

TOWN OF STOW  
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the March 5, 2019 Planning Board Meeting

Planning Board Members Present: Lori Clark, Len Golder, Karen Kelleher, John Colonna-Romano

Voting Associate Member: Megan Birch-McMichael

Associate Member: Mark Jones

Absent: Margaret Costello

Lori Clark called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Discussion of Meeting Minutes**

**Minutes of January 15, 2019**

*Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as amended.*

*Len Golder seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Len Golder, Karen Kelleher, John Colonna-Romano- Yea).**

**Minutes of January 22, 2019**

*Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as drafted.*

*Len Golder seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Len Golder, Karen Kelleher, John Colonna-Romano- Yea).**

**Minutes of January 29, 2019**

*Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as amended.*

*Len Golder seconded.*

**VOTED: 3-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Len Golder, Karen Kelleher- Yea, John Colonna-Romano abstained).**

**Minutes of February 5, 2019**

*Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as amended.*

*Len Golder seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Len Golder, Karen Kelleher, John Colonna-Romano- Yea).**

**Minutes of February 19, 2019**

*Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as drafted.*

*Len Golder seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Len Golder, Karen Kelleher, John Colonna-Romano- Yea).**

**Executive Session Minutes of January 8, 2019**

*Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as amended.*

*Len Golder seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Len Golder, Karen Kelleher, John Colonna-Romano- Yea).**

**Executive Session Minutes of January 15, 2019**

*Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as amended.*

*Len Golder seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Len Golder, Karen Kelleher, John Colonna-Romano- Yea).**

**Executive Session Minutes of January 22, 2019**

*Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as amended.*

*Len Golder seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Len Golder, Karen Kelleher, John Colonna-Romano- Yea).**

**Executive Session Minutes of January 29, 2019**

*Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as amended.*

*Len Golder seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Len Golder, Karen Kelleher, John Colonna-Romano- Yea).**

**Public Input**

None.

**Member Updates**

Mark Jones said the Zoning Board of Appeals recently discussed whether to provide the Board of Selectmen recommendations on a draft covenant with Plantation Apartments I. Mark Jones said a funder of Plantation Apartments II has requested that if the entity were to go into foreclosure, they would retain the right to rent units at market rate, beyond the mandated Ch.40b percentage. Mark Jones said this may be challenging, as the project was funded in part through the Community Preservation Act.

John Colonna-Romano said that Spring Hill Estates has gone to public auction. The Planning Board discussed concern for the site during the spring thaw, especially as a current homeowner shares the driveway.

Karen Kelleher said the Complete Streets Committee is meeting this week to discuss their fiscal year 2020 budget and the relationship between their funds and the Highway Department's Chapter 90 allocations.

Megan Birch-McMichael said the Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee is finalizing a document to provide to the Planning Board detailing a vision and recommendations for the district that come from several past planning processes.

## **Planner's Report**

### *Gleasondale Bridge Comments*

Jesse Steadman said that MassDOT has provided 25% design plans for the Gleasondale Bridge reconstruction. The Planning Board has the opportunity to provide comments on these plans until the end of the month.

### *Mistletoe Farm Special Permit Modification*

Jesse Steadman said the owner of Mistletoe Farm would like the Special Permit to be modified so that the accessory dwelling space located in the historic structure may be used as a rental. Members of the Planning Board asked whether the Special Permit states the land cannot be subdivided and noted the intent of the Special Permit to preserve the historic structure without allowing two residences on the lot. The Planning Board considered whether the owner would be amenable to a Conservation Restriction.

## **Joint Boards Meeting- Golf Course Planning**

Members of the Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, and Stow Conservation Trust joined the Planning Board in discussing potential development and conservation opportunities for Stow's golf courses. Jesse Steadman and Valerie Oorthuys gave a presentation to provide an overview of Stow's residentially zoned golf courses and their potential for development. The goals of the discussion were to describe current land use options should the owners choose to develop, to understand how participating Boards and Committees may work together to advance the Town's goals, and to determine how to move a planning process forward, including how to best organize a Chapter 61 withdrawal response.

