

TOWN OF STOW  
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the September 24, 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 September 10, 2019**

*Margaret Costello moved to approve the minutes as amended.*

*John Colonna-Romano seconded.*

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

**Public Input**

None.

**Member Updates**

Margaret Costello said she is reviewing the results from the survey regarding a customized Local Historic District in Gleasondale. This will be discussed further at a future meeting of the Planning Board.

**Planner's Report**

*Properties for Consideration*

Stow's Chapter 61 quick response team has been notified of the potential sale of two properties in Stow to consider. The owner of Stow Acres has approached the Town with the option of purchasing the 20 acre driving range at the North Course of Stow Acres, which is currently under Chapter 61. Stow Acres intends to move the driving range to their South Course and they have provided the Town with a concept plan for a 5 unit Hammerhead Lot Special Permit. The Recreation Department may be interested, and the team is waiting to hear from other departments.

Highrock Church is planning to sell their property along Great Road adjacent to Town Center Park, as they have moved to a new site in Acton. The quick response team has heard the Library and the Recreation Department may be interested, though the team is waiting to hear responses from other departments as well.

The Planning Board agreed to reply to the quick response team regarding these two properties, and to discuss a proposed reply at their next meeting.

*Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant*

As an MVP designated community, Stow is eligible to apply for Action Grants through the State's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to implement action steps from the MVP final report.

#### *Athens Lane Development*

Planning and Conservation staff met with the owner of several parcels off Athens Lane and their engineers to review a concept plan for a 66 unit Active Adult Neighborhood (AAN). The owner asked that the Planning Board raise the cap on AAN units, as the Town is only 3 or 4 units from the limit. The owner would like to discuss this further with the Board at a future meeting.

#### *Gleasondale Local Historic District*

The Gleasondale Neighborhood Area Subcommittee would like to become a formalized Local Historic District Study Committee, formed by the Board of Selectmen, in order to establish a Local Historic District. The group will meet with the Historical Commission in October to discuss the intent of the Committee and then likely request that the Planning Board disband the subcommittee to pursue the Study Committee.

#### *55+ Housing Forum*

MetroWest Collaborative Development has put together a housing forum to discuss decisions and opportunities for 55 and over households. The forum will be held on October 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm at the Pompositticut Community Center.

#### *CrossTown Connect*

Representative Kate Hogan secured additional funding for CrossTown Connect to create a pilot program to establish a shuttle stop in Stow along the Acton and Maynard route to the South Acton commuter rail station. Planning staff have met with CrossTown Connect and Linear Realty to discuss the addition of a stop at the Lower Village Shopping Plaza. Linear Realty let staff know they would not want to make parking available for the shuttle.

#### *On-Demand Transportation Pilot Program*

Planning staff are looking into joining Sudbury's Making the Connections partnership, which would provide eligible Stow residents discounted rides through an on-demand service such as Uber or Lyft.

#### **Endorsement of Minor Modification of Erosion Control Special Permit, 79 Edgehill Road**

The Planning Board endorsed the Minor Modification of the Erosion Control Special Permit at 79 Edgehill Road, as approved at the meeting of September 10, 2019.

#### **Endorsement of Joanne Drive Planned Conservation Development Extension**

The Planning Board endorsed the Joanne Drive Planned Conservation Development Special Permit extension, as approved at the meeting of September 10, 2019.

#### **Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee Member Appointments**

The Planning Board reviewed letters of interest for membership on the Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee from Jim Salvie, Tom Farnsworth, Jonathan Bransfield, and Meghan Birch-McMichael.

*Margaret Costello moved to appoint Tom Farnsworth to the Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee for a one-year term.*

*John Colonna-Romano seconded.*

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

*Len Golder moved to appoint Jim Salvie to the Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee for a one-year term.*

*John Colonna-Romano seconded.*

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

*Len Golder moved to appoint Jonathan Bransfield to the Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee for a one-year term.*

*Margaret Costello seconded.*

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

*Len Golder moved to appoint Megan Birch-McMichael to the Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee for a one-year term.*

*Margaret Costello seconded.*

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

### **Lower Village Traffic Safety Improvement Project**

Jesse Steadman said the two week look ahead for the Lower Village project includes installation of temporary lane striping, sidewalk grading, driveway grading, fence removal, and installation of curbing.

Jesse Steadman provided the Board with correspondence from the owner of 92 Great Road, requesting reimbursement for work he completed on his site last fall in an effort to mitigate ponding along the frontage due to the construction of the berm. The Board agreed more information on the issue should be collected, both from the property owner and engineers at Green International. The Board agreed to discuss the issue further at an upcoming meeting.

Jesse Steadman said the driveways at 1 White Pond Road have been modified again due to the homeowner's complaint that it was not straight or wide enough. After an onsite meeting and subsequent revision, the revised plan is satisfactory to the homeowner.

### **Lower Village Working Session**

The Planning Board utilized this working session to explore modifications to Lower Village Business District zoning.

The Board discussed the parcels to be included with zoning changes as part of the Business District, noting that several single family homes are within the current boundaries such as 196 Great Road and homes along Samuel Prescott Road. Several members agreed the district boundary should not change, and zoning changes should focus on uses. Mark Jones noted that a residential overlay could be added to existing single family homes to decrease nonconformities.

Lori Clark stated that while zoning changes increase developers' flexibility, abutters will expect that bylaws will need to be more strictly enforced.

Jesse Steadman said the draft bylaw would state that all site changes would trigger a Special Permit process through the Planning Board, inclusive of changes to parking, building facades, signage, and curb cuts.

Jesse Steadman described a new administrative review process to be included in the bylaw, stating that a Design Review Committee could be created. The Planning Board agreed this should be a Design Review Subcommittee of the Planning Board.

The Board discussed the inclusion of allowed uses in the bylaw, agreeing this should be included though the bylaw should have more focus on form. Allowed uses would include those uses that residents have expressed interest in through past surveys, including restaurants, retail, professional offices, service businesses, and mixed use developments. The Board agreed that drive through windows should be prohibited.

The Board discussed performance standards for a consultant to provide feedback on, including limitations on the size of retail establishments. John Colonna-Romano asked how this would apply to grocery stores, and whether a size limitation could be considered a taking. Jesse Steadman said that the bylaw could include language that would allow an increase in floor area, if certain other recommendations have been met, such as if design guidelines have been utilized or if the expansion fits the needs of the community.

The Board discussed how to create the mix of uses that residents want to have in Lower Village. John Colonna-Romano noted that if the district becomes mostly offices, it will not bring about a community feel as there would be no reason to use civic spaces. John Colonna-Romano said he feels the bylaw should specify that offices should locate on the second floor of buildings, while retail should locate on the first floor.

Margaret Costello asked how the bylaw would balance good architectural design with allowed uses. Lori Clark said that it would be important not to give up considerable space in the business district to stand alone residential uses, even if the form of the building is in keeping with the community's vision.

Lori Clark said the way the bylaw handles mixed use developments needs to be treated carefully, as the district would not serve the community's needs if it prioritized housing. Lori Clark said mixed use should include retail and housing in the same building, with housing limited to the second floor. Lori Clark said that the Board has previously heard from Lower Village landowners that they don't want to be landlords. Jesse Steadman noted that housing could be limited to a number of units per acre, or to a specific number of bedrooms. Jesse Steadman said the bylaw could also be revised to allow housing only on the second floor or only behind prime real estate, out of view from the road. The Board agreed that the bylaw will need to be able to ensure a mix of uses.

Lori Clark added that the Board may want to make incremental changes at logical steps.

John Colonna-Romano added that the bylaw should include the ability for interlot connections.

Jesse Steadman said the draft bylaw will continue to be updated and will be discussed again at an upcoming meeting ahead of hiring a consultant.

### **Meeting Adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys