

TOWN OF STOW
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the March 12, 2019 Planning Board Meeting

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

Voting Associate Member: Megan Birch-McMichael

Associate Member: Mark Jones

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

Discussion of Meeting Minutes

Minutes of March 5, 2019

Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as amended.

John Colonna-Romano seconded.

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

Public Input

None.

Correspondence

The Planning Board discussed a letter from the Conservation and Recreation Commissions regarding the completion of permitting and bidding for the construction of Town Center Park. The Board noted that the sequence of events prepared by the contractor was not included in the correspondence and agreed that tree cutting should not be considered commencement of construction.

Planner's Report

Administrative Assistant Position

Jesse Steadman said that interviews will begin next week for the Administrative Assistant position.

Complete Streets

Jesse Steadman said existing conditions surveys are almost complete for two of the funded Complete Streets projects, including the intersection of Old Bolton Road and Great Road and the section of Great Road between Town Center and Lower Village.

Harvard Road Runoff

Jesse Steadman said residents of Harvard Road continue to raise concerns over increasing runoff in the vicinity of Wedgewood Pines Country Club. The Planning Board agreed this could be a seasonal issue or a larger concern and that the Special Permit for the golf course should be reviewed.

Lower Village

Jesse Steadman said correspondence from a resident at 196 Great Road describes a concern with snow plowing, stormwater runoff, and the proximity of donation boxes at the abutting property. Jesse Steadman said the Building Commissioner has contacted the owner of the donation boxes to have them relocated and the plowing concern has been forwarded to the Highway Department. Jesse Steadman said the issue of water ponding on the driveway will be addressed in the scope of work of the engineers working to complete the Lower Village traffic project.

Public Hearing

Erosion Control Special Permit, Collings Foundation

Karen Kelleher recused herself as an abutter to the Collings Foundation.

Lori Clark said the applicant has requested to continue the public hearing without testimony.

Len Golder moved to continue the public hearing for the Erosion Control Special Permit at the Collings Foundation without testimony to April 23, 2019 at 7:30pm.

Margaret Costello seconded.

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

Golf Course Planning

The Planning Board debriefed the discussion held at their meeting of March 5th, 2019 regarding development of golf courses.

John Colonna-Romano said it is notable that some newer subdivisions are not thought to reflect the character of Stow, and that this should be clarified so that these elements are not part of a potential residential neighborhood on the golf courses. The Board agreed this vision may include homes that aren't too close together and yards that are left meadowed.

Karen Kelleher said she felt the discussion around needing diversity in housing is important, and that neighborhoods that support a continuum of care should be looked into, as well as the use of the existing historic clubhouse as commercial space. Karen Kelleher mentioned the possibility of transferring development rights from one course to another to allow for a mix of conservation and development.

The Planning Board agreed that participating Boards and Committees were very engaged in the discussion and it will be important to understand the basis for various visions. Lori Clark said it may be helpful to know the owners' financial target as a vision is developed.

The Planning Board agreed their next steps should include planning a charrette to gather ideas from Town Board and Committees, residents, and golf course owners. After the charrette, a subcommittee can be formed.

Mark Jones said a description of the M.G.L. Chapter 61b withdrawal process would be important to have as part of the charrette.

The Board agreed to send a letter to all Boards and Committees in attendance during the discussion on March 5th and to let them know the Board will host an upcoming forum so as not to lose momentum.

Gleasondale Bridge 25% Design Comments

The Board reviewed a draft letter to MassDOT regarding the 25% design plans for the Gleasondale Bridge replacement. The plans detail the replacement of the superstructure of the bridge, part of one abutment, and the northern wingwalls. Construction will take roughly 18 months and will utilize a similar traffic signal setup as what is currently in place. The 25% design plans include the extent of roadway improvements and some detail on the locations of easements. MassDOT will collect comments from various Town departments on the plans and set a public forum date, after which plans will advance to the 75% design phase.

Mark Jones said it may be important to inquire as to whether part of the grading during construction could open up the right of way along the bridge transitions so that the road's pinch points are widened. Margaret Costello said she is opposed to widening the right of way and noted the stone wall to the southwest of the bridge which she feels slows traffic.

Jesse Steadman said the letter will be finalized and provided to MassDOT by the end of the week.

Housing Choice Designation

Jesse Steadman said an application to the State's Housing Choice Initiative will be completed by the end of the week. The designation rewards communities that have made progress in developing diverse housing opportunities with access to capital funding sources and technical assistance. If granted the designation, the Town will commit to entering into a Memorandum of Understanding to conduct an Americans with Disabilities Act Self-Evaluation within five years of entering the program.

Discussion of Upcoming Town Meeting Warrant Articles

The Planning Board discussed a draft Town Meeting Warrant article requesting funds for the Lower Village Traffic Safety Improvement Project. The Planning Board agreed that without a final design for the roadway, the amount of the request will have to be estimated at \$500,000 at this point.

Lower Village Traffic Safety Improvement Project and Design Proposal

The Planning Board reviewed a proposal from Green International Affiliates, Inc. for design, engineering, and construction services for the Lower Village project. Jesse Steadman noted the proposal includes the provision of MassDOT standards for the roadway and references to specific documents and processes that are encouraging. The scope of work does not include the provision of revised layout plans in the event easements need to be altered. The Board's consulting engineers at Places Associates feel revised layout plans aren't necessarily needed. Jesse Steadman said the proposal includes expenses itemized for five specific tasks of the project, allowing the Board to accept certain tasks without relying on funding through Town Meeting, as some funds still remain in the project account. For example, a contract for construction phase services could be determined after Town Meeting's vote to allocate additional funding. Jesse Steadman said Places Associates is continuing their review of the proposal.

Karen Kelleher moved to accept the proposal from Green International Affiliates, Inc. contingent on Places Associates' favorable review and the recommendation of the Town Administrator, Town Planner, and Places Associates.

Margaret Costello seconded.

Voted: 5-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Len Golder, Margaret Costello, Karen Kelleher, John Colonna-Romano- Yea).

The Planning Board discussed a communication strategy, contingent on a signed contract with an engineering firm. A press release will be issued and a frequently asked questions document will be made available. A public forum will be held ahead of Town Meeting and a Swift Reach call will be utilized. Impacted abutters to the project will be invited to a Planning Board meeting to discuss any specific concerns. Flashing signs from the Highway Department will be placed on Great Road ahead of construction.

Executive Session in Accordance with M.G.L. Ch.30A s.21(a)(3) for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to possible litigation

Lori Clark stated that she finds an open discussion would have a detrimental effect on the Board's litigating position.

Karen Kelleher moved to enter into Executive Session to discuss contract concerns and potential litigation and to reconvene the regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Board thereafter.

Margaret Costello seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Lori Clark- Yea; Margaret Costello- Yea; Karen Kelleher- Yea; John Colonna-Romano- Yea.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys