



OLD VILLAGE ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

Special Issue of the Old Village Association Newsletter

TOWN MEETING MONDAY, MAY 12TH 6 pm CHATHAM HIGH SCHOOL

*Downtown Displays and Affordable Housing ~
Two Town Meeting Issues Old Village Residents Should Consider*

Affordable Housing Zoning Bylaw Rewrite: (Ready or Not Here It Comes)

The long-term issue of providing more affordable housing in Chatham will come up squarely before the voters at the May Town Meeting. Because of the size and complexity of the zoning bylaw revisions, and the haste with which they were written, there is no way to know if these proposals are going to add to our affordable housing stock sufficiently to curtail unfriendly 40B proposals. Here in a nutshell are the provisions of this article, what it is supposed to accomplish, and some of the issues voters should consider:

- Loosens the present restrictions on establishing new affordable accessory apartments, *but* allows the owner, after a period of time, to voluntarily terminate the affordable aspect and/or sell the entire unit, so as to remove it from the affordable inventory.
- Establishes an Amnesty Program for presently illegal apartments that could allow citizens to make them both legal and affordable, *but* with possible future “escape hatches” if the affordable part of the building were voluntarily terminated or the building were sold.
- Provides that those Guest Houses which are attached to the main house can later be converted to affordable apartments occupied by non-relatives, *but* in doing so liberalizes the present bylaw with respect to the minimum land area necessary for all Guest Houses, with potential adverse affects as to density.
- Allows greater numbers of affordable apartments in the Industrial District, as of right without requiring a ZBA review and Special Permit. *Under present State law, without a Special Permit they will not count toward Chatham’s 10% quota!*

Note: The key provision on “mandatory inclusion” – which would have changed our present requirement of 10% affordable units in every 10 lot-or-more subdivision, to 20%, plus allowing up to 2 market rate units as a density bonus – was dropped from the draft but may be resurrected at a later time.

As we go to press, the selectmen endorsed the Article (3-1), but the Finance Committee was narrowly opposed (4-3) with members urging that the Article be tabled and worked on further so that it could be clarified, tightened up and – together with the critical “mandatory inclusion” provision – brought back to an early fall town meeting in one complete package. This would be our suggestion, too, but Town Meeting will, as always, have the last word....

Norm Pacun

MAKE WAY FOR.....T-SHIRTS???

Back in 2001, Town Meeting considered a complete revision of the Outdoor Display Bylaw covering the downtown business district from the Rotary to the Cranberry Inn. The selectmen appointed a group to come up with a proposal which would allow modest displays back from the sidewalk, and the committee (David Veach, Ginny Nickerson, Nancy Yeaw, and myself) recommended that businesses be allowed to put a single item or a group of items *up against their building*, but at least five feet back from the sidewalk. Merchants would apply to the Community Development Department for a permit (no fee), and the permits could be renewed, with the selectmen hearing any appeals.

The Merchants Association and the selectmen endorsed the changes and the bylaw was approved overwhelmingly at Town Meeting. Since then, it has worked pretty well—we continue to have a downtown that is thriving and the envy of the rest of the Cape, largely because it is uncluttered and walkable and without the kinds of outdoor displays that festoon many of our neighboring towns.

So what’s the problem? One of our local merchants, whose building is slightly further back from the street and feels that her wares aren’t sufficiently visible, has introduced an amendment to the bylaw to allow businesses with a setback of 10 feet or more from Main Street to display an item or small group of items *anywhere on their property* (but no closer than five feet from the street). Contrary to initial thought that only a few businesses would benefit from this change, there are actually *over 60 merchants* who could obtain such a permit to display T-shirts, post-cards, designer jeans, or any other goods they sell. If the amendment is approved, there could be the potential for a major change on Main Street.

The Board of Selectmen have put the amendment on the warrant and endorsed it (4-1, with Ron Bergstrom opposing), but FinCom members were unanimous in their opposition (7-0). So far, the business community has not clamored for the change, but things could get interesting on Town Meeting floor when this article comes up. Stay Tuned!

Norm Pacun

‘TROUBLED BRIDGE OVER WATERS’

Many Old Village residents are familiar with the footbridge over Mill Creek. Mill Creek runs to Little Mill Pond from the tidal marsh (formerly a working cranberry bog) surrounded by Homestead Lane, Main Street, School Street, Sunset Lane and Chase Street. The beach path from Eliphamets Lane town landing to the town dock at the foot of Mill Pond Road crosses the footbridge. Water flows up and down the shallow creek with the rising and falling tides.

Old Timers recall that there has been some sort of bridge over the creek for more than 50 years. Both ends of the bridge are on private property of the two homeowners living on the south and north sides of Mill Creek. The deeds show property lines as “the middle of the creek.” The current footbridge was built and installed in late 1988 following approval by the Chatham Conservation Commission. It was funded completely by neighborhood support.

Over the years the footbridge has been extended on both ends. It has been repaired with new wood, and strengthened structurally a number of times by interested neighbors. But, in recent years, it has become more difficult to keep applying “band-aids” to the bridge. The time may have come to start planning for a replacement footbridge in the location of the current structure. Approval for replacement will have to be gained from the Conservation Commission and the DEP. In a desire to be a good neighbor, I have begun to tap qualified attorneys, town officials and shoreline structure builders to help us through the approval and construction process. I will keep Old Village residents informed of the results and would welcome your ideas or suggestions.

George Olmsted

SPRING IN THE OLD VILLAGE: OF THIS AND THAT

This bulletin is part one of the Old Village Association spring newsletter. We are mailing it early enough to cover the May 12th Town Meeting agenda which contains two bylaw changes of some importance to the Old Village. The first would loosen the rules for outdoor displays on downtown Main Street, and, if passed, could affect the streetscape which abuts the Old Village. More complicated and more difficult to understand is the revision to the affordable housing section of the Zoning Bylaw. Written under considerable pressure to meet the deadline for Town Meeting, this bylaw is incomplete (without a rewrite of the "mandatory inclusion" section which

was sacked at the last minute) and is somewhat confusing as to its content. We hope Norm Pacun's outline will help you understand what's left and make a decision on its merits.

We would also like to urge you to attend the Chatham Alliance program on Saturday, May 3rd (see below) about architecture, new and old. And architecture is what we have in the Old Village! This spring, proposals for additions and renovations have sprouted up like daffodils. Last month alone, Debbie Aikman and I (an "Information Committee" of two) have sent plans out to abutters to inform them of seven reconstructions to Old Village contributing houses.

These proposals have been or are now being heard by the Chatham Historical Commission and all but one will also be reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

This winter and spring, George Olmsted, Nancy Koerner and Bob Walsh have worked hard on our files to get a handle on the comings and goings in the Old Village, with a special interest in welcoming newcomers.

Have a great spring! Part two of the newsletter, including information on the Annual Meeting, is scheduled for late June.

Carol Pacun



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Preserving Chatham's Architectural Magic

The Chatham Alliance for Preservation and Conservation

Presents a Lecture and Discussion with

Jonathan Hale, AIA

author of *The Old Way of Seeing: How Architecture Lost Its Magic and How to Get It Back*
and

Len Sussman, Architect and Chairman of the Chatham Planning Board

Saturday, May 3, 2008

10:15 ~ Coffee and Refreshments 10:30 ~ Program

Eldredge Public Library

