

Planning Board report for the January 25, 2012 City Council meeting

Prepared by Mayor Dean Trefethen, Council representative on the Planning Board

The Planning Board meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month. The first meeting of the month generally is used as a workshop, although it may be used to review and act on time sensitive applications. The board consists of 9 regular members and up to 3 alternates. Six of the 9 regular members are citizens appointed by the Council. The City Manager, or his designee, is a member and at the moment the Manager has decided to designate a staff member to sit in his position. The City Manager also appoints an additional staff member to the board. The two staff members currently on the board are Building Inspector Tom Clark and City Engineer Dave White. The final member is someone from the City Council.

During the past several months, the Planning Board has been working on updating the "Subdivision of Land" and "Site Review Regulations" code chapters of the city, chapters 155 and 149 respectively. This process concluded on January 24, 2012 when the board adopted the updates to these chapters following several workshops and two public hearings. Most of the updates would be considered housekeeping in nature or to bring the chapters in to compliance with changes in state law or other regulations. There was also a concerted effort to update these chapters to reflect better ways of doing things in Dover based on experience over the past several years.

The next task the board will start is a review of various zoning aspects, many of which will be minor or technical in nature, but some could be more far reaching than that. The suggested list of items to review has been assembled from several sources, including other land use boards in the city, but also from concerns that have arisen in the recent past from the board itself.

Over the past three years, the number of applications to the Planning Board has been less than the previous three year period, obviously due to the economic conditions we have experienced. The board has used that time to update the documents and rules that guide its operation to be ready for whatever the future may bring. The intent of many of these updates was to help ensure that when a project is proposed that it will be a quality one and one that fits in with the existing conditions surrounding it.