

TOWN OF STOW
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the June 4, 2019 Planning Board Meeting

Planning Board Members Present: Lori Clark, Margaret Costello, Karen Kelleher, Len Golder, 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 May 28, 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; Margaret Costello abstained).

Public Input

None.

Member Updates

Mark Jones said the Zoning Board of Appeals met recently and denied an application for a variance to construct a garage. Mark Jones said that longtime chair Ed Tarnuzzer is retiring from the ZBA after over 40 years of service to the Town as a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board.

Margaret Costello said the Gleasondale Neighborhood Area Subcommittee members are continuing to gather survey responses to inform the potential creation of a local historic district.

Planner's Report

Wedgewood Pines Runoff

Jesse Steadman provided the Board with a draft letter to the owner of Wedgewood Properties that describes site conditions observed at a recent site walk at a home on Harvard Road. Jesse Steadman said the letter requests that the owner provide a proposal to address drainage that can then be reviewed by the Board's consulting engineer at Places Associates.

Melone Erosion Control Special Permit

Jesse Steadman said that he attended a recent site walk at J.Melone & Sons, to view the location of the basins and dewatering structure. The public hearing for the permit will be on an agenda in July.

Lower Village Discussion with Selectmen

Jesse Steadman said there will be a Joint Boards meeting on June 11th to discuss the Lower Village project with the Board of Selectmen.

Lower Village Discussion with Finance Committee

Jesse Steadman said a meeting will be held on June 18th with the Finance Committee to discuss the Lower Village project.

Marble Hill Farm stand

Jesse Steadman said a business is looking to lease the Marble Hill Farm stand to open a retail shop, though the items sold will not be related to an agricultural use. As the site is in the residential district, they have expressed interest in requesting a zoning change for parcels along that section of Great Road, including Patterson Autobody.

Golf Course Public Forum

Valerie Oorthuys said staff continue to plan for a public forum around development scenarios at residentially zoned golf courses. The forum will be scheduled for either July 10th or 15th.

Annual Appointments

The Board discussed and agreed upon annual appointments of Board members and staff.

Karen Kelleher moved to appoint Lori Clark as Chairman.

JCR Seconded.

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

Margaret Costello moved to appoint Karen Kelleher as Vice Chairman.

John Colonna-Romano Seconded.

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

Karen Kelleher moved to appoint Jesse Steadman and John Colonna-Romano to endorse Subdivision Approval Not Required (ANR) Plans.

Margaret Costello Seconded.

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

Karen Kelleher moved to appoint John Colonna-Romano as Community Preservation Committee Representative.

Margaret Costello Seconded.

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

Karen Kelleher moved to appoint Jesse Steadman as Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) Representative.

Margaret Costello Seconded.

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

Karen Kelleher moved to appoint Mark Jones as Liaison to Zoning Board of Appeals.

Margaret Costello Seconded.

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

Karen Kelleher moved to appoint Jesse Steadman as Liaison to MAPC.

Margaret Costello Seconded.

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

Karen Kelleher moved to appoint Margaret Costello as Liaison to the Gleasondale Neighborhood Area Sub-Committee.

John Colonna- Romano Seconded.

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

Karen Kelleher moved to appoint Megan Birch-McMichael as Liaison to the Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee.

Margaret Costello Seconded.

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

Erosion Control Special Permit Deliberation. Collings Foundation

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

Jesse Steadman provided the Board with the Conservation Commission's Order of Conditions and noted that Places Associates had previously issued recommendations for landscaping. The Conservation Commission has a limited jurisdiction because of the delineation of the riverfront area. The proposed plans show about 9 clusters of plantings throughout the Conservation Commission. Jesse Steadman said the Planning Board may want to consider landscaping over the entire excavated area and review the proposal to grade the slopes gently down. Jesse Steadman asked if the Board feels that more material should be brought on site to fill the area to its original mounded condition or somewhere in between.

Margaret Costello said she feels the site was not excavated solely to fill in the museum foundation, as the applicant provided three different sites that accepted the excavated materials. Lori Clark acknowledged it is unusual to receive an application for a permit for work that has already been done, and the Board needs to determine how the site should be restored.

