

TOWN OF STOW
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the January 21, 2020 Planning Board Meeting

Planning Board Members Present: Lori Clark, Karen Kelleher, Margaret Costello, 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 January 7, 2020

Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as drafted.

Margaret Costello seconded.

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

Member's Updates

Karen Kelleher said the Complete Streets Committee will meet on Thursday to discuss feedback from the forum held on January 8th and to finalize comments to the engineer related to the plans for Old Bolton Road and Harvard Road.

Planner's Report

Spring Hill Estates

Staff met with the Spring Hill Estates team and determined that they will provide an escrow estimate for the final pavement and any binder repairs for the shared driveway, common driveway, and Pennie Lane. They will meet with the Board's consulting engineer from Places Associates on site to review pavement cores in a few locations to determine where they may need to make further repairs in the future.

Attorney Chris Alphen will prepare an easement instrument to allow for access up to the point of the pedestrian easement to Hale Corzine Woodlands.

CrossTown Connect Shuttle Pilot

Staff continue to work with Representative Hogan and CrossTown Connect to develop a commuter shuttle stop from Hartley Road in Stow to the South Acton Commuter Rail Station. Currently, there is discussion with the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority to provide additional shuttle capacity in Stow.

Making Connections Senior Transit Pilot Project

Stow will host the next meeting on creating a Pilot Project for on demand senior transportation options tomorrow. The Town Social Worker and the Director of the Council on Aging are expected to attend.

Active Adult Neighborhood Bylaw Update

As part of the Board's efforts to revise the Active Adult Neighborhood (AAN) Bylaw, Jesse Steadman and Valerie Oorthuys presented data on housing affordability in Stow, housing needs among older adults, and types of housing for older adults. Because Stow has reached the cap on the number of AAN units that may be developed, the only way senior housing opportunities may be developed is through Comprehensive Permits. The housing units that have been created through the existing AAN provide primarily for higher end market rate housing, though data shows there is a growing need for ownership and rental housing at all income brackets. A revised bylaw could include an increased percentage of affordable units, consider mixed age communities rather than restricting age, and could offer options for different housing types such as accessory apartments, cottage style homes, and continuum of care facilities.

Erosion Control Special Permit Update, Collings Foundation

Present:

Bob Collings

Rob Collings

Bob Collings provided a narrative summary of the proposed modification, detailing concerns with the Erosion Control Special Permit and the Order of Conditions through the Conservation Commission, as well as a plan of the site. Bob Collings said he is concerned with the requirement to replace the large amount of material previously excavated, as it would bring truck traffic to the neighborhood, the soil could contain contaminants, and he feels the elevation required by the special permit is arbitrary. Bob Collings proposed that material could be trucked from a location just west of the museum to the excavated area, which would ensure that the soil is of the same composition and would keep truck traffic on site. Bob Collings said that some of the originally excavated materials were placed by the museum previously.

John Colonna-Romano said the Board would need additional information on the area to be excavated. Bob Collings said the area was originally at an elevation of about 197 feet and was increased to 204 feet after the base for the foundation of the museum was constructed. John Colonna-Romano clarified that the Board would need volume calculations.

Megan Birch-McMichael asked if this proposal would flatten out the area to the west of the museum. Bob Collings said yes.

Megan Birch-McMichael asked if the Collings Foundation has a planned expansion of the American Heritage Museum to the west of its current footprint. Bob Collings said an expansion is planned at that location.

Lori Clark asked if the plan shows the existing conditions on site. Bob Collings said yes. Jesse Steadman noted that the area to the west of the museum is the location of reserved parking on the original site plan for the museum construction.

Bob Collings asked what type of permitting would be required in order to do this work. Jesse Steadman said this would be a modification of the Erosion Control Special Permit, though it should be clarified whether this would impact the Settlement Agreement.

Mark Jones stated that the plan should depict the full site, rather than only the area of excavation.

Some members of the Board agreed that it appears advantageous to source material onsite, though without volume calculations and an engineering opinion, a decision would be hard to determine.

Megan Birch-McMichael asked if Ben Poulson has the trucking slips to clarify the amount of material trucked off site, as requested previously as part of the Special Permit. Some members of the Board stated they would be unwilling to entertain a modification of the permit without receipt of the trucking slips. Bob Collings said that he would ask.

The Board clarified the language in the decision around installing a gate at the excavated site during construction.

Bob Collings requested that remediation include only a wildlife seed mix with no other shrubs or plants installed.

Bob Collings said that the Conservation Commission is pushing for a remediation schedule, which could start in March or April of this year. Bob Collings estimated it would take about one month to remove the fill and bring in the engineered top soil and spread it over the site. The engineered soil would need to burn off for about two months. Next, August and September would be spent hydroseeding, so the work could be done by the end of September 2020.

Lori Clark said that the request does not satisfy the requirements of a minor modification and would need a public hearing and engineering review. Jesse Steadman said that a site visit with the Board, the Board's consulting engineer, the engineer for the Collings Foundation, and the Conservation Department should be scheduled so that all parties can better understand the existing conditions on site and the modification proposal.

Approval of Golf Course Survey

The Board reviewed a brief survey regarding future land uses on residentially-zoned golf course parcels. The survey is intended to reinvigorate the discussion started at last summer's public forum of the types of uses currently allowed through zoning and how these properties could be utilized in the future. The Board agreed that the survey should be structured to provide measurable results, rather than allow respondents to write in comments. The Board agreed that questions of ownership and funding sources should be addressed in future forums and surveys, so that initial results can focus on the interests and needs of residents.

Steve Angelini, 457 Gleasondale Road, said that he is concerned about recent tree clearing on the south course of Stow Acres Country Club and whether it is related to any potential sale of the property. Steve Angelini said that he feels the preservation of the land is very important, especially as it abuts the Assabet River. Valerie Oorthuys noted that the Conservation Director has been in contact with the property owner regarding this complaint, though the area in question is outside of the Conservation Commission's jurisdiction and did not include land clearing or grading. Steve Angelini and the Board broadly discussed mechanisms for the Town to purchase land, including the Chapter 61 process and the possibility of involvement of a non-profit organization. The Board noted they began a planning process last summer regarding the future of residentially- zoned golf courses, and related this complaint to the need to continue the discussion with residents regarding the future of the Golf Courses and what Stow's unmet needs are.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys