

Proposed zoning changes

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it the best place to have a large retail store.

There has been discussion around town that a Home Depot is going to be built on the parcel. Town Planner Alicia Altieri said the planning board has no proposals before them pertaining to Home Depot or, even to the land at this time.

Crowley did not say Home Depot would definitely be the store constructed on the land. He did say that

“Commercial (zoning) is absolutely the way to go.”

— DAVID CROWLEY

Westminster has many contractors based in town and they would benefit by having that store closer to home.

Crowley said he has heard a lot of positive feedback on the idea.

He said it is an exciting time for him, as he explores the possibilities.

He also realizes there are people who don't like change or don't want it in their backyard.

“It is a concern that I will have to overcome,” said Crowley.

He is interested in hearing feedback from everyone. He hopes to have some public discussion on the project before it goes to special town meeting.

Approval of the article would require a two-thirds majority vote because it is a change to the zoning bylaws.

In other news:

- The planning board approved the

“Westminster Commons” project submitted by Peter J. Normandin. The plan calls for tearing down the building housing Wine & Roses Liquor Store and building a 15,500 square foot commercial building next to it. Normandin said the new building would contain Wine & Roses, Head to Toe Salon, a bank and rental office space.

Altieri said certain conditions have to be met, but these have been previously discussed with Normandin. She said the most of the conditions have to do with parking and circulation.

Normandin's plan calls for having a drive-through window at the bank. Altieri said signs would have to be put up directing traffic. She also said signage on the Nichols Street entrance into the parking lot is important as this will serve as an entrance only in order to prevent disruption to traffic. This had been a concern of various officials in town.

According to Building Inspector Marcia Phelps, Normandin had not applied for a building permit as of last week.

- The planning board has not received all of the filings necessary to review the Westminster Business Park proposal. Altieri said representatives from the project came to a planning board meeting to submit their proposal, but never submitted final filing fees or copies of the plans.

Debate rages

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“This question has kind of blindsided the committee,” said David Sargent, the chairman of the Town Hall Renovation

“During our deliberations I haven't always agreed with Jim, but on this I think we have a good idea,” he said.

Voters approved \$2.7 million two years ago to renovate the building

Sargent said the project has already been delayed because of the delay of the public safety building project.

One resident suggested just holding off the project until the public safety building was completed. But most officials and residents objected to the delay because of fear of inflation costs.

The public also got the chance to speak on the matter.

“Are we going to be allowed to vote on it or are we just being told,” asked resident Pixie Brennan. “Everyone in this room and everyone in this town is an owner of the town property.”

If money is going to be spent on the Stevens Building then voters at town meeting will have to appropriate the money.

“One thing that everybody is forgetting is site plan review,” said Joe Kalagher, a member of the planning board. “You will be changing the use.”

Mary Coswell said at some point the Stevens Building is going to have to be renovated so the town should look at it now.



Michael Fredricks speaks out during the public discussion on whether to turn the Stevens Building into a town hall annex.

JOURNAL PHOTO/CAITLYN KELLEHER

Committee. “It was taken off the table because of expense.”

Whidden expressed his disagreement with Sargent saying that the committee never voted to take the Stevens Building off the table and that the committee couldn't consider the option unless the selectmen agreed it was a good one.

Renovation committee member Ron Reed spoke in favor of the concept but not of delaying the project.

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Halloween Safety Tips

The Massachusetts State Fire Marshal offers the following tips for a safe and happy Halloween:

Costumes

- Children should carry a flashlight and their costumes should be brightly-colored or have reflective tape to highlight them.
- Be sure all parts of their costume are labeled flame retardant.
- Costumes should not have trailing material or tails long enough to cause falls.
- Pointed objects such as swords and devils' forks should be made of soft materials.
- If your child wears a mask instead of make-up on their face, double check that the eye holes are large enough to see through clearly.
- Children should wear sturdy shoes and temperature appropriate clothing underneath their costumes.

Decorations

- Use a small flashlight in pumpkins instead of a candle.
- Only use flame-proof crepe paper.
- Keep dried leaves and cornstalks away from all flames and heat sources.

Receiving Trick-or-Treaters

- Make sure your own home is well-lit and that there is a clear path to your door. Bicycles and lawn furniture can trip youngsters in the dark.

Checking Treats

- Throw out anything that appears tampered with, homemade foods or home-packaged foods unless you are certain of the source.
- Inspect food closely and take away treats that may not be age appropriate.

Trick-or-Treating

- Smaller children should always be with an adult. It's best to take little ones out early.
- If older children are going out without you, go over the ground rules first! Know what neighborhoods they will be in.
- Don't allow them in areas with which you are not completely comfortable.
- Have the children stay in a group.
- Let them know what time to be home.

Instruct children to:

- Use sidewalks.
- Cover one side of the street at a time, no crisscrossing.
- Never go inside someone's home unless it is a friend's
- Never accept a ride in a car.
- Only approach houses where the outside lights are on as a signal of welcome.
- Bring bags home to be checked by an adult before eating a single treat.