

TOWN OF STOW  
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the July 7, 2020 Planning Board Meeting

Planning Board Members Present: Lori Clark, Margaret Costello, Karen Kelleher, Len Golder, John Colonna-Romano

Associate Member: Mark Jones

Lori Clark called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Discussion of Meeting Minutes**

**Minutes of June 16, 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- Yea; Len Golder abstained.**

**Executive Session Minutes of June 16, 2020**

*Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as drafted.*

*John Colonna-Romano seconded.*

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

**Member's Updates**

Mark Jones said the Zoning Board of Appeals intends to meet in the next week or so to finalize the decisions and waiver requests for the modification of the Comprehensive Permit for Plantation Apartments I and II.

Margaret Costello said the Open Space Committee recently discussed the Town's Right of First Refusal of the land off Hallocks Point Road on Lake Boon. The Committee agreed that if the land were to be used as a second access to the lake, it should be restricted to non-motorized boats only.

John Colonna-Romano said the Community Preservation Commission has heard that Habitat for Humanity plans to begin building the affordable units on Pine Point Road in the fall.

**Correspondence**

The Board discussed correspondence from a group of 19 organizations regarding municipalities' ability to adapt streets for pandemic response and recovery. Margaret Costello said she appreciates the document noting the importance of allowing neighborhoods to create their own safe spaces and of taking the police out of traffic discussions. The Board agreed that it would be helpful to begin to take temporary measures to test impacts. The Board noted that the document should be shared with others, including the Board of Selectmen, the Highway Department, the Board of Health, and the Complete Streets Committee.

**Planner's Report**

*Complete Streets Extension*

The State's Complete Streets Program has granted Stow an extension through December 2021 to construct improvements at Old Bolton Road and Harvard Road.

#### *Online Mapping*

As part of their software update, the Assessors have provided an online Geographic Information Systems (GIS) platform for residents to use. The link to the mapping service is available through the Assessor's webpage.

#### *Hallocks Point Chapter 61 Withdrawal*

The Lake Boon Commission, the Lake Boon Association, and the Open Space Committee have expressed interest in the Town's purchase of the parcels off Hallocks Point Road. The Board of Selectmen will hold a meeting on July 14<sup>th</sup> to discuss further.

#### *137 Harvard Road Violations*

The Building Inspector continues to issue daily fines against the builder at 137 Harvard Road. Neither the Building Department nor the Planning Department have heard from the builder or engineer regarding a Special Permit application.

#### *Discussion with Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (SMAHT)*

Staff plan to meet with the chair of SMAHT in the coming weeks to discuss items such as the Active Adult Neighborhood Bylaw Update and affordable housing at Red Acre Road. Looking ahead, a joint boards meeting may be scheduled for September.

#### *Stormwater Bylaw Updates*

As part of Stow's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Permit, the Highway Superintendent is interested in working with the Planning Department to revise the Stormwater Bylaw.

#### **Active Adult Neighborhood Bylaw Update**

The Board reviewed proposed revisions to the Active Adult Neighborhood (AAN) Bylaw and the Inclusion of Affordable Housing bylaw.

The Board agreed a map detailing the parcels that are included in the overlay district and their development status would be useful in understanding the implications of the bylaw revision. Karen Kelleher noted that parcels within the Industrial District were originally included in the AAN overlay district because AANs are thought of as revenue positive and the fact that Stow has difficulties marketing Industrial Uses and therefore it would be acceptable to encourage their development on Industrial land. The Board acknowledged that the revisions do not expand the district or increase the cap on AANs in Stow.

The Board discussed the bylaw's purpose section, agreeing language should be added to emphasize housing affordability, walkability of the neighborhood, ADA-compliance, and community.

The Board agreed that the definitions of the types of housing allowed in the district need to be included. The Board noted that the inclusion of units with accessory apartments needs clarity, as accessory units are likely to be occupied by family members, caregivers, or renters though they would still be subject to an age restriction.

The Board agreed that if the bylaw mandates communal spaces, this should be made more explicit.

Regarding dimensional requirements, the Board discussed ways of limiting the number of units allowed on a given development. The bylaw should clarify the relationship between the proof plan and the maximum number of units per acre. The Board agreed the bylaw should increase the open space requirement to 60% of the total land.

The Board agreed that in relationship to existing AANs, the revised bylaw should create developments with smaller homes, increased walkability, and more opportunity for community. Community focused design includes courtyards, porches, benches, thoughtful landscape design, and homes that face each other, with garages behind or to the side of the homes. The Board considered adding diagrams to more clearly depict the intent of the bylaw.

The Board discussed whether parking should be required and whether attached garages are necessary, considering a future with increased public transit opportunities and the need to incentivize car-free lifestyles.

The Board agreed to specify that single access roads are not desirable, due to public safety and the impact of traffic flow for the homeowners closest to the beginning of the road.

The Board discussed the proposed 20% affordable housing component and agreed the option for the developer to provide a fee in lieu of construction should be removed. The Board questioned the ability to ensure that the affordable units would be spread out among the types of housing sizes provided and considered the impact of a 20% affordable housing component on developers' interest, as developers may opt to construct a Comprehensive Permit instead. The Board agreed that affordability can be controlled through specifying the sizes and types of housing allowed. The Board agreed on the inclusion of affordability for moderate income households.

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

Valerie Oorthuys said the memo to the Cemetery Committee and the memo to the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen regarding legal fees were both sent.

The Highway Superintendent is ordering materials for the infiltration basin and could begin the installation as soon as this fall.

The homeowner at 196 Great Road no longer requires a step to be installed at the walkway, meaning that only a few landscaping items are needed before finishing work at that location.

#### **Meeting Adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys