

TOWN OF STOW
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the January 12, 2016 Planning Board Meeting

Planning Board Members Present: Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Len Golder, Steve Quinn;
Margaret Costello

Voting Associate Member: Mark Jones

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

Appointment #1 - Kathy Sferra

Discussion of Duplex Zoning

Kathy Sferra explained the two page paper she prepared for the Board on the topic of duplex zoning in Stow. Kathy Sferra said that about a year ago she purchased a 2.5 acre lot with a house in relatively poor condition. As she and her husband worked through the options of what to do with the house, Kathy Sferra said they decided to rent the house and and currently are not looking to change direction. However, as they looked at the options, Kathy Sferra said they realized there are several ways to create a duplex in Stow, particularly taking an older house and turning it into a duplex, although the bylaw does not allow for exterior changes, which makes the prospect difficult. Kathy Sferra said that is a very difficult bar to meet. She said the bylaw could be improved to allow a house to be demolished and a duplex built in its place. Kathy Sferra said that in the future she would like to have the option to construct a two unit home that could be designed for seniors, although with the exterior appearance of a single family home. Kathy Sferra said she has come before the Board to put the issue on the table for discussion first.

Mark Jones said he and his partner also looked at the same parcel and could not figure out how to make it financially feasible, and could not do a duplex without a subdivision.

Steve Quinn said there are towns that have separate districts for two family homes. Steve Quinn said that a different district in Stow would be difficult to create in Stow, however. Karen Kelleher said that a minimum lot size could be one limitation. Kathy Sferra said it could be required by right or by special permit as long as the applicant can meet a minimum lot size.

Len Golder said if the condition of the home is reasonably good, he might be more reluctant to support a tear down for a duplex. But if the house were already in poor condition it may seem more appropriate.

Steve Quinn noted, that accessory apartments, which are not too different than duplexes failed twice at Town Meeting.

Kathy Sferra said if there is concern over too many duplexes being built only a certain number could be built per year, perhaps. Lori Clark said what will be important is how you make it attractive to Town Meeting. What are the general concerns she asked? Is it about living next to renters versus owners? Lori Clark said you can begin to find a strategy if you looked back at the concerns of the general resident of Stow and find ways to mitigate the concerns with the bylaw. Steve Quinn said that some of the units may be rentals but some may also be condos.

Ernie Dodd said he believes abutters would have the biggest issue with a duplex bylaw proposal. Ernie Dodd said it has been difficult to get rentals passed at Town meeting. Ernie Dodd said Board of Health concerns also limits the number of bedrooms on the property. Steve Quinn said the argument regarding additional school children will come up and need to be addressed.

Kathy Sferra said the most minor change would be to leave the provision for duplexes intact, have the ZBA hear the application, and delete the language regarding no exterior changes to the existing appearance. Lori Clark said that would likely be a non-starter with the Board.

Lori Clark reiterated that if the goal is to not prohibit duplexes then looking at the mitigating factors is the best place to start for a bylaw. Lori Clark said that what she is hearing is that the Board is OK with the concept and that perhaps Kathy Sferra could draft a bylaw with the help of Planning staff for the Board's review.

Appointment #2 - Mike Almada

TRM Representative RE Minor Modification at 501 Gleasondale Road for T-Mobile

Mike Almada said that T-Mobile is in the process of modernizing their antenna and adding a new competitive frequency that improves the functionality of existing sites. They have been trying to upgrade as many sites as possible nationwide.

The scope of work regards adding three thinner 2" thick antenna that are 8' feet tall rather than the 5 or 6 foot antenna currently installed. Mike Almada said that in the packets are a series of information to go along with the building permit application. Mike Almada said that the FCC weighed in on the activities regarding existing sites, particularly that they can and should be modified through a building permit process, and that the Towns have given the ability of setting up locations for facilities and there should not be year long processes for updating these simple antenna. The packet explains how the project fits an eligible facilities request.

The last time, the Board's focus was the look of the antenna, especially as one of the competitors has a facility just above T-Mobile that is not in keeping with what the Board would like to see. T-Mobile originally eliminated the mounting brackets. Because of the

concerns over projection of the chimney, T-Mobile eliminated the brackets and added a banded bracket system bringing the antenna close to flush with the smokestack.

Members of the Board met with the paint contractor and the existing antenna were painted said Mike Almada. Regarding the paint, Mike Almada said the middle banding may look better if solid red, rather than imitation brick. Mike Almada said the new antenna will be larger and there will need to be a third steel band to carry the load. Mike Almada showed the Board locational analysis that displayed the visuals of the smokestack from different angles in Gleasondale.

Mike Almada said the details that they are talking about are really not visible from most locations on the ground. Mike Almada said he feels this would not be a visual issue.

Steve Quinn asked if there are antenna that could house all of the frequencies. Mike Almada explained it would have to be much larger. The Board agreed the band would be better as solid red.

Len Golder asked if there are any built examples of these antenna in the immediate facility. Len Golder asked what technological needs requires the upgrade? Mike Almada said that having a different frequency needs a different piece of equipment.

Steve Quinn said that it looks a lot better than some of the other companys' mounts. The bands are better.

Bill Byron, of Gleasondale Road, said that he appreciates the close mount surface installation.

Meg Costello asked if the antenna could be painted a little darker, without the imitation mortar lines, which would look even better. Meg Costello said just a solid brick color rather than the white that reflects might look a little bit better. Mike Almada said they could accommodate that request.

Ernie Dodd said he thanks them for being so accommodating. Ernie Dodd noted that the removal of the cable tray was a big improvement.

Lori Clark said the banding as solid brick color is an improvement. And if the antennas can be solid brick color, matching the existing brick, that would be even better.

Ernie Dodd moved to approve a minor modification to the 501 Gleasondale site plan for T-Mobile as shown on the plans with conditions regarding the painting of the antenna.

Steve Quinn seconded.

VOTED (5-0) Unanimously in favor. (Lori Clark, Margaret Costello, Ernie Dodd, Len Golder, Steve Quinn).

Discussion of 1.5.2016 Meeting Minutes

Ernie Dodd moved to approve the minutes as amended.

Steve Quinn seconded.

VOTED: 5-0 Unanimously in favor. (Lori Clark, Margaret Costello, Len Golder, Ernie Dodd, Steve Quinn).

Member Updates

Margaret Costello said that she feels very strongly that the Eversource proposal for high tension wires not be approved by the Town.

Steve Quinn said there is a large expanse of ledge now unearthed at the Wedgewood property.

Mark Jones said that when site plan review is objected, he feels amending the bylaw to bypass the ZBA and instead go straight to court may be a better option than allowing the ZBA the chance to overrule the Planning Board's decision.

Planner's Report

Joanne Drive

Karen Kelleher said she has a request for a variance from the inclusionary zoning provision from the bylaw. Karen Kelleher reported that Rich Harrington noted that his client will be filing a request for variance from the requirements of the Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw. Karen recommended that the Board start thinking about a memo to the ZBA now so as to be sure we have enough time to respond when the Public Hearing is noticed.

The Board discussed whether the variance would be considered a use variance.

Jillian's Lane Preliminary Subdivision Decision

Karen Kelleher said she is preparing a draft decision for the Jillian's Lane Preliminary Subdivision Plan for review and approval at next week's meeting.

Gleasondale Survey Plan

Karen Kelleher said staff will be meeting with Tom Stokes of Howard/Stein-Hudson to discuss the request for a survey plan. The Highway Department had a series of survey right of way plans, some dating back to 1916. We are hopeful that the required survey may not be as extensive as we first thought.

White Pond Road Commercially Zoned Property

Karen Kelleher said staff have received inquiries from two parties about the Commercially Zoned White Pond Road properties. It seems that both parties are very interested in the property for contractor yards and landscaping business locations.

Fire Station/Community Center

The expected construction completion date for the new Fire Station/Community Center is July 2016 Karen Kelleher said. The Selectmen will be forming a committee to evaluate the future use of Town Hall Building and the Crescent Street Fire Station Building. Karen Kelleher and Jesse Steadman

recommended that Planning Department Staff and/or a Planning Board Member be appointed to the committee given the data analysis the Department has as a result of Town Center Study prepared by the UMass Students.

Lower Village

Karen Kelleher said Steve Steinberg stopped by the office today and once again urged the Town to provide for rental housing in the Business District. Steve Steinberg said he has drafted an agreement regarding water for Rich Presti and Kostas to review.

51 Crescent Street

Karen Kelleher reported that she was advised that an appeal was filed on the Building Commissioner's determination that the business at 51 Crescent Street is allowed under the bylaw as a home occupation as defined by the bylaw.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted.

Jesse Steadman