stormwater runoff and improve its aesthetic value. Alternatives include:
  - Porous Pavement
  - Infiltration Basins
  - Infiltration Trenches
  - Bioretention landscaping features adapted to treat stormwater

### **Obery Street Residential Goals**

- I. Encourage “park like” or campus style residential development through the use of boulevard roads and drives, open space, landscaping, and mature trees;
  1. *Policies and Actions*
  2. Create design and landscape standards for any residential development other than single family dwellings.
  3. Encourage open space, pocket parks, and vegetative buffers to non-residential uses.
  4. Provide safe pedestrian pathways, connections, and links to, from, and within the neighborhood.
- II. Maintain a mix of institutional, municipal, residential and open space uses on the complex the Plymouth North High school site;  
*Policies and Actions*
  1. Study the possible use of vacant or unutilized land at the Plymouth North High School Complex for the creation of affordable family and age-restricted housing.
- III. Identify, protect and preserve the characteristics of the existing residential neighborhood;  
*Policies and Actions*
  1. Encourage designs that reflect and compliment existing residential structures.
  2. Where possible expand existing residential neighborhoods with development of similar size, style and scale.
- IV. Encourage a balanced mix of housing to meet all lifestyles, age groups and income levels of residents of the Obery Street area;  
*Policies and Actions*
  1. Encourage higher density residential uses as an alternative to retail development.
  2. Encourage affordable housing.
  3. All such housing shall be in a park-like setting with open space, pocket parks, and vegetative buffers.

4. Provide safe pedestrian pathways, connections, and links to, from, and within the neighborhood.

### **Obery Street Open Space Recreational Goals**

- I. Provide sufficient active recreation spaces and places to meet the residential demand for athletic fields, parks and playgrounds;

#### *Policies and Actions*

1. Maintain existing recreational fields with all future uses of the Plymouth North High School Complex.
2. Provide sufficient funding to maintain and enhance the recreational facilities at the Plymouth North High School Complex.
3. The athletic facilities should be serviced by proper bathroom and concession facilities.
4. Encourage cultural/historic facilities and events at the Plymouth North High School Complex.
5. Encourage the County to maintain and enhance the interactive agricultural components of the County Farm.

- II. Provide sufficient passive recreation and open spaces to enhance the scenic beauty of the neighborhood;

#### *Policies and Actions*

1. Invest funds to purchase and create additional walking and biking trails in the neighborhood.
2. Design and create pathways that encourage walking, running and biking at the County Farm.
3. The Town should provide sufficient funding to maintain and enhance the recreational facilities at the Plymouth North High School Complex.
4. Limit lighting and signage for pedestrian walkways and trails.
5. Provide safe pedestrian pathways, connections, and links to, from, and within the neighborhood.

- III. Preserve existing green spaces;

#### *Policies and Actions*

1. Encourage “park like” or campus style development through the use of boulevard roads and drives, open space, landscaping, and mature trees.
2. Install trees and landscaping along the north side of Obery Street (Registry of Deeds and County Farm side). New trees should be of sufficient size and caliper.
3. Explore a redesign of the Obery Street/Sandwich Street intersection that provides more landscaping.

The committee held a general discussion about the conservation restriction proposed for the County Farm. Mr. Filla asked the committee if they should support allowing the County to reserve land for additional building construction on Obery Street west of the Registry of Deeds.

The consensus of the committee was to have no comment on that specific issue but to encourage the County and the Town to work to complete the conservation restriction process. The consensus of the committee was to also encourage the County to initiate an overall master planning process for the County Farm.

The Committee ask for an update from the Department of Public Works on the Obery Street and Nook Road projects.

The Committee discussed the format of the March 16, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. public meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Lee Hartmann  
Director of Planning and Development