

TOWN OF STOW
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the February 5, 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 21, 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

Mark Jones said the Zoning Board of Appeals met on Monday to review draft rules and regulations, amending the Town's covenant with Plantation Apartments I and Habitech's compliance with reporting related to Villages at Stow.

Mark Jones asked that the Board draft warrant articles for Town Meeting to allow outdoor dining in the Business District and to clarify definitions around commercial kennels.

Karen Kelleher said that in response to the Fire Chief's concerns of the emergency access road at Villages at Stow, she is drafting a letter to the Villages at Stow homeowners association.

Planner's Report

Spring Hill Estates

Jesse Steadman said the process for determining an escrow amount is underway. Sue Carter indicated that the site manager at Spring Hill Estates has contacted her to set up a time to discuss the number of required core samples along Pennie Lane.

Pilot Point

The public hearing for the Pilot Point Subdivision Modification is scheduled for 7:30pm on February 11th. Staff will provide further information on the request prior to the meeting.

Joanne Drive

Staff have a meeting with Steve Bjorklund to review the legal documents on file and prepare for recording of the plan and other documentation necessary for sale of the subdivision. The Lundy's plan to sell the subdivision to long time friend Barry Sullivan, who will develop the project, with Rick Lundy completing the roadway work. Staff plan to discuss the timing of conveyance of open land parcels as well as the intended owner of the Open Land.

Special Permit and Site Plan Approval, 108-118 Great Road

The draft decision will be ready for the Board to discuss at either the meeting of February 11 or 25th.

Collings Foundation Erosion Control Special Permit

Staff are in the process of setting up a site visit to the Collings Foundation.

Lower Village

Jesse Steadman said an infiltration basin proposal has been requested of Green International after a discussion of feasibility with Highway Department staff on their ability to promptly and efficiently install the system.

South Acton Commuter Rail Shuttle Service

Staff are in discussion with the Council on Aging on a partnership to utilize vans for the pilot shuttle service. Staff are currently determining how the pilot would be implemented, overseen, and marketed.

Track Road

Jesse Steadman said he will attend the upcoming Community Preservation Committee meeting on Monday to discuss the proposal for reallocation of unused design funds to kick start survey and conceptual design of Track Road's potential as a multi-use path.

Athens Lane Concept Plans and Zoning Amendment Discussion with Habitech, Inc.

Present:

Bruce Wheeler, Habitech, Inc.

Brian Ahern, Habitech, Inc.

George Dimakarakos, P.E., Stamski and McNary, Inc.

Lou Lavine, Esq., D'Agostine, Levine, Parra & Netburn

Tom Skahen, Streamline Communities

Tom Skahen presented an updated market analysis as justification for the applicant's request that the Board support increasing the 6% cap on Active Adult Neighborhoods (AANs) to 12% of the existing housing stock.

Lori Clark asked how millennials and baby boomers' buying trends differ, so that the Board is not only planning for a certain population size but also for that population's demand of the age restricted product. Tom Skahen said he is confident there will be a continued demand for housing with first floor master bedrooms, and that with new construction age restriction is in demand, but offered no additional data to support.

Margaret Costello said she is concerned with the assumption that the 55+ population directly correlates to demand for age restricted neighborhoods. Tom Skahen said that may be true, though age restricted housing is a need based product and the need exists.

Megan Birch-McMichael noted that as fewer millennials are able to purchase homes and fewer able to do so at a young age, when that population hits 55+ they may have less equity than the age restricted product assumes.

Karen Kelleher asked if the demand is for Active Adult Neighborhoods or for first floor master bedrooms (age targeted housing). Tom Skahen said that 55+ buyers have more interest in age targeted neighborhoods, though the demand is there for both.

Lori Clark noted that though the analysis shows need within Stow, only one or two households from Stow moved into Regency at Stow. Tom Skahen said that generally 50% of a 55+ development comes from 5- 10 miles away. Margaret Costello noted other AANs being developed in adjacent towns, notably in Hudson and Sudbury, which were not included as part of this analysis.

Tom Skahen said that the requested increase in the AAN cap to 12% comes from data showing 6% growth in Stow in recent years. The Board agreed they cannot assume a continued 6% growth in Stow, as there are limited areas for development.

Megan Birch-McMichael noted the analysis considers existing age restricted developments such as Arbor Glen, Regency, and Meeting House, though does not include Plantation Apartments. Kathy Sferra noted that Plantation Apartments offers a product in high demand, as those units are affordable. Tom Skahen said one difference between those developments is average age at the time of purchase, meaning that the adult who moves into Meeting House may later need a different senior housing opportunity. Tom Skahen said the region is under supply for all forms of senior housing.

Lori Clark noted the analysis of existing senior housing in Stow and adjacent towns does not consider the 55+ population in those adjacent towns. Lori Clark asked what percentage of the 55+ population wants to live in a 55+ development.

Lori Clark noted that the presentation shows that 4.4% of the housing supply in Stow and surrounding towns is age restricted, though in Stow alone 7% of the housing supply is age restricted, showing that Stow is in fact ahead of adjacent towns. Tom Skahen said the demand for senior housing in the region is very strong. Lori Clark said that other than the fact of demand, the data here isn't showing a correlation with the 55+ population in Stow wanting to move to an age restricted development.

Lori Clark questioned whether millennials will buy the same type of housing and at the same rate as baby boomers.

The Board acknowledged that the applicant requested one change to the bylaw, though additional revisions such as the consideration of age targeted housing may better reflect the need of older adults in Stow and the character of the Town.

George Dimakarakos asked what the Board's general feeling is toward the concept plans. Mark Jones said the Board has discussed more generally what types of housing the town needs, including senior housing opportunities. Lori Clark asked if there is any data on the demand for Active Adult Neighborhoods among the local 55+ population. Tom Skahen said he did not have the data. Lou Levine suggested the Board consider whether age targeted housing is appropriate. Tom Skahen said the development could include a mix of age targeted and age restricted housing, should the revised bylaw allow it.

George Dimakarakos provided the Board with information on general services needed by developments with and without school aged children. George Dimakarakos said he feels the Town would see a surplus per unit in tax revenue, though this data did not consider additional services needed through the Council on Aging.

Margaret Costello noted the data assumes that each unit would be sold around the \$600,000 price point. The Board agreed that they weren't convinced this represents Stow's needs.

George Dimakarakos presented a revised concept plan, including additional parcels of land where the applicants have overlapping ownership interests. All parcels included are within the Industrial District and the Active Adult Neighborhood (AAN) Overlay District. The concept plans show two 66 unit AANs with 70 acres of Open Space. With the addition of 132 AAN units, the applicant is requesting the current 6% cap on AAN units is expanded to 12%. One of the proposed AAN developments shows all single family housing, the other shows all duplex housing. George Dimakarakos said the applicants' preference for inclusionary housing is to construct those units on an adjacent parcel not shown on the concept plan to create family housing, which could be a way to circumvent DHCD's limitations on placing age restrictions on affordable housing as the off site development would not be age restricted. The off-site development would require a Comprehensive Permit and is proposed to provide 30-40 units, with 20 of those affordable, deed-restricted units.

Lori Clark said that as the Board only received the concept plan last night, the intent of this meeting would be to take in comments from the engineer and applicants and to allow the Board to ask preliminary questions. This discussion will be placed on a future agenda to continue the conversation.

Margaret Costello asked why affordable units are not included within the proposed AAN developments. George Dimakarakos said that DHCD's policy on including an age restriction differs from Stow's AAN bylaw. Margaret Costello asked if the AAN bylaw were changed to age targeted developments, would affordable units be included in the development. Bruce Wheeler said they could be mixed into the developments. Margaret Costello said she is concerned for the isolation of demographics. Bruce Wheeler noted the concept plan was created to require the smallest change to the existing bylaw.

Cliff Martin, 29 Heather Lane, noted that the development on the Quirk property shows homes located at the hill, though the plan shows no contours. Cliff Martin asked what the proposed condition of the hill would be. George Dimakarakos said the development would adhere to the existing contours as much as possible.

Kathy Sferra, 74 West Acton Road, noted that with the local demand for age targeted housing, there should be a mix of price points and design that reflects the character of the town. The Board agreed that perhaps only two households in Stow relocated to Regency at Stow. Bruce Wheeler said that national developers such as Toll Brothers and Pulte provide a product that attracts a higher number of relocation buyers and provides a style that is not reminiscent of New England.

The Board stated they would continue the discussion at an upcoming meeting.

Vote on Release of Lot 1 at Highgrove Estates

Jesse Steadman said that the five hammerhead lots at Highgrove Estates have completed homes on them, and that the bond may be released after Places Associates' comments on the as-built plans are approved.

Karen Kelleher moved to release Lot 1 at Highgrove Estates

Len Golder seconded.

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

Lower Village Working Session

The Planning Board received a revised version of the draft zoning bylaw for the Lower Village Business District, for further discussion at an upcoming meeting.

Jesse Steadman noted that the bylaw includes mixed use residential developments. Mark Jones said his concerns for allowing residences in the Business District include increased traffic congestion and further limiting the Town's small business district. Jesse Steadman said that the intent of the bylaw is to ensure that any residential component would be secondary to the lot's primary business uses, meaning that the bylaw can clarify that residences must be on the second floor, rather than in a separate building as is seen at Maynard's Parker Street development. Members of the Board agreed that secondary structures would change the streetscape of the village.

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

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

Karen Kelleher moved to enter into Executive Session to discuss ongoing litigation and to adjourn the regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Board thereafter.

John Colonna-Romano seconded.

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

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys