

PLANNING BOARD

A five-member elected board with one appointed associate voting member, the Planning Board has specific statutory requirements. The Board reviews and approves the division of land under the State Subdivision Control Law (MGL c. 41) and the Stow Subdivision Rules and Regulations; serves as a special permit granting authority under the State Zoning Act and the Stow Zoning Bylaw; and guides the process of Zoning Bylaw amendments under the State Zoning Act (MGL c. 40A).

By statute, the Board is charged with the responsibility of protecting the health, safety and welfare of Stow's residents. Guided by the Massachusetts General Laws, the Stow Zoning Bylaw, the 1996 Stow Master Plan, and citizens' comments and concerns, the Board strives to preserve and enhance the integrity of Stow's character through the use of these regulatory tools, while safeguarding property owners' rights. We recommend and specify changes to development proposals to achieve these goals. Board members and staff strive to work with both applicants and residents to help shape projects so as to minimize impact to the community.

Organization

At the annual election, Leonard H. Golder was elected to a 5-year term, filling Bruce Fletcher's expired term. Bruce, who served for five years and chose not to seek re-election, has been a tremendous asset to the Board. We are fortunate that he continues to assist the Board as a voting Associate Member and a member of the Lower Village Sub-Committee.

Following the election, the Board elected Ernest Dodd to serve as Chairman, Laura Spear as Vice-Chairman and Kathleen Willis as Clerk. Bruce Fletcher was appointed as the Voting Associate Member. The Associate Member's voting power is limited to special permit applications, in the case of absence, inability to act or conflict of interest on the part of any member of the Planning Board or in the event of a vacancy on the Board. Malcolm FitzPatrick and Karen Kelleher were designated to endorse ANR Plans (Subdivision Approval Not Required). The Board appointed representatives to various Committees:

Community Preservation Committee: Laura Spear.

Master Plan Committee: Ernie Dodd.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council: Donna Jacobs.

School Building Task Force: Ernie Dodd

Development Activity

In 2006, the Planning Board met with developers and discussed the potential for:

A 5,552 sq. ft. retail/restaurant space:

- Great Road, expansion of an existing commercial complex with (3) businesses to a seven (7)-business plaza) - APPROVED

2 Wireless Service Antennas:

- Cingular at Gleasondale Mill – DENIED
- Nextel at Gleasondale Mill – WITHDRAWN

132 Active Adult Neighborhood/Townhouse style units:

- Arbor Glen, off of Hudson Road – 66-units APPROVED
- RidgeWood at Stow – 66 units UNDER REVIEW

1 Hammerhead Lot on Boxboro Road – APPROVED

1 Accessory Apartment on Old Bolton Road – APPROVED

14 single-family dwelling units:

- Taylor Road 5-lot Planned Conservation Development – APPROVED
- Riverhill Estates 5-lot Conventional Subdivision – UNDER REVIEW
- Pine Point Road/Barton Road ANR Plan, creating one new lot - DENIED
- Hudson Road/Maguire Lane, ANR Plan, creating one new lot – UNDER REVIEW
- Homestead Lane ANR Plan, creating 2 new lots - APPROVED

With the assistance of the Board's Consulting Engineer, Susan C. Sullivan, P. E., the Board monitored ongoing construction of seven (7) Subdivisions and two (2) Special Permits:

- Country Club Estates (Fairway Drive), a 7-lot subdivision, located off of Edson Street
- Wildlife Woods, a 67-lot subdivision, located off of Sudbury Road
- Red Fox Run (Cranberry Circle), a 5-lot subdivision, located off of Hudson Road
- Orchard View (Brandymeade Circle) a 12-lot subdivision, located off of West Acton Road
- Meadowbrook (Trefry Lane), a 17-lot subdivision, located off of Boxboro Road
- Derby Woods (Sylvan Drive and Dunster Drive extension), a 33-lot subdivision, located off of Harvard Road
- Butternut Farm Golf Course
- Arbor Glen Active Adult Neighborhood
- Whispering Woods (Kettell Plain Road), a 14-lot subdivision, located off of Maple Street
- Marble Hill (Asa Whitcomb Way), a 3-lot subdivision, located off of Taylor Road

The Board recommended Town Meeting acceptance of Farm Road, Militia Circle and Whispering Way.

Fees Collected:

Fees collected in 2006 in the amount of \$12,203.00 offset expenses incurred for processing these applications and for miscellaneous copies. Plan review and inspections are paid for by the Applicant.

Zoning Bylaw And Rules And Regulations Amendments:

Two Zoning Bylaw amendments were brought forth to Town Meeting in May by the Board and were unanimously adopted:

Section 3.8.1.9 (Drainage)

Sections 8.6.1.2 and 8.6.13 (Phasing of Growth)

The Board Continued to review Special Permit and Subdivision Rules and Regulations to be updated in 2007.

Work Plan:

The Board's work plan continues to include efforts to maintain Stow's rural character, Lower Village and Gleasondale Village Planning, pathways/sidewalk planning, assessment of the Town's future land needs, the potential need for a public water supply in Lower Village and Gleasondale, updating Rules and Regulations and Zoning Bylaws, light pollution, and affordable housing. The Board held many extra meetings dedicated to reviewing the Zoning Bylaw and

Rules and Regulations with plans for extensive changes to encourage Smart Growth and Low Impact Development Techniques.

Lower Village

The Lower Village Sub-Committee continued working with the Planning Board to enhance the Lower Village area, our vital Business District.

Lower Village Traffic Study

The Board and its Lower Village Sub-Committee feels strongly that any changes in the traffic pattern for Lower Village shall be in harmony with the Town's goal to enhance the Lower Village as the vital business center of our community, focusing on creating an identity for our historic Lower Village, consistent with the rural character of Stow.

The Board and its Lower Village Sub-Committee continued to work with Fay Spofford and Thorndike (FST) in conducting a Traffic Planning Study for the Lower Village to evaluate a series of alternative traffic calming recommendations to address vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle transportation conflicts. The Board conducted a detailed evaluation and recommended a 'Preferred Alternative' for implementation:

- Modern roundabout at Red Acre Road and Pompositticut Street to allow easier access to Great Road
- West Gateway modern roundabout to improve Elm Ridge Road and Bradley Lane access to Great Road and accommodate reverse direction from the east
- East Gateway incorporated into a reconfigured White Pond Road intersection
- Optional future signal at a Shopping Center entrance – only to be considered if the proposed roundabouts are infeasible
- Incorporate the Lower Village Streetscape plan (sidewalks, landscaping, etc.)
- Pedestrian Islands
- Curb cut consolidations

The Board and its Lower Village Sub-Committee's goal is to continue to seek input from residents; work with the Highway Department to implement pedestrian refuge islands and seek funding for design in 2007; and seek funding for construction (grants, private funds and Town funds) in 2008.

Lower Village Water

The Department of Environmental Protection is currently looking at several businesses in the Stow Lower Village Area with regard to drinking water. One of the businesses is under a consent order and another was denied plans for expansion. The Planning Board and its Lower Village Sub-Committee recognize the fact that any plans for a Mixed-Use Village Overlay District cannot be accomplished without providing water and/or wastewater treatment for the Village - whether it be through a municipal agreement with an abutting town or establishment of a community water supply in the Lower Village. The Planning Board and its Lower Village Sub-Committee requested that the Board of Selectmen take the lead on the issue.

West Stow Planning

West Stow Planning remains a priority. This area of town has a large amount of open land at risk of development and little protected Open Space. Several key parcels are currently being developed or are in the planning stage.

In its review of concept development plans for this area, the Board has and will continue to stress its goal for any proposed development to make provisions for an open space corridor and trail network from the Hudson Town Line to Great Road, Low Impact Development, Diversity in Housing Stock and Village feel.

Light Pollution

The Light Pollution Sub-Committee continued working with the Planning Board on proposed lighting bylaw changes. A “Final” recommendation was submitted to the Planning Board for presentation to Town Meeting in 2007 for a Zoning Bylaw amendment. In addition, the Committee worked with developers and the Planning Board to ensure that lighting will comply with existing and proposed new bylaw. The Planning Board and its Light Pollution Study Sub-Committee extends our appreciation for the changes made to the lighting at the Bose Facility to comply with the Special Permit. We are especially thankful that, even though not required, Bose Corporation also lowered the light output. The current level is more appropriate and in keeping with the rural nature of Stow. The Committee continues to urge residents to confine their lighting to their property by re-aiming or replacing fixtures to achieve better lighting, which is not bothersome to others.

Other Activities

The Board reviewed and commented on the Environmental Notification Form for the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, the Town of Stow Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan, and various applications before the Conservation Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Building Department.

Thanks

None of the planning efforts would be possible without the enormous contributions by Stow residents, who serve as volunteers on the boards and committees and Town staff. It is a pleasure to continue working with all of you.

The Board thanks the following Sub-Committee members for their ongoing efforts:

Lower Village Sub-Committee: Chairman Don McPherson, Bruce Fletcher, Karen Kelleher, Lucille King, Barbara Sipler, Laura Spear and Russ Willis and Associate Members Phil Moseley, Tom Farnsworth and T. L. Neff.

Light Pollution Sub-Committee - Chairman Russ Willis, Bill Chiarchiaro and Greg Troxel.

Our very capable professional consultants were Susan Sullivan, Town Counsels Jon Witten and Patty Daley of Daley and Witten, LLC.

As can be seen by this report, the Board had another busy year, but this amount of work would never have been possible without the tireless and competent efforts of Karen Kelleher and Lois Costello, who not only work hard for the Board, but also for the general public with whom they interact on a daily basis.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernest E. Dodd, Chairman
Laura Y. Spear, Vice Chairman
Kathleen A. Willis, Clerk
Malcolm S. FitzPatrick

Leonard H. Golder
Donna Jacobs, Voting Associate
Bruce E. Fletcher, R Voting Associate
Ruth Kennedy, Non-Voting Associate

Karen Kelleher, Planning Coordinator

Lois Costello, Administrative Assistant