

TOWN OF STOW
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the February 8, 2022 Planning Board Meeting

Planning Board members present: Lori Clark, Karen Kelleher, John Colonna-Romano, Nancy Arsenault, Margaret Costello

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

Minutes

*Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2022 meeting as amended
John Colonna-Romano seconded*

Roll Call Vote: Lori Clark **-Yea**; Karen Kelleher **-Yea**; John Colonna-Romano **-Yea**;
Nancy Arsenault **-Yea**, Margaret Costello **-Yea**

Correspondence

Karen Kelleher referenced the email from Nancy Arsenault about the cottages in Harvard. Karen Kelleher said she is curious about the pricing range of the market rate housing. Karen Kelleher and Nancy Arsenault appreciated the appearance of the housing.

Planning Board Member Updates

John Colonna-Romano said the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is debating 3 projects for funding: a housing project at Red Acre Road brought forward by the Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (SMAHT), the historic preservation component of Randall Library renovations, and renovations to the old Town Hall. John Colonna-Romano said the CPC will need to make some decisions soon to decide which projects will be eligible for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding through Town Meeting given CPC and Select Board deadlines. John Colonna-Romano said the Town Hall would require bonding CPA funds, which has never been done in Stow before. John Colonna-Romano explained that the CPC can bond projects using the CPA surcharge on property taxes to pay principal and interest. John Colonna-Romano said this is a relatively common practice for larger projects in other towns.

Planners Report

Jesse Steadman said there will be a joint meeting the next evening with the Select Board to view a presentation from Masters Academy, moderated by Ellen Sturgis. Jesse Steadman said the Masters Academy has never presented their plans publicly before, and will detail their master plan for the former Bose site. Jesse Steadman said the initial permitting applications are expected sometime later in the Spring.

Jesse Steadman said the Planning Board's annual report is due to the Select Board on Feb 15th. Jesse Steadman said he will email the Board before the deadline and will request their comments via email.

Jesse Steadman said the dept received a Special Permit modification application for Nan's Market, and that the Public Hearing has been scheduled for March 8th at 7:30pm.

Jesse Steadman said the owner of Stow House of Pizza is working with a new consultant and engineer and has been in contact with the Building Department. Jesse Steadman said the Citizens Bank sign has been shut down and is no longer internally illuminated.

Jesse Steadman said he had a budget meeting with the Town Administrator, who did not raise any concerns about the Board's five-year capital spending plan. Jesse Steadman said the influx of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money may mean the Board will not have to request funds from the Capital Planning Committee.

Jesse Steadman said he has been in touch with Chuck Black about the fee-in-lieu of affordable housing payment for the Joanne Drive subdivision. Jesse Steadman said there is a disagreement between Chuck Black and the Town regarding the amount of the fee-in-lieu. Jesse Steadman said Chuck Black can request a determination from the Building Inspector about the required amount, and then appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals if he is so inclined. Jesse Steadman said staff are reviewing occupancy permit thresholds, including placement of street trees and reviewing draft deeds for language required in the Subdivision approval.

Jesse Steadman said the Select Board is likely to make a recommendation on the Local Initiative Program (LIP) applications for the Stow Acres project. Jesse Steadman said approval by DHCD for the LIP application will allow for technical assistance to the Town of Stow and will benefit the eventual comprehensive permit application for the Stow Acres housing units.

Jesse Steadman said the Complete Streets Committee has been discussing a Town Meeting warrant article for engineering funds for sidewalk improvements on Crescent Street near Town Center. Jesse Steadman said the Town Administrator recently suggested the engineering work could be supported by ARPA funds.

Jesse Steadman said the Gleasondale Local Historic District Study Committee could also request ARPA funding for consulting services to help draft a preliminary report to the Mass Historical Commission, a necessary step to create a Local Historic District in Gleasondale.

Margaret Costello asked if the Kane Land access engineering RFP had received any responses. Jesse Steadman said it is due later in the week and is still expecting a submission by Places Associates.

The Board scheduled March 8th, 15th, and 22nd meetings.

Minuteman Airfield – Presentation by Don McPherson for MassDOT Aeronautics Division Grant

Minuteman Airfield owner Don McPherson presented to the Board his plans to expand the airfield and take advantage of grant funding through the MassDOT Aeronautics Division for a new administration building. Don McPherson requested a letter of support from the Planning Board to MassDOT Aeronautics in support of the grant application.

John Colonna-Romano disclosed to all attendees that he was a direct abutter of the airfield for several decades before the development of the Regency at Stow Active Adult Neighborhood divided the parcel.

Don McPherson presented on impacts to airfield activities from Covid and detailed how resumption of many activities has limited available space. Don McPherson detailed a grant program through MassDOT's Aeronautics Division to provide funding for administrative buildings at small airports but said that Minuteman Airfield has been last in line for this funding. Don McPherson said that expansion plans have moved beyond just the new administration building to include an annex to an existing building a new 3-megawatt photovoltaic array, to be used to produce hydrogen fuel. Don McPherson said the new building will be net-zero emissions and utilize the hydrogen fuel produced on site to power the building. Don McPherson said he recently learned of the new Green Advisory Committee and would like to discuss the project with that committee soon.

Don McPherson said the MassDOT Aeronautics grant is limited to the administration building, and that he is looking for other funding and programs to help move the rest of the project forward. Don McPherson said the project would help the airfield grow and bring new green technology jobs and economic activity to Stow.

Nancy Arsenault asked if there are still plans to put the airfield up for sale. Don McPherson said the site is always for sale but he has stopped advertising the sale and would prefer to see this improvement project through. Nancy Arsenault asked about how the site is currently able to support the roughly 350 students at the flight school. Don McPherson said the flight school's classroom facilities are in Concord and Minuteman Airfield is more of the school's laboratory space.

John Colonna-Romano said as a nearby resident he is concerned about the impacts from increased activity from flight operations. Don McPherson said he does not expect that flight activity will increase, given gas price increases and other market trends. Don McPherson said one of his tenants is a startup working with hydrogen fuels, and that expansion of their activities would not include new flights. Nancy Arsenault noted that New England Tree Masters has a lease for processing operations at the site and asked if that will be part of the broader proposal presented. Nancy Arsenault noted that abutters have raised concerns about the tree processing operation. Don McPherson said he is aware of the concerns and will work with abutters to find solutions.

Lori Clark asked Don McPherson if he expects to require permitting from the Planning Board. Don McPherson said most uses will be permitted by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) since the site is a pre-existing non-conforming use. Margaret Costello said she does not think the price of gas guarantees long term trends of flight activity. Don McPherson said the last 20 years of data shows relatively static number of flights.

John Colonna-Romano said that he has noted an overall decrease in flight activities over the past 20 or so years. John Colonna-Romano asked for a rough timeline for the project. Don McPherson said he is pushing to get designs permitted in 2023 and begin construction in 2024.

Mark Forgues asked where storage tanks for the Hydrogen are expected. Don McPherson said there are two tanks above ground now for liquid hydrogen. Don McPherson said permitting for hydrogen tanks was done for the existing tanks through the Stow Conservation Commission. Don McPherson said the existing tanks were installed following training provided to the Stow Fire Department.

Wireless Communication Facility Site Plan Approval – 501 Gleasondale Road (Verizon)

The Board reviewed the draft decision. Karen Kelleher asked to include a finding about discussions with the Police Chief about the need for space for additional radio repeater and another finding to encourage continued communication between Verizon and the Stow Police Department. Lori Clark requested a finding to note that Verizon Wireless should be put in contact with the Police Department to continue those discussions, noting that Verizon's representative stated they do not have authority to sublease space on the Gleasondale Mill smokestack.

Karen Kelleher motioned to approve the Site Plan Approval for Modification to Telecommunication Facility at 501 Gleasondale Road as drafted and amended
John Colonna-Romano seconded

Roll Call Vote: Lori Clark **-Yea**; Karen Kelleher **-Yea**; John Colonna-Romano **-Yea**;
Nancy Arseneault **-Yea**, Margaret Costello **-Yea**

Athens Lane Traffic Impact Assessment

Jesse Steadman noted that no complete Special Permit application for the Athens Lane Active Adult Neighborhood (AAN) has yet been received and no Public Hearing has yet been scheduled. Jesse Steadman said the traffic impact assessment was completed in line with recent revisions to the Board's Rules and Regulations for Special Permits. Jesse Steadman said the Rules and Regulations require analysis of the impacts to intersections within 1 mile of the study parcel, but that traffic data can be quite noisy and unreliable at these distances. Jesse Steadman said the impact assessment is generally in line with the requirements of the Rules and Regulations and asked the Board for ways they believe it could be improved.

Karen Kelleher noted that the study proposes a Road Safety Audit at the Hudson Road/Route 117 intersection prior to issuance of the first Occupancy Permit, and said that the audit should be completed earlier. Karen Kelleher said that no pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure improvements are proposed on Hudson Road and the study does not account for impacts from the Masters Academy at the former Bose Campus. John Colonna-Romano said the units at Athens Lane will not be age-restricted and questioned whether this should affect traffic forecasts. John Colonna-Romano said the forecasted 50 peak hour trips from the development seems intuitively too low.

Mark Jones noted the traffic study includes reference to 21 feet of space between garages and the street. Jesse Steadman said this is in response to new requirements included by the Board in recent amendments to the AAN overlay zoning district.

Lori Clark said that the trip calculations are based on a senior residential development, which may not accurately reflect impacts given the lack of age restriction. Lori Clark said the calculations should assume some of the units have families without age limitations. Lori Clark said the clear implication of the study is that the Hudson Road/Route 117 intersection is already operating at a low level of service and that the

developers should not be accountable for any further degradation in the level of service. Lori Clark questioned this interpretation and anticipated that developers of Stow Acres, the Masters Academy, and Athens Lane will all try to make that same argument.

Karen Kelleher asked if the Board will have the study peer-reviewed. Jesse Steadman said he will pass along Board comments to the developer and will also seek out a firm for peer review.

Katie Fisher said Hudson Road is dangerous. Katie Fisher said the traffic study does not mention a fire access road. John Colonna-Romano commented that traffic engineers have designed some poorly functioning intersections and access entrances in Stow in recent years. John Colonna-Romano said expert opinion has failed in the past. John Colonna-Romano said the Planning Board should apply common sense review of intersection designs and not hesitate to seek peer reviews for the site engineering.

Lori Clark noted that the intersection of Walcott St and Hudson Rd was not studied. Jesse Steadman said the study forecasted 80% of the traffic from the Athens Lane development to travel north from the entrance, and so several intersections to the south were not studied. Jesse Steadman said the Board is empowered by the Rules and Regulations to require study of intersections to the south that are within 1 mile of the development parcel, and may wish to do so in light of future development at Stow Acres.

Margaret Costello said the traffic study downplays what she expects will be significant traffic impacts to Hudson Road. Margaret Costello said there needs to be a pickup and drop-off location at the entrance to the Athens Lane development to minimize impacts of traffic and prepare for future public transit. Lori Clark said each of the large developments in the southern part of town should be contributing to traffic mitigation efforts at Hudson Road/Route 117. Jesse Steadman said that is why the Town wants to get clear Hudson Rd intersection improvement costs in hand so the town can seek development impact contributions from developers.

Lori Clark asked what the Board can condition for traffic improvements from developers. Jesse Steadman said there is no single answer, but Special Permits empower the Board to require mitigations proportionate to the need and with a rational connection to expected project impacts. Jesse Steadman said the Board should have the authority to request improvement funds for Hudson Rd/Route 117 with the developers of Masters Academy, Athens Lane, and Stow Acres, given the scope of those projects. John Colonna-Romano said those three developers should make some proportional contributions to intersection improvements.

Jesse Steadman said the Planning Board will have lots of support from the Town Administrator, Select Board, and other committees to guide intersection improvements. Lori Clark said the Planning Board should proceed with a goal of making Hudson Road more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. Mark Jones said that should be a topic for the upcoming Master Plan update.

Lower Village Water Feasibility Study

Jesse Steadman said he has been working on a draft RFP for a Lower Village water feasibility study over the last few weeks. Jesse Steadman said the Select Board and Economic Development & Industrial Commission (EDIC) have identified the study as a key priority. Jesse Steadman summarized that the draft RFP contains two main tasks. Task 1 includes a review of previous capacity studies and new test well program to get an idea of estimated yield potential supply parcels at 144 Red Acres Rd and Heritage Lane. Task 2 will examine the costs of developing and distributing the system, including treatment,

drilling, and transmission, and will also propose a service area in response to a buildout analysis of Lower Village. Jesse Steadman said the Town will want to know the range of options available to the Town for the management and ownership structure for a future water system. Jesse Steadman said the study is ultimately to determine feasibility. Jesse Steadman said the overall cost should be between \$70-100k, which can be covered entirely by an ARPA funding request to the Select Board.

Jesse Steadman said he will also begin planning a public forum explaining the effort for the near future. John Colonna-Romano asked if the feasibility study would include a model fee schedule for different ownership models. Jesse Steadman said that will have to be part of the feasibility study as part of the task 2. Jesse Steadman said the capacity of the water supply parcels will influence the fee structures and coverage area.

John Colonna-Romano questioned how willing the town will be to pay for any water system development. Jesse Steadman said the numbers that come from the study will be necessary to ask those questions. Nancy Arsenault said she hopes the feasibility study provides clear information about potential costs and benefits so that meaningful discussions about water system development can be had. Jesse Steadman said the EDIC will have a responsibility to continue dialogue with the business owners in Lower Village.

Katie Fisher said a lot of houses in Lower Village are on undersized lots and could benefit from a public water supply. Mark Forgues said he had made it clear that he does not think the water supply should be developed with taxpayer money. Mark Forgues said the town should not pay for water to the businesses in Lower Village.

Jesse Steadman said staff will continue to refine the Request for Proposals in consultation with many stakeholders and Town Departments.

Dorothy Granat asked if staff have seen examples of communities that have developed a public water supply for only portions of the Town. Jesse Steadman said there are numerous examples of Towns with special water districts.

Draft Amendments to Wireless Facility Special Permit Rules and Regulations – Eligible Facilities Requests

Assistant Planner Malcolm Ragan described the proposed process for administering Eligible Facilities Requests for Wireless Facilities, including draft Rules and Regulations for compliance with federal FCC licensed cellular towers. Malcolm Ragan described some of the existing language in the Zoning Bylaw that is inconsistent with recent FCC rules, and proposed language for the zoning Bylaw to update applicable sections. Malcolm Ragan noted that many of the standards are directly quoted in FCC rulemaking decisions in the federal statute.

Lori Clark suggested the draft rules and regulations amendment include information for the applicant about the kinds of impact mitigations the Board is likely to request. Malcolm Ragan said some language from the Site Plan Approval Rules and Regulations can be adapted for this purpose.

Jesse Steadman said the Board can update the Rules and Regulations for Wireless Facility Special Permits after a public hearing to be held sometime in March. Jesse Steadman said that Public Hearing can also

cover any minor amendments needed in the Zoning Bylaw, which can be presented for approval at Annual Town Meeting.

Other Business

Mark Jones asked about the status of conversations with the Conservation Commission on the preliminary site plans for Athens Lane. Jesse Steadman said there will be some continued discussion with the Conservation Commission and Stow Conservation Trust as the concept plans evolve. Jesse Steadman said he will be attending a site walk on Friday and will continue to keep the Board updated as the open space design process moves forward.

Lori Clark asked if there is a plan for zoning amendments to bring to Annual Town Meeting on May 21. Jesse Steadman said the main priority is Lower Village zoning, but staff are still determining if other zoning amendments should be brought forward. Jesse Steadman said any other Zoning Amendments would be minor in comparison to Lower Village.

Karen Kelleher motioned to adjourn
Margaret Costello seconded

Respectfully submitted,
Malcolm Ragan