

TOWN OF STOW  
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the September 26, 2023, Planning Board Meeting

Planning Board members present: Lori Clark, Nancy Arsenault, John Colonna-Romano, Margaret Costello, Karen Kelleher, Debbie Woods (voting associate)

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

**Discussion – Joanne Drive Subdivision -Request for Relief from Street Tree Planting Requirements**  
*Present: Tim Black, Kendall Homes*

Lori Clark opened the discussion for the Joanne Drive Subdivision. Prior to the meeting, Tim Black submitted an updated street tree plan and a letter to the Board. The letter states that the location of 14 street trees on the subdivision plan are not appropriate for plantings, and that alternative locations of plantings have been marked on the subdivision plan. Lori Clark asked Tim Black to present what he submitted.

Tim Black stated that he had worked with PLACES Associates and the Conservation Department to identify locations and alternative species that could be planted instead of 14 street trees as presented on the subdivision plan. Based on their feedback, Tim Black proposed 3 crabapple trees near the intersection of Joanne Drive and Forest Drive, 2 rows of 5 winterberry shrubs along the sides of the parking area for the conservation land, and 5 freeman maples in the cul-de-sac of Joanne Drive.

Members of the Board found that the alternative trees and shrubs are an appropriate alternative to the 14 street trees.

*Karen Kelleher motioned to approve the alternative street tree plan, received September 26, 2023.*  
*John Colonna-Romano seconded.*

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

**Review of Minutes**

*Karen Kelleher motioned to approve the minutes of September 19, 2023, as amended.*  
*John Colonna-Romano seconded.*

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

**Planning Board Member Updates**

Karen Kelleher asked the Board about the process needed following the approval of the citizen's petition regarding firearm zoning. She suggested starting the process soon. She asked for clarification if posting a public hearing would limit the Board's ability to receive and hear applications regarding firearms business. Valerie Oorthuys responded that if the Board has draft bylaw language, they may post a Public Hearing. If the hearing is posted after the Select Board opens the warrant for Annual Town Meeting, the draft bylaw language becomes effective in the interim.

John Colonna-Romano stated that a working session may be needed for drafting a bylaw. Karen Kelleher and Lori Clark agreed. Lori Clark suggested that the Board should get informed and educated about what other towns have done regarding firearm businesses, followed by a working session to identify what the Board will want to accomplish.

John Colonna-Romano asked Debbie Woods about an article to amend the Town Charter from the 2023 Special Town Meeting regarding quorums and decisions. Debbie Woods explained that the amendment would allow for decisions to be made based on the number of members present during a quorum instead of the committee or board as a whole. Valerie Oorthuys added that it will not impact the endorsement process for Approval Not Required subdivision plans or the approval of Special Permits; instead, she stated that it will be used for smaller decisions like approving minutes.

John Colonna-Romano asked when the amendments to the Town Charter will be effective. Debbie Woods stated that the amendments approved at Town Meeting will need to be reviewed and approved by the Attorney General; if approved, the amendments will be on the 2024 Town Election Ballot in May. If the amendments pass at the Election, they will become effective around June 2024.

Margaret Costello noted that both Public Hearings have been requested to be continued. Lori Clark followed this by informing the members of the public about the meaning of a continuation, and that the dates for the continuation will be rescheduled during the meeting.

Debbie Woods asked for an update on a staff meeting with 148-156 Great Road regarding their special permit. Valerie Oorthuys stated that the meeting date has not been set, but Planning Staff are working with the property owner to schedule the meeting.

### **Public Input**

Mark Forgues, 9 White Pond Road, asked about what happens when there is a four-person quorum. Karen Kelleher stated that it will need three votes in favor to pass.

### **Public Hearing - The Cottages at Wandering Pond Active Adult Neighborhood Special Permit, Athens Street, continued from July 25, 2023**

Lori Clark opened the public hearing at 7:30pm.

*Karen Kelleher motioned to continue the Public Hearing for the Cottages at Wandering Pond Active Adult Neighborhood Special Permit without testimony until November 28, 2023, at 7:30pm.*

*John Colonna-Romano seconded.*

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

### **Public Hearing - Modification of a Contractor's Yard Special Permit, Erosion Control Special Permit, and Earth Removal Special Permit and Site Plan Approval, 63-65 White Pond Road, continued from August 15, 2023**

Lori Clark opened the hearing at 7:35pm.

*Margaret Costello motioned to continue the Public Hearing for the modification of a contractor's yard Special Permit, Erosion Control Special Permit, and Earth Removal Special Permit and Site Plan Approval at 63-65 White Pond Road without testimony until November 14, 2023, at 7:30pm.*

*John Colonna-Romano seconded.*

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

Mary Mintz, 26 White Pond Road, asked the Board if they had visited the site and if they have notes from the site visit. Lori Clark stated that the Board has visited the site, and that the Board has received a letter from their peer review engineer about the site. She stated that the Board is unable to discuss the site visit because the Public Hearing is open.

### **Planning Director's Report**

#### *Stow Acres Climate Resilience Master Plan*

The working group for the Stow Acres Plan met on September 21, 2023. The consultant of the project presented their initial findings and proposed uses for the site. A public forum about the plan will be held on October 18, 2023, virtually via Zoom Web Conferencing.

A family day will be held at Stow Acres on October 29, 2023, to engage residents with the plan. There will be tours of the North Course of Stow Acres, informational tables, and activities for children. Karen Kelleher, member of the working group, stated that she is impressed with the consultant.

#### *Comprehensive Plan Committee*

The Comprehensive Plan Committee met on September 25, 2023. The meeting was a working session to review what the previous Master Plan had accomplished. The Committee will meet again in October and begin working directly with the consultant.

### **Member Updates, Continued**

Margaret Costello reminded the Board that she will not be available at the October 17 and 24<sup>th</sup> Board Meetings. She stated she will be periodically checking her emails to stay connected.

Karen Kelleher asked what date the Common Road public forum is, and asked Valerie Oorthuys to give the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee a copy of the memorandum sent to the Select Board regarding Common Road. Valerie Oorthuys stated it will be October 3, 2023, and she will provide the committee with a copy.

John Colonna-Romano stated that applications for funding from the Community Preservation Fund will become available soon.

### **Adjournment**

*Karen Kelleher motioned to adjourn.*

*Margaret Costello seconded.*

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

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michael Slagle