

TOWN OF STOW  
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the August 2, 2022 Planning Board meeting

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

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

**Minutes**

*Karen Kelleher motioned to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2022 meeting as amended  
John Colonna-Romano seconded*

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

**Correspondence**

The Board discussed a proposal to expand an existing dog kennel use on Hudson Road onto a nearby (but discontinuous) parcel of land owned by the erstwhile D&D Farms. Karen Kelleher said the parcel in question is contained in three different zoning districts, only one of which allows for dog kennel uses. Karen Kelleher said the proposer has been asked to bring the proposal before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

**Planning Board Member Updates**

Karen Kelleher said Plantation Apartments have received state funding for rehab of the existing buildings and buildout of the next phase.

**Planner's Report**

Assistant Planner Malcolm Ragan reported that the Planning Department received comments from abutters to the new house under construction at 38 Hiley Brook Road and the delivery of electricity. Malcolm Ragan said that town bylaws require buried utilities but that overhead wires have been installed. Malcolm Ragan said Planning and Building Department staff will investigate the issue.

Malcolm Ragan said that Town staff have begun seeking appraisal services related to replacement of the Boxmill Bridge, anticipated to begin construction in spring 2024. Malcolm Ragan said that the Town still has some funds available from a Shared Streets and Spaces MassDOT grant that can be expended by transportation committees.

Malcolm Ragan said that the Planning Department has received necessary stormwater permitting documents from the contractor of the Spring Hill Estates subdivision and will be able to release Building Permits. Malcolm Ragan updated on progress made on projects to construct an access path for the Kane Land in Gleasondale, as well as to design a new traffic light at the intersection of Hudson Road/Route 117.

Outgoing Town Planner Jesse Steadman reported that the Montachusett Regional Transit Administration received a grant to provide additional services to Stow and some surrounding communities, and that more information about what that entails should be forthcoming soon.

### **Voting Associate Member Appointment**

The Planning Board reviewed the letter of interest from previous voting associate member Mark Jones.

*Karen Kelleher motioned to appoint Mark Jones as the Planning Board voting associate member  
Margaret Costello seconded*

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

### **PUBLIC HEARING – The Cottages at Wandering Pond Active Adult Neighborhood**

Planning Board members and staff introduced themselves.

Principal Engineer George Dimakarakos provided an overview of the project as proposed. George Dimakarakos showed the approx. locations of drinking water wells and explained the final permitting for the water supply will be obtained from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and other related state agencies.

George Dimakarakos said that some revisions to the plans are in progress based on staff review for compliance with recent revisions to the Zoning Bylaw.

George Dimakarakos stated that 60% of the project locus will be preserved as open space. George Dimakarakos said 15% of units will be deed restricted affordable. George Dimakarakos said the locus is partially within the Water Resource Protection District, which limits impervious surface area to 10% of the locus area. George Dimakarakos demonstrated that parking requirements under the Zoning Bylaw have been exceeded.

Speaking next for the project team was Tom Miner, landscape architect, who provided an overview of the site and the overall neighborhood design, designed to work with contours to minimize grading and tree removal. Tom Miner said that where slopes allow, they will create walk-out basements for units. Tom Miner said that after a meeting with the Conservation Commission and town staff, the development envelope was shifted east away from wetlands.

Tom Miner provided an overview of site plan for the club house portion close to the entrance, which will include a covered rear deck, small swimming pool, and pickleball court. Tom Miner showed a planting plan for the cottage-style dwellings, where parking is located off common driveways at the rear of the structures, and fronts of the houses face common areas to encourage social interaction. Areas will include walks, seating, and landscaping.

The project team next introduced architect Larry Reeves. Larry Reeves said that he attempted to keep the character of the project like a rural waterfront or resort-like feel, taking advantage of the natural surroundings.

Larry Reeves presented architectural drawings, starting with the club house/cottage house. Larry Reeves said everything on this site is thematically linked with cottages. Larry Reeves said the clubhouse has seen

some changes since the original submission and presented a revised design. Larry Reeves said the final designs will include a large deck attached to the structure and will be connected to the rest of the site with walkways.

Larry Reeves presented the design of the cottage-style dwellings, which he said are designed at a human scale and will avoid presenting blank walls to common areas. Larry Reeves showed how each ground floor will include a master bedroom and small home office. Larry Reeves said the units are geared toward aging in place, including full sized entry door, handicap access to accessible units throughout the first floor. Larry Reeves said that other units are designed to be easy to adapt for accessible designs.

Larry Reeves showed larger units with a walkout basement shown, which he said will be available for most units, where topography allows. Larry Reeves said that all units include 2 car garages, needed to make the units marketable to the intended customers. Larry Reeves said that each home will have ability to install Electric Vehicle charging stations, and some will be provided at the clubhouse parking lot.

Larry Reeves said that considerable time has been put into working to make the homes at or above the upcoming energy code revisions anticipated from the state. Larry Reeves said that houses will all use heat pumps and will be thoroughly insulated with tight seals.

