

TOWN OF STOW
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the October 6, 2020 Planning Board Meeting

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

Voting Associate Member: Mark Jones

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

Discussion of Meeting Minutes

Minutes of September 29, 2020

Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes as amended.

Margaret Costello seconded.

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

Member's Updates

None.

Correspondence

John Colonna-Romano noted a letter from the owner of 108-118 Great Road which requests relief from the Special Permit condition that requires the existing businesses at 118 Great Road to comply with lighting and signage bylaws. The owner states that the Bank of America ATM and Stow Café are currently out of compliance and he is concerned that existing leases with those businesses prevent him from requesting that the lighting and signage comply. This could in turn impact the owner's ability to secure financing. The Board agreed they may not have the authority to allow non-compliance for a period until the businesses' leases change and that the Zoning Enforcement Officer should be consulted. Jesse Steadman said the owner will attend an upcoming Planning Board meeting to discuss further.

Karen Kelleher noted correspondence from the realtor of 124 Great Road in which allowed uses on the site are discussed. Karen Kelleher said she would like the Lower Village Business District bylaw updates should include removal of the statement that prohibits establishments whose primary method of operation includes food sales in disposable containers. There are already businesses in Lower Village which operate in this way, and the zoning language could prevent a café from locating in Stow. The current bylaw allows salesrooms if vehicles are displayed indoors, which may not be a preferred use. Karen Kelleher suggested the reference to 'automobiles' is removed from Section 3.3.2.3. The Planning Board agreed this language should be revisited during the zoning update.

Public Input

None.

Planner's Report

Planning Board Schedule

The Board agreed to meet on October 20th and 27th, November 10th and 17th, and December 1st and 8th. The discussion of Athens Lane with Habitech will be scheduled for a date in October, and consultants with Dodson & Flinker will attend a meeting in November to continue the Lower Village rezoning effort.

Mistletoe Christmas Tree Farm

The owners plan to apply for an Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan to separate the historic barn and accessory dwelling unit from the farmhouse and to request a modification to the Special Permit to remove limitations on the site. Mark Jones noted that the land is under Chapter 61A.

Joanne Drive Subdivision

Jesse Steadman said staff held a pre-construction meeting with the developer, who plans to provide a fee in lieu of constructing the affordable home and has agreed to construct the trail leading to a canoe landing. Jesse Steadman said he is working with public safety to ensure that during construction, addresses of each lot are made clear in case of emergency. Jesse Steadman confirmed that the Conservation Commission intends to maintain the associated open space.

Collings Foundation

The excavated area at the Collings Foundation has been planted and hydroseeded per the Special Permit. A site inspection will be scheduled to ensure the final condition is as intended.

Nan's Market

Jesse Steadman said he will reach out to the leases of 271 Great Road to encourage them to review the Special Permit for the property and ensure their proposed uses align. They may wish to update the Special Permit to account for events and outdoor activities.

Lower Village Construction

Construction on the lower commons of the infiltration system has begun.

Discussion of Athens Lane Concept Plans and Active Adult Neighborhood Bylaw Update with Representatives from Habitech, Inc.

Jesse Steadman said that representatives from Habitech, Inc will discuss their plans with the Board at a future meeting in order to have more time to review correspondence from the Planning Board.

Jerry Kilmartin, 190 Maple Street, asked whether the concept plan present is allowed through zoning and whether a second access is required for emergency access. Lori Clark explained that Habitech has requested that the Board increase the limit of Active Adult Neighborhoods (AANs) in Stow to allow more age-restricted developments. The Board is considering revisions to the bylaw by revisiting Stow's housing goals and reviewing the relative success of developments built through the AAN bylaw. The Board acknowledged that for a development of this size, a second access for emergency use is likely needed, though there are alternatives to the Goshen Lane easement. Jerry Kilmartin said he believes the easement for Goshen Lane allows access only to residents on Lot 7.

Paul Giovinazzo, 194 Maple Street, noted the location of a beaver dam to the west of the Athens Lane parcels and mentioned that there would be considerable wetlands concerns if then Goshen Lane easement were considered. The Board acknowledged the concerns and noted that the development is still in a conceptual phase and it would be expected that wetlands considerations would be included in any future subdivision plan.

Approval of Spring Hill Estates Subdivision Extension Request

Jesse Steadman clarified that rather than a Special Permit extension request, this request is for a minor modification to provide more time to construct the road.

Chris Alphen, the attorney for the developer, noted that Section 8.3 of the approved Special Permit from 2017 requires the completion of the roads and utilities within the first three years of the project. Chris Alphen said his client purchased the development in 2019, and is requesting a 2 year extension to that condition.

Karen Kelleher moved that the Planning Board find the extension request dated September 25, 2020 to be a minor modification.

Margaret Costello seconded.

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

Karen Kelleher moved to grant approval of a minor modification to extend the time described in Section 8.3 of the 2017 Special Permit to October 3, 2022.

Len Golder seconded.

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

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Valerie Oorthuys