

TOWN OF STOW
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the October 18th, 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 moved to approve the minutes of August 2, 2022 as amended

Margaret Costello seconded

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

Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes of August 23, 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**

Karen Kelleher moved to approve the minutes of October 4, 2022 as amended

Margaret Costello seconded

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

Planning Board Member Updates

John Colonna-Romano said the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) recently held a public hearing meeting yesterday to discuss the last year of funding awards and to receive input on possible future projects. John Colonna-Romano also said the Green Advisory Committee (GAC) is hosting a pair of information sessions for all Town staff and committees to hear about their work to date.

Planner's Report

Planning Director Valerie Oorthuys said the Planning Department and other Town Staff attended a meeting with engineers from Green International and the owner of the Track Road property to discuss a new cross section concept for a shared use recreational path. Valerie Oorthuys said that the project will need to move through some processes with MassDOT in order for the Town to access federal earmarks for full designs of the shared use path.

Valerie Oorthuys said that draft bids documents have been received from the engineers designing the Kane Land access path, and that they will be finalized once prevailing wage data is verified.

Valerie Oorthuys said that staff attended a meeting with the developer of the Stow Acres housing project, who provided an update on the project and provided a tentative timeline for submission of a Comprehensive Permit application in January.

John Colonna-Romano asked about rumors regarding the future of the Bose campus site. Staff could not provide any updates about the site at this time.

Margaret Costello asked that Valerie Oorthuys summarize the traffic impact study for the proposed distribution facility at the former Intel site in Hudson. Valerie Oorthuys said that she perused that study and said that trip distribution data showed 5% of generated trips move north via route 62. Margaret Costello said that the traffic impacts will be felt hard on Gleasondale Rd and said the town should be proactive in being opposed to the warehouse use at the Intel site. Lori Clark said that the Board should communicate their concerns about the impacts to Gleasondale Road to the Hudson Planning Board. Valerie Oorthuys said that staff have requested a meeting with Hudson employees to discuss a possible truck restriction on Marlboro Road and Chestnut Street and noted that Stow does not have authority to unilaterally place such a restriction on those roads.

Non-Voting Associate Member Appointment

Planning Board members introduced themselves to the two applicants. Several Board members discussed their experiences as associate members prior to running for elected seats.

Applicant Deborah Woods said she has been a Stow resident for 29 years and has been a member of several boards and is the current chair of the Charter Review Committee. Deborah Woods said she was instrumental in helping get the Active Adult Neighborhood Overlay District bylaw passed by Town Meeting in 2002, after it had failed to pass at several previous Town Meetings. Deborah Woods said she is interested in serving as the Board's non-voting associate because her grandchildren will be raised in Stow, and she hopes the same things that made Stow a great place to raise her own children will be available to them.

Margaret Tucker said that she grew up in Massachusetts and recently moved back after some time on the West Coast. Margaret Tucker said that she loves the amount of space and quiet she has access to in Stow. Margaret Tucker said it is clear that a lot of change for Stow is on the horizon and that she would like to help influence those changes in a positive direction.

Karen Kelleher asked the prospective applicants if they are familiar with the Board's workplan and if they have any disagreements with the priorities currently under consideration. Deborah Woods discussed Lower Village and said that not having water and septic is a challenge, but said it is also important to understand the full range of reasons for challenges faced by businesses. Deborah Woods said she is supportive of the work that has gone into the Stow Acres project. Margaret Tucker said that Lower Village is a complicated issue and that some course corrections in zoning could be needed. Margaret Tucker said that she has also followed the Cottages at Wandering Pond and what people are saying about new developments on Facebook, and that interests need to be balanced for those cases.

Margaret Tucker and Deborah Woods provided further information about the background and motivation for serving as the non-voting associate member. John Colonna-Romano asked applicants the project they are most excited about. Deborah Woods said she is excited about the benefits that will come from the

Stow Acres project. Margaret Tucker said that addressing issues in Lower Village is a strong priority, and that that project, like all others, requires careful balance of multiple interests.

Karen Kelleher asked applicants their availability for meetings. Deborah Woods said she is retired and has lots of availability for evening meetings, although she would prefer the Board aim to meet twice monthly instead of thrice. Margaret Tucker asked about the Board's plans for remote participation. Board members said they will continue to follow state rules around remote meeting.

Board discussed appointing both applicants. Staff pointed out that the posting is explicit that it is for 1 member and appointing two members would require re-posting the notice of vacancy. Lori Clark asked applicants what they would hope to change about the Board. Deborah Woods said she would encourage the Board to decide more definitively when enough testimony has been received in Public Hearings. Margaret Tucker said the Board must be careful about how they communicate when uses that invite criticism from the public are allowed under the zoning code and cited the example of a gun store locating in Lower Village several years ago.

