

TOWN OF STOW
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the May 19, 2020 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 12, 2020

Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as amended.

John Colonna-Romano seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Lori Clark- Yea; Karen Kelleher- Yea; John Colonna-Romano-Yea

Margaret Costello and Len Golder arrived.

Correspondence

Gleasondale Bridge Plans

Karen Kelleher noted that the MassDOT bridge design team responded to the Town's comments on the 75% design plans, giving unfavorable feedback related to the speed limit over the bridge, the opportunity for a crosswalk, and the relocation of utilities under the bridge. Jesse Steadman said the speed limit and utility concerns could be discussed with MassDOT District 3, though the bridge team made it clear that a crosswalk would not be safe.

Stow Acres Country Club

Karen Kelleher noted correspondence from the owner of Stow Acres regarding Stow's Subsidized Housing Inventory. Valerie Oorthuys said there was no direct context for the email, though it is known Stow Acres is in discussion with Toll Brothers.

Public Input

John Mascia, 153 Harvard Road, asked for updates regarding further site clearing at 137 Harvard Road. Jesse Steadman said the Planning Board expects the Building Inspector to issue a second Cease and Desist so that interior work would not be allowed, in addition to the cease and desist for site work, which the builder defied. The Planning Board sent the builder a letter last week stating that an application for an Erosion Control Special Permit is expected before any further work is done.

Member's Updates

Mark Jones said the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) opened a hearing to modify the decisions for Plantation Apartments 1 and 2. The ZBA also approved a variance and special permit for demolition and reconstruction of a home on Lake Boon. Mark Jones noted the new home will be larger than the existing home and asked that the Board consider a Floor Area Ratio bylaw.

Planner's Report

Joanne Drive

The longstanding developer of the Joanne Drive subdivision pulled out of the project. Jesse Steadman said he has been in contact with their realtor to review the subdivision plans. It is unclear whether the owners may sell the lots individually or the full subdivision.

Discussion with Fire Chief

The Fire Chief will likely attend a Planning Board meeting in June to clarify expectations for submission of comments in the public hearing process for Special Permits. Jesse Steadman said public safety prefers responding to individual questions regarding an application rather than providing general comments on safety and standards. Lori Clark noted that a list of common topics for various departments could be created to standardize a better process. The Board discussed the possibility of amending the decision for 108- 118 Great Road to include fire safety provisions.

Gleasondale Bridge Plans

Jesse Steadman said that he has reviewed the 100% design plans with the Highway Superintendent, and of concern is the traffic management plan as it uses Hudson Road as a detour. There is a known failing culvert on Hudson Road.

Complete Streets Update

The construction bids for the Harvard Road and Old Bolton Road projects will be posted next week, with a bid opening date of June 11. Letters to abutters of both projects were sent today, alerting the residents to the current status of the projects and the expectation for communication going forward.

Track Road Survey and Design Proposals

Two firms have submitted revised proposals for engineering services on Track Road, per comment from the Complete Streets Committee. The Committee will meet next week to finalize their decision.

Red Acre Road

The Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (SMAHT) continues to work on the development of affordable housing off Red Acre Road, as approved by Town Meeting. SMAHT would like to discuss the possibility of creating an affordable housing overlay at the parcel, to both direct development and to avoid the Comprehensive Permit process.

Active Adult Neighborhood Bylaw

Staff will work to elaborate on the Planning Board's list of goals for revising the Active Adult Neighborhood bylaw and begin drafting the new bylaw language.

Planning Board Schedule

The Planning Board agreed to meet on June 2, 9, and 16, as well as July 7, 14, and 21.

Lake Boon Commission Proposal for Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant

Present:

Dan Barstow, Lake Boon Commission

Dan Barstow described the Lake Boon Commission's application for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant, stating the need to assess the nutrient dynamics of the lake using a nature based approach to produce data driven responses. Though Lake Boon has invasive weeds,

algae blooms and bacteria, the exact measures of its health are not known and current treatments have not helped. The application will be submitted in June, and successful applicants will be notified at the end of the summer. The application requires that Towns provide 25% of the grant total as cost sharing, though this could be provided with staff time. The Town of Hudson is a partner in the grant application, as the Lake Boon Commission represents both Stow and Hudson. Completion of the assessment would take approximately two years from a grant award and will provide an understanding of the causes of the state of the lake's health and their relative impacts. The assessment would provide the Planning Board with data to understand whether development restrictions should be considered for the Lake Boon neighborhood.

Margaret Costello said that outreach around this initiative should expand beyond the residents of the Lake Boon neighborhood, as those who use and appreciate the Lake extend past those borders.

Karen Kelleher moved that the Planning Board support the Lake Boon Commission's proposal for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant.

Len Golder seconded.

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

Lower Village Zoning Proposals

The Board discussed proposals from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and a second proposal provided by a team of firms including Dodson & Flinker, Inc., Barrett Planning Group, LLC and Robert P. Mitchell.

The Board acknowledged the proposal from Dodson & Flinker provided a technical understanding of each task without losing focus on the specific design goals of the zoning effort. The Board noted the design and zoning experience of the three project leads, as their past project experience shows their depth of understanding of the needs of small towns, the nature of rural business centers, and the architecture and design vision shared by Stow residents. John Colonna-Romano said that the proposal includes showing the Board zoning measures that the consultants have found to be ineffective in towns similar to Stow, in order to provide a comprehensive view of the town's options. The Dodson & Flinker proposal includes a more aggressive timeline of four months in order to better situate the Board with a warrant article for Town Meeting 2021, compared to MAPC's proposal of six months.

The Board discussed project funding, which is pending Town Meeting approval of the Board's typical master planning and consulting account. Jesse Steadman said previous discussions with the Town Administrator, earlier on in the coronavirus pandemic, showed that departments need to exercise discretion with spending and Town Meeting requests. Jesse Steadman noted that the \$2,500 the Board contributed to help finalize Complete Streets projects was taken from the account that would fund the Lower Village Rezoning. The Board agreed that a letter should be sent to Dodson & Flinker to explain the shifting expectations from the Town Administrator and to ask for an extension in order to finalize a decision after Town Meeting on June 22. If Town Meeting is unsuccessful in providing the master planning and consulting account with the full amount requested, the Board could return to Dodson & Flinker and ask for items to be trimmed from the proposal in order to better align with funding.

Karen Kelleher moved to recommend the Town Administrator approve the proposal from Dodson & Flinker for Lower Village Zoning Development.

Margaret Costello seconded.

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

Lower Village Infiltration Basin Final Plans

Jesse Steadman said that Green International provided the plans for the completion of the infiltration basin and though the design is as anticipated, the estimated cost of the project is \$50,000 higher than previously projected. If the estimate was around \$220,000 the funds for the Lower Village project would have been able to cover the construction though the increased cost estimate combined with higher legal fees have made it infeasible with current funding. The Board agreed that the Town should take on as many items as possible in the bid, such as tree protection and removal, so as to lower the construction cost. The Board agreed the Selectmen should be notified of the inability to fund the installation as planned, due to legal fees that have more than tripled, and that though leadership has changed the Highway Department previously agreed to complete the work.

Zoning Board of Appeals Covenant Discussion

Karen Kelleher recused herself as an applicant to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Lori Clark said the Board has been asked to consider whether to provide input to the Zoning Board of Appeals ahead of their decision to amend the covenant with Plantation Apartments I which restricts the number of housing units allowed along Johnston Way and states that the Town will not be asked to accept the road. Lori Clark noted that without an understanding of the nuance of the Plantation Apartments application, the Board may opt to only provide general guidance.

After discussion of the specific application in front of the ZBA, the Planning Board agreed that covenants can ensure that conditions and expectations set out in a Special Permit do not get lost over time and that regarding Plantation Apartments, any changes made should not overburden the property, should protect neighbors interests, and should preserve the original intent of the decision. Additionally, the Planning Board decided not to send guidance to the ZBA.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys