

Town of Stow
Gleasondale Neighborhood Area Subcommittee of the Stow Planning Board
(hereafter referred to as “Gleasondale Subcommittee”)

Minutes of the November 27, 2017 meeting of the Gleasondale Subcommittee

Gleasondale Subcommittee members present

Laurel Cohen, Jeri DiPietro, Rosemary Monahan, and Dot Spaulding

Gleasondale Subcommittee members absent

Meg Costello

Stow Planning Department staff present

Valerie Oorthuys (for first 30 minutes)

Rosemary Monahan called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Minutes from previous meeting

Minutes from the October 25, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved.

Public Comment

None

Member updates

None

Discussion of Neighborhood Survey

The Subcommittee reviewed the results of surveys completed by neighbors. The survey had been distributed to about 95 homes and businesses in Gleasondale, including Gleasondale Road, High Street, Railroad Avenue, and Marlboro Road. It also was sent electronically to the Gleasondale email group.

This survey and accompanying map were intended to gauge interest within Gleasondale about moving forward with actions to preserve our neighborhood’s character. Valerie Oorthuys had compiled the results of surveys available in advance of the meeting, and Jeri DiPietro brought her survey answers to the meeting. In total, 12 completed surveys were received. (See attached compilation of results.) Not surprisingly, those who responded believe that Gleasondale is historically significant, with the mill getting the most ‘votes’ for being an important historic or cultural resource, followed by historic homes and architecture, the Assabet River, and farms and open spaces. Respondents also are concerned about the potential demolition of historic structures, and feel that it is important that new development contain architectural characteristics that are in

keeping with the historic character of the neighborhood. Respondents also commented on the boundaries of Gleasondale and at least two recommended placing signs at the 'gateways' to the neighborhood on Gleasondale Road and Marlboro Road.

The Subcommittee discussed whether the response rate reflected interest on the part of the overall neighborhood, and it was noted that it was good that we didn't get 'pushback' on the survey in terms of negative responses. In regard to the boundaries, Jeri mentioned that there was a road that went over the river between the town-owned Kane land and Forest Road. Foundations of the bridge abutments can be seen on either side of the river. She suggested that we might consider including Forest Road within the boundaries if it was connected more in the past to the mill area.

After some discussion of possible actions the Subcommittee could take, it was decided that it makes most sense to explore the potential for a Demolition Delay that would apply town-wide, not just to Gleasondale. Dot Spaulding talked briefly about the last time that a Demolition Delay bylaw was brought to a vote at Town Meeting, which was some time in the 1980s. She is going to look into whether there is any information available on why it did not pass. Jeri noted that if we pursue a Demolition Delay bylaw that should take into consideration homeowners' reasonable needs to sell or improve properties.

It was decided that the next steps for the Subcommittee would be to investigate demolition delay bylaws in other nearby communities before our next meeting, and to potentially host a public forum in late March or early April in which we would invite speakers from a few (e.g., 3-4) other towns to talk about their experience with demolition delays.

The Subcommittee's investigation (using information available on-line) into what other towns have done will include researching: information on how long the delay is, what buildings it applies to, when the bylaw was adopted, and what has resulted from application of the bylaw (e.g., were structures saved).

Dot will investigate bylaws in Littleton, Maynard, and Berlin.

Laurel will investigate bylaws in Worcester and Hudson.

Jeri will investigate bylaws in Acton, Groton, and Shirley.

Rosemary will investigate bylaws in Northborough and Southborough.

Next Meeting:

The Subcommittee agreed to a date for the next meeting, which will take place on Thursday, January 25 at 7pm in the Town Building. The focus of this meeting will be on the findings from our research into what other towns have done, and on discussing whether to host a public forum, potentially in collaboration with the full Stow Planning Board.

Meeting adjourned, 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosemary Monahan