Margaret Costello said she has concerns about Deborah Woods' connections to Town Government through her husband, and how that could influence her conduct on the Planning Board. Deborah Woods said that her husband is Tom Ryan, former Select Board member, former Financial Committee member, and current member of the Board of Assessors. Deborah Woods said she and her husband have been involved in Town government for many years and do not influence each other's actions or decisions.

Karen Kelleher motioned to appoint Deborah Woods as a non-voting associate member for a term through September 1, 2023

John Colonna-Romano seconded

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

The Board expressed appreciation for Margaret Tucker's interest in serving as an associate member and encouraged her to stay informed and involved with future Planning Board business.

Town Charter Review

Deborah Woods said that the Town Charter Review committee was appointed by the Town moderator, as is required every ten years. Deborah Woods said the committee is seeking input on potential revisions by November 15th. Deborah Woods said that the review committee has asked for Boards to provide input on charter language specifically related to that Board. Deborah Woods said that Board members will also have the opportunity to provide input in their capacity as residents.

Deborah Woods said the committee is working on receiving broad input from Boards before they begin seriously discussing any revisions and asked that the Planning Board prepare some proposed changes at a future meeting. The Board agreed to discuss a series of proposed changes at an upcoming meeting.

Comprehensive Plan Approach

The Board discussed their approach to future updates to the Master/Comprehensive Plan. Planning staff provided a situational overview and pointed out that substantial progress has been made on goals of the

2010 Master Plan. Valerie Oorthuys recommended that the Board be prepared to hire a consultant for the process and anticipate associated costs.

Karen Kelleher said the appointing authority for the Master/Comprehensive Plan committee should be the Planning Board rather than the Select Board, a power that is granted in Massachusetts General Law and standard in many communities. Board members agreed that they would prefer the Planning Board serve as the appointing authority for the Master Plan Committee.

Valerie Oorthuys asked if the Board would prefer to wait until a new Town Charter is in place before beginning this master planning process. Board members noted that Charter revisions will not take effect for close to two years and that the master planning process should not wait that long to commence.

Board members expressed continued support for a living document approach to the Master Plan revisions. The board discussed implementing mechanisms to ensure regular review of the plan as other planning efforts are completed. The board discussed running a visioning process at the outset to help guide future process. The Board discussed providing some priorities to the Master Plan Committee but also allowing that group freedom to conduct a visioning exercise.

The Board discussed how much funding to request to advance a master planning process. Valerie Oorthuys said that the primary benefit of consultants is simply the added capacity. Lori Clark said that consultants can also be helpful for event facilitation and ensuring one strong voice does not dominate the discussions and process. Valerie Oorthuys said that a combination of Town Meeting funding and grant funding could be applied to paying for consultant assistance.

The Planning Board said that they would like to begin outreach for setting priorities as soon as possible to make clear recommendations to appoint the Master Plan Committee.

Input to Select Board on Economic Development & Industrial Commission Goals

Lori Clark recalled that the EDIC is currently reviewing their mission statement and will present a proposed rewrite to the Select Board for approval.

John Colonna-Romano said the EDIC should draft recommendations for sign bylaw revisions. John Colonna-Romano said that the EDIC should be able to collect input from affected businesses and provide that input to the Planning Board. Lori Clark said that the EDIC could present the bylaw language that poses the greatest challenge to local businesses.

Board discussed asking the EDIC to present a list of future businesses that could be attracted to Stow. The Board also suggested the EDIC review previous survey data to understand possible future outreach and major issues facing local business. Lori Clark said that Stow is a small sized market and that any expectations of what can and should be attracted to Town should recognize that reality.

Review of Draft Letter to Zoning Board of Appeals regarding Special Permit for “Lot 2”, next to 137 Harvard Road

The Board reviewed the draft letter to the Zoning Board of Appeals, which explained previous erosion control permitting at an abutting lot, the status of an open lawsuit against the Planning Board regarding

that permitting, and the Board concerns about stormwater flows into the roadway. The Board approved the letter to the Zoning Board of Appeals as drafted.

Review of Draft Workplan

Karen Kelleher said that she ranks revisions to the noise bylaw low because there is little potential to effectively regulate noise through zoning. Board discussed revising rules and regulations to encourage construction of “pocket parks.” The board discussed searching for ways to drive the conversion of above-ground utilities to underground.

Valerie Oorthuys said that the priority ranking of some transportation projects may be worth reconsidering. Valerie Oorthuys said there is a clear need for streetscape improvement projects in both Town Center and Gleasondale, and the Board should be sure about which should be prioritized. Valerie Oorthuys suggested revisions to stormwater regulations by an ongoing project by staff because of requirements by the EPA, which are now several years overdue.

Board members agreed to regularly review their list of projects and priorities.

Karen Kelleher motioned to adjourn

John Colonna-Romano seconded

Respectfully submitted,
Malcolm Ragan