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## **PLANNING BOARD**

**Planning Board Report: ZBL-2010-1**  
**Petition to Amend the Grafton Zoning By-Laws Referencing Changeable Electronic**  
**Variable Message Signs (CEVMS)**  
**May 10, 2010 Town Meeting**

At their meeting on March 22, 2010 the Grafton Planning Board conducted a public hearing to consider a proposed amendment to the Grafton Zoning By-law (ZBL) submitted by the Town Administrator through the Board of Selectmen. Board members present were Chairman Bruce Spinney III, Vice Chairman Robert Hassinger, Clerk Peter Parsons, Members Heath Christensen and Stephen Qualey, and Associate Member Sadie Miller. Those individuals wishing to speak to the proposed amendment were heard.

The proposed amendment would add a definition for Changeable Electronic Variable Message Signs (CEVMS). It would also amend section 4.4.2.1 of the ZBL to permit these signs in all districts where illuminated signs are allowed as long as they met all dimensional and location standards as well as conformed to the proposed standards for (a) Duration of Message; (b) Transition Time; (c) Brightness; (d) Flashing and Scrolling; and (e) Temperature and Time information.

The article was reviewed by Town Counsel for compliance with state laws as well as to form and was found satisfactory.

The Board acknowledged that the proposed CEVMS amendment was, except for the definition, exactly the same as the proposal submitted for the May 2009 Town Meeting, which it had supported. The Board recognized that there were business owners present who would be affected by the zoning amendment and asked whether they were present in support of passage as written. A representative from the Grafton Suburban Credit Union testified that he could not support the current language as he felt that the proposed five (5) minute duration between messages was excessively long and should be more in the thirty (30) second range. He also stated that he had been told that the CEVMS would be part of a more comprehensive sign bylaw. A representative from Gaudette Insurance also stated disappointment with the process. The Planning Board also noted that there was no representative from the proponent(s) of the amendment to answer questions from the Board and the public.

Additionally, the Planning Board noted concerns regarding (a) whether these signs should be “in all districts where internally-illuminated signs are allowed” or restricted to the Town’s Community Business (CB) zoning districts; (b) whether these signs would be able to advertise for off-site commercial businesses; and (c) as relates specifically to reducing the duration time of

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messages, whether changing one part of the proposed by-law without revisiting it in its entirety would allow for an acceptable compromise with the earlier version that the Planning Board supported.

Based on the fact that the proposed CEVMS was before the Board for the third time in a year and that there was still no consensus as to what the standards should be or the scope of the amendment, the Planning Board voted unanimously **NOT TO RECOMMEND** acceptance of the CEVMS article.