Jim Salvie asked what tools the Town's Boards and Committees have when considering preferred development scenarios. The Board listed a few examples, such as zoning amendments to dictate where development could happen while preserving open space, offering density bonuses or encouraging cluster developments. Jesse Steadman said options may include a public golf course such as the one in Maynard, continuing care housing, a comprehensive permit, or agricultural uses. Bob Wilbur said he feels the size of the courses provide a unique opportunity to define outcomes for a community with many needs.

Bob Wilbur reminded the Boards and Committees present that all of the courses in the residential district are under M.G.L. Chapter 61, giving the Town considerable leverage. The Town could opt to purchase the land with a clear plan and develop Requests for Proposals to achieve goals.

Bill Maxfield said he would like to know more about the financial risk of the courses being developed, as far as school projections and public safety costs for Active Adult Neighborhoods.

Kathy Sferra noted the future of golf at these courses is at risk and that conceptual plans for subdivisions have been engineered. Kathy Sferra said it is important the Town engage with

the land owners early on in the planning process. Jesse Steadman said the owners were invited to attend this meeting, and they are interested in the outcome.

Adrienne Snow said she feels that the land includes unique features, such as drumlins, that are not visible from the roadway and any planning process should include a site walk to better understand what is at stake. Adrienne Snow said she feels affordable housing and ADA accessible trails are good options for the land.

Mike Kopczynski said he feels the land cost will likely be quite high and wondered if the Town would vote to exercise the right of first refusal.

Cortni Frecha offered that one option may be to approach land owners with an offer to purchase a Conservation Restriction.

Mark Jones said that regarding financial risks of a large development, the birth rate is declining with the population of aging adults increasing. The Wildlife Woods subdivision has an average of one child per home, which is under the average. Mark Jones said he believes the deeds for the golf courses show the face value of their mortgages at \$10 million. Kathy Sferra said the roll back taxes for the north course at Stow Acres could be in the millions as well.

Ingeborg Hegemann Clark said she feels that planning for residential developments such as cohousing or continuous care facilities will need to consider multiple levels of affordability as well as the Town's goals around sustainability.

Mike Kopczynski said he feels that rental opportunities would help advance the Town's affordable housing goals.

The Boards and Committees present agreed to meet individually to consider their preferred uses of the land. It was agreed that a subcommittee should be formed to continue the planning process.

#### **Endorsement of Stiles Farm Definitive Subdivision Minor Modification and Lot Release Vote**

*Len Golder recused himself as an abutter to Stiles Farm.*

Jesse Steadman said that Town Counsel has advised the Board to release the lot from the previous Restrictive Covenant due to the minor modification and to issue a new Restrictive Covenant. The Board clarified that if the owner does not receive the Agricultural Preservation Restriction, there will be opportunities to revisit the designation.

*Karen Kelleher moved to issue a lot release from the original Restrictive Covenant subject to issuance of the recording of a new covenant.*

*John Colonna-Romano seconded.*

**VOTED: 3-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Karen Kelleher, John Colonna-Romano- Yea; Len Golder abstained).**

**Discussion of Upcoming Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

Jesse Steadman said that draft language would be available for the Board to review on their meeting of March 12. Jesse Steadman said the Town Administrator feels it may be possible to use funds to complete the Lower Village project through free cash, rather than through a bond account. Other warrant articles will include 8 articles to accept easements from property owners along Great Road that need to be extended ahead of continuing construction on the Lower Village project.

Jesse Steadman said the request for \$50,000 for Complete Streets will be reviewed by the Capital Planning Committee. The funds will go toward engineering costs for design of MassDOT funded projects or toward completion of smaller projects on the Prioritization Plan that do not require engineering. The Planning Board discussed whether the article should be under the Planning Board's requests or under the Selectmen's. The Planning Board agreed that Planning staff should not represent this request at Town Meeting.

**Lower Village Traffic Safety Improvement Project**

The Planning Board reviewed draft language for a press release around the next steps for the Lower Village project. The Board agreed that language should be added to provide specifics of the drainage concern to clarify that rather than being concerned over the functionality of the underground drainage infrastructure, the concern is that water on the roadway surface would not be able to flow to the gutter line. The final course of paving was not installed because the roadway would've been damaged by puddling and icing, leading to crumbling pavement within a few years.

The Planning Board agreed that a public forum should be held ahead of Town Meeting.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys