

TOWN OF STOW  
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the June 28th, 2022 Planning Board meeting

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

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

**Minutes**

*Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes of May 17, 2022 as amended*

*John Colonna-Romano seconded*

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

Chair Lori Clark asked if the Board is required to provide a formal recommendation on the zoning amendment proposed by Daniel Taranto to allow landscapers and contractor's yards in the Residential District by Special Permit. Karen Kelleher said the Board would only be required to make a recommendation if the article was included in an upcoming Town Meeting warrant.

**Correspondence**

Karen Kelleher said she agrees with Town Planner Jesse Steadman's response to the letter from the Bill Chiachiaro regarding the required fee-in-lieu of sidewalk construction for a use allowed by Special Permit. Karen Kelleher said Mr. Chiachiaro argued that he is responsible for the quoted fee minus costs he incurred to replace a nearby stormwater catch basin. Karen Kelleher asked if the basin replacement was to accommodate work done at the subject property and anticipated changes to drainage patterns. Jesse Steadman said that the previous Highway Superintendent had intended to replace that catch basin, but it was not an immediate priority. Jesse Steadman said Bill Chiachiaro elected to replace the basin himself, but that does not release him from responsibilities for the fee-in-lieu of sidewalk construction under the terms of the Special Permit.

Mark Jones asked if there was a condition requiring culvert/basin construction in that area in the Special Permit. Jesse Steadman said the two issues are fee-in-lieu and the function of the stormwater retention basin, which drains into the roadway catch basin in question. Lori Clark said the fee-in-lieu is a separate accounting from other project improvements undertaken by the applicant. The Board acknowledged that materials for the basin replacement were provided by the Town, but asserted that a handshake deal between the Highway Department and the applicant has no bearing on the applicability of the conditions of the Special Permit.

John Colonna-Romano said it was clear that the Board's consulting engineer does not recommend that the Board waive dimensional requirements of the right-of-way monumentation at the Joanne Drive subdivision.

## **Planning Board Member Updates**

John Colonna-Romano noted that the tank outside the former Great Road Firearms in Lower Village has finally been removed. Jesse Steadman reported that legal issues surrounding the closing of the former Great Road Firearms have been resolved, allowing the removal.

Margaret Costello said she received excellent service from Miller Brother Garage on Crescent Street and was very happy to see a woman employed as a mechanic there. Margaret Costello said that the owners operate an honest business and recommended their services.

## **Planner's Report**

Jesse Steadman said that the developer of Joanne Drive asked to be placed on a future agenda to discuss a request for relief from some of the street tree planting requirements of the subdivision approval. Karen Kelleher asked if the developer intends to install street trees elsewhere as a substitution. Jesse Steadman said he believes the existing forested areas abutting the development create a pleasant natural barrier and he does not think additional street trees would provide much benefit. Jesse Steadman said some of the required trees could be planted elsewhere, but there is not enough space to relocate all of them. Karen Kelleher asked that the requested waiver be provided to the Board in writing.

Jesse Steadman noted that he has two remaining meetings with the Board before leaving his position on August 1. Jesse Steadman reported that the developers of the upcoming Athens Lane Active Adult Neighborhood are interested to schedule a public hearing in the next few weeks. Karen Kelleher said she would prefer to hold the public hearing in August to provide enough time for the Board's consulting engineer to review the application.

The Board scheduled meetings for August 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.

Jesse Steadman said staff will meet with Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (SMAHT) to discuss updates to the Housing Production Plan (HPP), having also reached out to staff at the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission to discuss possible assistance. Jesse Steadman said the update to that plan is timely, with housing being a major concern for residents. Jesse Steadman said the HPP update may be an opportunity to have some frank discussions about the implications of new multi-family zoning requirements under the new MGL Ch 40A §3A.

Jesse Steadman said the applicant for the Athens Lane project has scheduled a road safety audit for the intersection of Hudson Road/Route 117. Jesse Steadman said Green International is likely to contract for signalization design work and will be invited to attend the road safety audit.

Jesse Steadman said the Planning Department is preparing a final grant report for the Shared Streets and Spaces grant that funded installation of pedestrian signals along Great Road. Jesse Steadman thanked the Highway Department for working with challenging roadway and sidewalk conditions to make the installation happen and for working within a tight timeframe.

Jesse Steadman reported that the climate coalition for the SuAsCo (Sudbury, Assabet, Concord Rivers) watershed will be funded for another 3 years by the Organization for the Assabet River (OARS).

Jesse Steadman said the department hosted a public meeting on design for the Kane Land access path, and that preference for a crushed stone path was communicated to the designing engineer.

Jesse Steadman said the request for proposals for a Lower Village Water Feasibility Study has been posted. Jesse Steadman cautioned that bids may come back higher than expected, given ongoing volatility of materials costs.

Jesse Steadman said the Planning Department was locked out of its Facebook page for the last 18 months and only just regained access. Jesse Steadman said the Department will make an effort to post regular updates.

Jesse Steadman said he had a short discussion with consultant Peter Flinker about getting some visualizations of proposed Lower Village zoning changes. Jesse Steadman staff will begin working on a scope of services and bring that back to the Board to review.

Margaret Costello asked if a \$30k grant applied for by the Highway Department to study replacement of the Sudbury Road bridge was awarded. Jesse Steadman said he will find out more information and report back to the Board. Margaret Costello said she would hate to see the design of the bridge change, and that the narrow lanes help limit vehicle speeds.

Karen Kelleher asked if a new location for the walkway to the Town Building entrance has been considered to account for the new location of the crosswalk leading to the old Town Hall. Karen Kelleher asked about status of Gleasondale speed feedback signs. Jesse Steadman said the Highway Department has taken delivery but has not yet been able to install, partially due to difficulties finding locations with enough sun exposure to power the units.

#### **Lower Village Zoning Amendment – Planning Board Review**

The Board reviewed the most recent draft of proposed Lower Village zoning amendments. Jesse Steadman said the highlighted changes reflect Board discussions regarding dimensional requirements. Lori Clark said the Board should soon discuss boundaries of the district at a future meeting.

Topics discussed included dimensional requirements, buffer provisions for parcels abutting residential parcels, use provisions for allowable mixed-use buildings, standards for sidewalks and open space, and parking requirements. The Board made several minor changes to wording and struck some provisions from the draft.

The Board agreed to focus on these amendments for the next two meetings to take advantage of Jesse Steadman's remaining time.

Jesse Steadman said the Board should begin planning how to present and discuss the proposed amendment, and how to best place it in historical context. Jesse Steadman said the draft bylaw is quite long and just handing residents the draft will not be helpful to understand the approach taken.

*John Colonna-Romano motioned to adjourn*  
*Karen Kelleher seconded*

Respectfully submitted,  
Malcolm Ragan