

**Town of Marlborough  
Community Development Advisory Commission  
Special Meeting  
Marlborough Town Hall  
February 14, 2005  
7:00 p.m.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Nancy Bader called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room of Town Hall. Commission members in attendance included Carolyn Gatesy, Nancy Bader, Bill Mogensen, Ned Hickey and Joanne Goode. Also present was Peter Hughes, Planning and Development Director.

**2. DISCUSSION – ROBERT ELLIOTT**

The members the CDAC group introduced themselves to Mr. Elliott, who owns several commercial properties in the center of town. Nancy Bader explained that the purpose of the evening's meeting was to have an informal discussion with Mr. Elliott about his plans for the center of town, and the CDAC's thoughts and ideas on the same.

Mr. Elliott began the meeting by providing a history of the three shopping centers he owns in town – the Old Marlborough Village (the four buildings on the southeastern corner), Marlborough Tavern Green (the southwestern corner) and Marlborough Village Green. Mr. Elliott said that the most interesting one is the Old Marlborough Village complex. Mr. Elliott explained that when he came to town in 1970 there was nothing but an old grey, dilapidated building on the corner with a barn in the back. Mr. Elliott explained that the grey building with the peaks was building 1, the hospital building was #2 (it is no longer a hospital) and the building presently housing Pineneedles and the Nutritional company is building #3. The fourth building in the complex houses Mr. Elliott's office. The development of the entire space took approx. ten years. Mr. Elliott said that he developed this property as per the town's regulations, which required him to maintain the colonial look of the town (special siding, shingles, brick sidewalks, etc.) which cost a lot of money. He noted that when the Marlborough Tavern Green property was later developed (he was not the original developer), aluminum siding was permitted, which is a lot less expensive. Mr. Elliott bought that property in 1991/92. He stated that he spent a lot of money and effort getting the whole complex rented. The Village Green property was also taken over by Mr. Elliott after the initial owners ran into financial trouble. Mr. Elliott stated that the construction of this center was not very good. There are presently two vacancies at this plaza.

Mr. Elliott said that it is important to get Marlborough residents more interested in supporting local businesses. He said that Smiles and Prime Time Video, both previously located in the Village Green plaza, went out of business. Mr. Elliott said that he thinks the development of an architectural review board is a good idea. He also said that the zoning regulations are in dire need of amendment. He said the existing regulations are very antiquated and they handicap developers who want to come to town. A complete overhaul of the zoning regulations is required to create an environment that is more business-friendly, he said. Things such as parking, setbacks, signs, etc. need to be changed. Mr. Elliott said that there are no national businesses in town; all businesses are local, family owned and people need to be sensitive to that.

As far as his future vision for the town, Mr. Elliott wants to see the town develop in the existing center. He is having discussions with grocery stores and pharmacies, trying to get some of these businesses to move to town. Mr. Elliott said there is a problem because the zoning commission has decided that a 50,000-60,000 square foot supermarket could go into the Marlborough Commons area, but not in the center of town. A grocery store in the center of town would be limited to 15,000-20,000 square feet. Mr. Elliott said that he believes this is a violation of the due

process laws, or the equal protection laws, of the constitution because it is giving preference to one location over another. Mr. Elliott said it is difficult to bring these companies to town, because you have to go through the developers. He also stated that the large chain stores are hesitant to come to town because they don't think the town's size could support the stores. If one chain were to come, Mr. Elliott believes others would follow.

There was a lengthy discussion about the types of businesses that Marlborough could attract. Mr. Elliott said that the large grocery chains want a large building, 50,000-60,000 square feet. He said that the town is ripe for a pharmacy chain, given the health care center, the hospital, and the high level of pass-thru traffic on Rte. 66. Nancy Bader said that the town survey will provide feedback on what kind of services residents want in town.

Bill Mogensen said that a lot of residents don't want to see any large buildings in the center of town. He said that it will be important for Mr. Elliott to bring his plan to the boards and commissions and sell it. Ned Hickey said that there will likely be some conflicting ideas, but if people can meet in the middle it could be a win/win for everyone. The group discussed some of the businesses that have failed in town and the need to increase the commercial tax base.

There was a general discussion about how the CDAC group is looking at developing the center of town. The group explained some of the items they've discussed over the past months, i.e. parking lots behind buildings vs. in front, sidewalks, and linkages so that people can get out of their car and move from building to building/store to store. Joanne Goode explained that one of the goals is to develop a town center that is attractive and utilized by residents, and key to this is not adding to the traffic on Rte. 66.

Mr. Elliott talked about some of his ideas for developing his existing properties. He is very interested in bringing into town a supermarket chain and a pharmacy chain. He stated that he is very interested in the future of Marlborough and he wants to work with the town's boards and commissions. Nancy Bader told Mr. Elliott that there will be a third public forum sometime in mid/late March to discuss the results of the public survey.

### **3. TOWN CENTER RFQ REVIEW**

The CDAC and Planning commissions reviewed the RFQ's for the town center study, and narrowed it down to five companies. Peter Hughes said that he will call references for all five companies, and he and Nancy Bader will meet with each of them to discuss the interview process. Mr. Hughes will forward his comments on each company to the CDAC and Planning members. Each company will then make a presentation to the CDAC/Planning group. Interviews are scheduled for March 8<sup>th</sup> and March 10<sup>th</sup> (the 10<sup>th</sup> to be confirmed by Peter Hughes), following which the CDAC/Planning group will make a recommendation to the board of selectmen.

The group agreed to cancel the February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **4. ADJOURN**

**Motion by Joanne Goode to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. The motion was seconded by Carolyne Gatesy and it was carried by a unanimous vote.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Sciano