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~
 Michael Zehner, AICP
 Planning Director

June 24, 2015

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Wellesley Municipal Light Plant

Re: Noise and Outdoor Lighting Committee Considerations for Town Boards and Departments

Dear Board Chairs and Department Heads,

I am writing on behalf of the Planning Board and the Town’s Noise and Outdoor Lighting Study Committee (“the Committee”), which was created and appointed by the Planning Board in 2014 to study the issue of excessive outdoor lighting and noise in Wellesley. The Committee was comprised of staff and board member representatives from the Planning Board, Natural Resources Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Design Review Board, Police Department, Municipal Light Plant, Facilities Maintenance Department, and town residents.

At the end 2014, the Committee delivered a report to the Planning Board identifying problems and issues associated with excessive or unregulated lighting and noise in Wellesley (see attached). The Committee identified that certain types and intensities of outdoor lighting and noise affect human health and wellbeing, energy, and wildlife and the natural environment. The report further recommended that multiple boards and departments take appropriate steps to amend their policies and practices to better accomplish lighting goals while reducing sky glow, light trespass, glare and clutter.

Included in the report was a list of recommendations that the Committee encourages relevant Town boards and departments to either adopt or incorporate into existing lighting and noise related regulations, policies, or procedures. A list of the suggestions from the Committee’s report is below with relevant departments or boards for each in **bold**:

1. *(To be included in Planning Board’s FY15-16 Work Plan)* The **Planning Board** should propose an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw in order to address certain problems caused by outdoor lighting and noise. Currently there is no concerted regulation of outdoor lighting or noise in the

Zoning Bylaw. Outdoor light and noise generators and uses of particular concern, whether public or private, include parking areas, signs, sports courts in residential districts, lights within proximity to roadways, 24-hour businesses, and security lights. Consideration should be given to differences among zoning districts, uses, enforcement, existing regulations, abutting uses, integrated design with other light and noise generators, maximum lighting levels, time of day/night and year, and light color. The Zoning Bylaw is an appropriate tool for controlling potential detrimental light and noise impacts associated with development. Further, the Board should prepare for artificial noise and light associated with emerging technologies, such as residential wind and solar energy. Proactive design standards and noise limits can help the Town avoid unwanted effects of these emerging technologies.

2. The **Design Review Board** and **Zoning Board of Appeals**, in conjunction with the **Health Department**, should consider the placement of dumpsters and the hours during which they may be serviced during Site Plan Review and other project reviews.
3. The **Natural Resources Commission** should examine its policy and enforcement on the use of PA systems at parks, working with the **Recreation Commission** and other recreational programs in Town to determine appropriate uses of such systems.
4. The **Natural Resources Commission**, with the input of the **Recreation Commission**, should inspect and make appropriate changes to lights at the Hunnewell tennis courts and other multipurpose fields.
5. The **Police Department** should remain diligent about enforcing Article 49.34, *Restrictions on hours of certain commercial activity*, of the Town Bylaw, with continued support from the **Board of Selectmen**.
6. Zoning inspection and enforcement is needed during non-business hours for illumination compliance and should be implemented through a joint effort between the **Building Department**, **Board of Selectmen**, and the **Police Department**.
7. All Town boards and departments, including the **Municipal Light Plant**, **Facilities Maintenance Department**, **Department of Public Works**, and the **Board of Selectmen**, should follow the design review process laid out in Article 46, *Design Review Board*, of the Town Bylaw, for the installation or modification of light fixtures on any public way, on Town land other than cemeteries, and on Town buildings.
8. The Town's **Municipal Light Plant**, **Facilities Maintenance Department**, and **Permanent Building Committee** should establish standards and policies for the use, installation, and replacement of outdoor lighting on Town properties.

Planning Staff is available to discuss the attached report and the considerations listed above at one of your regularly scheduled meetings. In the meantime, please contact me should you have any questions or would like any additional information.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

June 24, 2015 Letter

Noise and Outdoor Lighting Committee Recommendations for Town Boards and Departments

Sincerely,



Michael D. Zehner, AICP
Planning Director

cc: Noise and Outdoor Lighting Study Committee, Planning Board