The project team introduced Jeff Dirk of Vanasse & Assoc. to present the Traffic Impact Assessment. The project team mentioned that the Planning Board will request a peer review of the traffic study.

Jeff Dirk said that the study was completed in accordance with MassDOT guidelines and standard methodology. Jeff Dirk said that all modes of transportation are under consideration, and will include considerations of pedestrians, cyclists, and mobility in general. Jeff Dirk said that Vanasse completed a revision of an earlier draft in response to Planning Board comments. Jeff Dirk said that the revisions resulted in a more holistic and localized study. Jeff Dirk said that all traffic counts were completed June 2021, requiring some adjustments for seasonal fluctuation and pandemic conditions that have affected trip volumes and patterns.

Jeff Dirk said that queuing at the Hudson Rd/117 intersection will be increased, but this does not create a decrease in the level of service (LOS) compared to a no-build condition. Jeff Dirk said peak hour queuing may involve an additional 5-7 cars at the intersection. Jeff Dirk said that a planned signalization project will address any impacts from additional trips and will be further supplemented by recommendations from a recent Road Safety Audit (RSA).

Jeff Dirk said that sight lines at the Athens Lane entrance were measured for average observed traveled speeds of 45mph in a 40mph posted zone. Jeff Dirk said that the study also considered additional trips resulting from developments at the Bose campus property and the anticipated Stow Acres housing project.

Jeff Dirk reminded attendees that the development is “age-targeted”, which does not guarantee all residents will be over 55, so traffic numbers have been adjusted to account for some units being occupied by working age families, using values associated with typical single-family homes. Jeff Dirk said the counts assumed it would be a 50/50 mix of both types of households.

Traffic study recommendations for site access and circulation include 22 ft wide roadways internal to the site to ensure safe access, as well as stop signs and necessary pavement markings. Jeff Dirk said that the

site plan will include sidewalks internal to the site. Jeff Dirk said that the developer has committed to contributing toward complete streets mobility improvements along Hudson Road.

Jeff Dirk said that all driveways will be 21 feet in length, so that vehicles do not overhang the sidewalks. Jeff Dirk said that landscaping will be designed to keep sight triangles free of obstructions, including snow plowing storage.

The project team next introduced Don Provencher to present on the drinking water wells. Don Provencher said water will be supplied by three bedrock wells. Don Provencher said each well will have a design limit of 10,764 gallons per day. Don Provencher displayed maps showing different protective radii around the proposed wells. Don Provencher said the wells will feed into a treatment facility and then a 64,000 gal storage tank before final delivery to units.

Don Provencher explained permitting requirements through the DEP. Don Provencher said that permitting requires that capacity for at least 2 days' worth of max capacity be provided on site. Don Provencher said irrigations and fire protection capacity will be provided by separate non-potable wells which are not subject to the same DEP standards as drinking water. Don Provencher said that finalized design for wells will be provided once other aspect of the development are finalized and approved.

Chair Lori Clark reminded attendees that this will not be the only session of the public hearing. Lori Clark opened the floor for questions and comments from the members of the public.

Paul Giovinazzo (194 Maple St) – said that there is a small stream behind the project with 3 beaver dams that have a flow leveler. Paul Giovinazzo asked if considerations have been given to prevent additional water flows into the abutting wetlands. George Dimakarakos said that this stream crossing will be further reviewed by the Stow Conservation Commission and the design will be revised based on that review.

Mark Forgues (39 Adams Drive, 9 White Pond Rd) – asked if a connection to Maple St will be provided for safety access. Mark Forgues said that 22-ft roads will not be wide enough if parking is allowed on one side. Mark Forgues asked if there is a contingency plan should the water supply fail. Mark Forgues expressed concern that additional well developments for upcoming projects may deplete nearby private water supply wells.

Don Provencher said that DEP requires an escrow account to be set up to guarantee the maintenance of the water system by the future Homeowners Association. Don Provencher said that the HOA will eventually need to establish a funding source to maintain the system going into the future, which will take the form of fees on residents.

Steve Dahill (facility manager, CPI Radant, 255 Hudson Rd) – said there is a radio test range to the immediate south of the project, accessed over Athens St, to which access must be maintained. Steve Dahill also said the power to their RF towers are also provided over that Athens St access, and that will need to be maintained during construction. Developer Bruce Wheeler said he will follow up with Steve Dahill to guarantee access and utilities over Athens St.

Rick Fadden (189 Maple St) asked if there will be access onto Maple St and asked if their groundwater supplies will be sufficient in the face of drought conditions. George Dimakarakos said that there are no plans to create an access onto Maple St, although there is an option to utilize that ROW in the future.

George Dimakarakos said that the project will not be a net loss of water, as the treatment system will recharge the aquifer.

David Bryant (210 Hudson Rd) – said that a family member is a traffic professional, and they noticed the increase to queuing at Hudson 117 is from 7 to 20+ cars. Jeff Dirk said the maximum queue would be 24 cars, and that installation of a traffic signal that the town is planning will go a long way to alleviate any additional queuing. Jeff Dirk said the project’s contribution toward mobility improvements along Hudson Rd can also work toward addressing those issues.

Lori Clark opened the floor to Planning Board members. Nancy Arsenault asked if a pool maintenance shed is expected at some point. Nancy Arsenault also asked if the gazebo shown in the woods would in a cleared area or a raised area.

Karen Kelleher said she was surprised to see Stow’s public safety departments not raise concern at Athens St serving as the sole site access. Karen Kelleher said she believes that a parcel in the development locus is not actually included in the Active Adult Neighborhood Overlay District. George Dimakarakos said that the parcel is included in the district in the Assessor’s maps.

Karen Kelleher asked if golf and apple season were considered in the traffic study. Jeff Dirk said that some of that should have been accounted for in the seasonal adjustments. Lori Clark said the applicant should not underestimate the traffic impacts of the peak apple picking season.

Karen Kelleher said that any continuation date should be far out enough to allow for modifications to the plans and peer review/additional engineering. John Colonna-Romano said that the financial impact of the project assumes only 8 children being in the development and asked that that be reconsidered. John Colonna-Romano said the application says hiking trails will be open to the public and said that some kind of parking for the public should be provided. John Colonna-Romano suggested that the clubhouse area should include additional open areas to allow for community events for the residents.

Nancy Arsenault asked if the roads will be private ways, which the applicant confirmed. Margaret Costello asked if irrigation will not be supplied to public areas, George Dimakarakos clarified that irrigation will not come from the public water supplies and will instead use non-potable irrigation wells. Margaret Costello asked if those draws are not included in the withdrawal calculations. George Dimakarakos said that the calculations are only for the application to DEP for the Public Water Supply, and that the local Board of Health will permit the irrigation wells. Margaret Costello asked if the 64,000 gal storage tank will be underground, applicant confirmed. Margaret Costello said she feels very strongly that vehicular traffic should be discouraged and asked that pickup shelters be provided for residents at entrances and exits of the development. Nancy Arsenault said that pickup areas could definitely be provided for school age children who will not be picked up by a school bus within the actual development.

Mark Jones said that the affordable housing provision of 21 units out of 141 total does not meet the 15% requirement under the Zoning Bylaw. Mark Jones noted that the draft Master Deed states that the HOA will own the exteriors of all units and asked if that implied those exterior will also be maintained by the HOA. George Dimakarakos said that the structures will be owned by the unit owner, and the Master Deed will be revised.

The Board agreed to continue the Public Hearing to October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 7:30pm.

*Karen Kelleher motioned to continue the Public Hearing to Oct 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:30*  
*John Colonna-Romano seconded*

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

**Input to Select Board on Purpose/Charter of the Economic Development & Industrial Commission**

The Board reviewed an example charge provided by the chair and a draft of the charge provided by the outgoing Town Planner. Lori Clark said that the charge should spell out how the committee should interact with other Board and Committees. Lori Clark said that she does want to present the Select Board with a fully draft of a charge, but would like to present some general suggestions and input.

Karen Kelleher said she reviewed the existing mission statement for the EDIC, and does not believe it is currently insufficient, but did say that it could be clearer about the relationships with other boards. Lori Clark said that if there is a general purpose for driving business growth, any recommendations should be working in collaboration with the relevant boards and committees that have regulatory authority over those various projects. Nancy Arsenault said that language about soliciting businesses to come to Town should not be encouraged.

Lori Clark said she anticipated the EDIC to gather input to represent businesses and what residents want to see from businesses, information which can be taken back to other Boards and committees to influence policy changes to make that happen.

Margaret Costello said she is a little bit nervous about the EDIC given full reign to seek out whatever businesses they can find. Lori Clark said this is why a clear purpose statement in the charge is important, which can lay out a vision for Stow that strikes a balance with Economic Development and the rural character of Stow.

Karen Kelleher asked Board members what they believe the composition of membership on the EDIC should look like. John Colonna-Romano said it makes sense to ask for preference to be given to Stow business owners. Board members discussed membership of the EDIC and agreed that members should primarily be at-large and not limited to members of existing committees. Board members agreed that the EDIC should be a 5-member rather than 7-member committee.

Lori Clark said that the EDIC should understand that they are not privileged to demand policy changes from regulatory Boards and Committees. Lori Clark said the EDIC should be expected to back up suggested changes to policy with local buy in and supporting data.

Lori Clark said the Select Board will hold a discussion about the EDIC charter during their meeting on Tuesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, which she will participate in on behalf of the Planning Board. Mark Jones recalled that the Town Administrator had recommended abolishing the EDIC outright in an earlier letter. Lori Clark said that the Town Administrator reached out to the Planning Board for input on a revised committee charter after the Select Board declined to consider abolishing the EDIC.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Malcolm Ragan