Mark Jones said the Erosion Control bylaw doesn't contemplate the General Bylaws, which states fines that could be applied. Mark Jones said he feels the applicant's claim that the work was done under the Building Permit brings it under site plan review, meaning that fines could be issued through the Planning Board.

Megan Birch-McMichael noted that the Board of Selectmen denied a permit for Earth Removal in 2014 regarding excavation of this site and said she is concerned for the precedent this may set.

John Colonna-Romano agreed that the permit process was disregarded and the site needs to be remediated.

Margaret Costello said that she is in favor of levelling fines as she feels the work was in violation of the Settlement Agreement. Margaret Costello said that regarding remediation, she would like to see enough soil replaced to build the hill back up. Lori Clark said she feels this was done deceptively, and asked what is gained by requiring full remediation. Lori Clark noted that abutters at a public hearing said they are concerned that remediation may require additional truckloads of material transported past their home, which they would not be in favor of.

Mark Jones asked if the Special Permit could be denied so that the Board could accept further information about the location of the soils excavated. Lori Clark said she feels that if the permit were denied, the applicant would not reapply with additional information.

Lori Clark asked what the Conservation Commissions concerns are. Jesse Steadman said they are concerned with the amount of invasives on the landscape and the ability to bring back native vegetation to restore the riverfront area. The Conservation Commission would like the northerly berm to be retained and asked for 6 inches of fill to be added with conservation restoration seed mixes to be used.

Jesse Steadman said that the decision can be written to focus on remediation, though plan modifications need to be prescriptive, as the public hearing process is over and no new information can be considered. The decision should state specific amounts of plantings and fill to a specific elevation, subject to review and approval from Places Associates prior to endorsement. The Board agreed that questions of fines should be asked of Town Counsel. The Board did not agree on whether the area should be fully restored or remediated.

Joint Boards Meeting with Cemetery Committee- Discussion of Lower Village Cemetery

Present:

GH Gledhill, Cemetery Superintendent

Ken Banks, Cemetery Committee

Glenn Hammil, Cemetery Committee

GH Gledhill said he feels there was a misunderstanding at the meeting of May 28th regarding public parking off Great Road at the Lower Village Cemetery. GH Gledhill said he is concerned that services cannot continue at the cemetery and that if parking is not provided, plots may not be able to be sold.

Lori Clark said the Board is not going to formally create parking, though cape cod berm can be placed between the utility poles along Route 117 for cemetery truck access. Jesse Steadman said the sidewalk is not proposed to be lowered at that location, though the back of sidewalk can be graded out. GH Gledhill said he feels this would not be enough for the maintenance truck to access the cemetery, as there is a landscaped berm on the back of sidewalk that is higher than the sidewalk. Jesse Steadman said the road is superelevated in that location, which is why the sidewalk is so high, as this impacts drainage. Jesse Steadman added that the Highway Department has offered to complete the loam and seeding at the cemetery frontage, though installing fill to create a level surface would bury the stone wall. The Cemetery Committee agreed that they would not want the wall to be impacted.

Glenn Hammil said the Committee's intent is to restore the prior condition of informal parking. Lori Clark said that given the Highway Department will loam and seed the area, it will be possible to work with them to bring down the loam on the back of sidewalk so that it is not higher than the walkway. The Planning Board agreed to ask Green if the sidewalk is able to be lowered and to work with the Highway Department to make the slope more gradual.

The Planning Board agreed that after the construction is complete, permanent parking alternatives for the cemetery will be discussed.

Bill Byron, 469 Gleasondale Road, said that while the Lower Village Cemetery may not be the most heavily visited, it is the Town's oldest cemetery. Bill Byron said he feels parking has been taken away from the site and he does not feel a sidewalk is necessary. Bill Bryon said he feels construction should address roadway drainage along the site, though not at the cost of parking. Lori Clark noted that the project is not solely the result of the Planning Board's efforts, but inclusive of input from the Pedestrian Walkway Committee, the Complete Streets Committee, and others.

Lower Village Traffic Safety Improvement Project- Design Review

Jesse Steadman said that Green International Affiliates (Green) have provided a draft set of final plans, which represent feedback from the Lower Village Working Group. E.T.&L. Corp has received the draft plans so they can begin their review and preparation of their cost estimate.

Jesse Steadman updated the Board on design alternatives selected by the Lower Village Working Group and Green. Cross connections for the additional catch basins have been reduced from 8 to 2, positively impacting the cost estimate and duration of construction, without detriment to the system's capacity. The plans call for some areas of milling and levelling. Green did test pits at the Lower Common and found poor soils two feet under the proposed infiltration system expansion, which is not a concern as the system stores water then recharges.

Jesse Steadman said the curb radius at White Pond Road is slightly widened, which will alleviate concerns from trucks and buses. Green found solutions to abutters' concerns, including excess water ponding on 92 Great Road. Jesse Steadman said improvements to abutting properties will be reviewed with owners prior to Town Meeting.

Jesse Steadman said that Green has been asked to complete a general peer review of the traffic analysis, including a review of whether a right hand turn at Red Acre Road is feasible and whether a future signal study should be completed at that location. Karen Kelleher noted correspondence from Don McPherson regarding Red Acre Road. Jesse Steadman said Green would need to review whether the turn radius could be adjusted without formalizing a right hand turn lane. This would likely include removing and resetting the concrete wheelchair ramp pads. Lori Clark said the Lower Village Working Group hopes the peer review will happen prior to Town Meeting, but the priority was providing E.T.&L. Corp the draft plans to provide an accurate cost estimate.

Margaret Costello asked if trench plates will be used during construction. Jesse Steadman said that on the advice of public safety officials, they will be used on a case by case basis with asphalt holding them in place.

Margaret Costello asked if night work will be authorized. Jesse Steadman said that the Working Group and public safety determined that night and weekend work may be allowed on a case by case basis.

Don McPherson, 103 Crescent Street, asked if draft plans are available to view. Jesse Steadman said that revised plans would be available by the end of the week.

Nancy Arsenault, 267 Red Acre Road, said she is glad to hear of the changes at White Pond Road, and asked if the plans include a right turn lane at Red Acre Road. Nancy Arsenault asked if the stop sign would be replaced at Pompositticut Street, and added that she would like to see landscaping

along the corridor to improve the aesthetics of the district. The Planning Board agreed that the corridor needs additional landscaping, particularly in front of the Stow Café building where trees were removed and acknowledged that the stop sign at Pompositticut Street will be replaced. Jesse Steadman said that Green is reviewing the plans to see if widening the radius at Red Acre Road would provide extra room for right hand turns, while continuing to provide safety for pedestrians.

Nancy Arsenault asked about the location of the utility pole in the road in front of 92 Great Road. Jesse Steadman said that the pole is owned by Verizon Wireless and the project team has requested on numerous occasions that it be moved.

Don McPherson asked for more information about the plans for aesthetic improvements in Lower Village. Karen Kelleher said that aesthetics in Lower Village is also a concern of the Board and noted that the Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee's Final Report includes recommendations related to landscaping.

Don McPherson said that he would like the proposed pedestrian refuge islands to be installed. Lori Clark said they were removed only for winterization and will be reinstalled.

Bruce Fletcher asked if the traffic engineering considers the potential build out of the White Pond Road commercial district. Jesse Steadman said the analysis balanced the need for commercial vehicles to utilize the intersection of White Pond Road with the need for pedestrian and cyclist safety, as the area is residential and connects to the Assabet River Rail Trail and Wildlife Refuge. This means that the roadway will accommodate SU-40 traffic and emergency apparatus, though not WB-50 vehicles.

Jesse Steadman said members of the Lower Village Working Group will provide the Board of Selectmen and update at their meeting on June 11th. The Finance Committee will be updated at their meeting of June 18th. The Board agreed to hold a public forum the week of June 17th.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys