

TOWN OF STOW
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the October 15, 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.

Members' Updates

None.

Planner's Report

Lower Village Construction

Overnight paving of Route 117 will occur Thursday and Friday night, weather dependent. Next week's work will include grading of driveways and sidewalks.

Subdivision Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan- Plantation Apartments, 22 Johnston Way

The Planning Board reviewed the ANR plans for Plantation Apartments on Johnston Way. The adjustment of lot lines is further described in the Zoning Board of Appeals' decisions for the Comprehensive Permit granted for Plantation I and Plantation II. The Board acknowledged a letter from Planning Staff to the engineer, providing suggested plan revisions. The Board agreed to come to a determination regarding the ANR once the engineer has revised the plans.

Subdivision Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan- 152 Walcott Street

Present:

Scott Hayes, P.E.- Foresite Engineering

Scott Hayes noted that the Planning Board had previously approved a Hammerhead Lot Special Permit at 152 Walcott Street, though it was never conveyed. The applicant is now asking for an ANR to create a buildable lot off Walcott Street as well as a Hammerhead Lot Special Permit. Karen Kelleher said that the Hammerhead Lot Special Permit should first be approved, so that the Board is not in the position of allowing a non-conformity.

The Board agreed they would like a note to be added to the ANR plan to clearly state that the parcel is to be divided into Lot 3 and Lot 2A.

Scott Hayes agreed to withdraw the application and reapply once the Hammerhead Lot Special Permit is approved.

Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee Member Appointment

The Planning Board reviewed a letter of interest from Jen Gero to be reappointed to the Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee. Vacancy notices were posted in August 2019.

Karen Kelleher moved to appoint Jen Gero to the Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee, for a one year term ending August 31, 2020.

Margaret Costello seconded.

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

Lower Village Zoning Working Session

The Planning Board reviewed a revised draft of the Lower Village zoning updates. Karen Kelleher noted that the draft bylaw indicates that Section 3.3 is to be replaced with the Lower Village Business District zoning, though the zoning for other business zoned parcels should not change.

Signage

Mark Jones said the section related to signage should be updated to reflect that letter size, style, and color are not able to be regulated.

Allowed Uses

The Board agreed that the bylaw should include definitions of the allowed uses for clarity, particularly for terms such as types of offices and service establishments. The Board agreed that the categories of allowed uses should not preclude uses such as gyms, coworking spaces, and Bed and Breakfast establishments. Bed and Breakfast establishments should include a limit on the number of available bedrooms and must be owner-occupied. The Board agreed child care facilities should be allowed if kept small, preferably on the second floor of an office building.

The Board agreed that entertainment establishments should be required to have a Special Permit through the Planning Board. These establishments would include uses such as movie theatres, bowling alleys, and arcades.

The Board agreed they would not want uses such as inns, gas stations, car show rooms, drive-throughs, or self-storage establishments in Lower Village. The description of allowed uses should clearly state that uses not otherwise permitted in the district could be allowed through Special Permit through the Planning Board, should the use preserve a historically or culturally significant structure.

Dimensional Requirements

Lori Clark said that the description of access to lots and requiring no minimum frontage would not work over time to maintain a cohesive plan. While a developer could create a master plan for a large parcel, these sections could allow the developer to subdivide and sell off lots, which could be redeveloped separately, without consideration of the site planning of the surrounding lots.

The Board discussed a setback minimum of 30 feet from a street. Some members felt this is too close to the road. Lori Clark noted that smaller setbacks work well in West Acton Village, though this may be due to the allowance of on-street parking, giving the impression that the buildings are set farther from the road.

The Board agreed to revisit the language around the ability for the Board to allow a reduction in the required setback in order to consider how the trade-offs may produce unintended outcomes. Reduced setbacks should only be considered if there is a sidewalk or landscape buffer separating the structure and the road, providing for increased safety for pedestrians.

Lower Village Traffic Safety Improvement Project

The Board reviewed correspondence from engineers at Green International regarding the construction of the berm and grading around the Lower Village Cemetery. The Board agreed that the improvements on the plan don't represent what was discussed at the site walk, though they agreed with the engineer's assessment that removing 10 to 20 feet of berm would not affect the overall maneuverability, and the additional grading request behind the sidewalk would result in a steep slope. John Colonna-Romano said that the integrity of the wall could be weakened if enough loam were added between the sidewalk and the rock wall to create a level area for parking.

Mark Forgues, 9 White Pond Road, said that he would like the engineers to review the drainage design at the eastern corner of the 92 Great Road parcel to ensure that runoff does not enter the 1 White Pond Road property. Valerie Oorthuys said this concern would be relayed to the engineers.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys