

TOWN OF STOW  
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the November 7, 2017 Planning Board Meeting

Planning Board Members Present: Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Margaret Costello, Len Golder,  
Karen Kelleher

Voting Associate Member: Mark Jones

Associate Member: John Colonna- Romano

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

**Discussion of Meeting Minutes**

**Minutes of October 17, 2017**

*Ernie Dodd moved to approve the minutes as amended.*

*Karen Kelleher Seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Margaret Costello, Karen Kelleher-Yea).**

**Correspondence**

Margaret Costello noted the construction schedule provided by the contractor for Spring Hill Estates, saying that the schedule needs to show more detail, including dates and times of planned work.

Margaret Costello asked for clarification of the Spring Hill Estates' Quitclaim Deed reference to 21.34 acres of Open Space on Parcel A. Jesse Steadman said that he believes the acreage is correct, and the plan and parcel referenced are correct.

Lori Clark asked about the intended use at the Quirk property on Athens Lane, and the status of the known access issues, as it is not an accepted street in Stow. Jesse Steadman said that that French Construction is considering the site for screened storage of construction equipment. Jesse Steadman said staff have discussed the use with the interested buyers and urged them to provide proof of access, and to be able to specifically note what type of equipment they will be bringing to the site, in order for the Board and the Conservation Commission to understand the potential impacts to the access off Athens Lane. Karen Kelleher asked if it is a conforming lot, suggesting that the Special Permit may be requested from the Zoning Board of Appeals and not the Planning Board.

Len Golder arrived.

Lori Clark said that the temporary lighting at the model home opening at Regency at Stow does not appear to be within the bylaws. Karen Kelleher said that it should be clarified that the Building Commissioner should be informed, as the Zoning Enforcement Officer, of the event and its conformance with the bylaw.

### **Public Input**

Katie Fisher, *1 White Pond Road*, said that she attended a meeting of the Economic Development and Industrial Commission on November 2, and a new gun shop in Lower Village was discussed. Katie Fisher asked for clarification of how the shop fits in with existing bylaws. Lori Clark said that the zoning does allow retail uses. Jesse Steadman said that he attended a site walk with the Police Chief, the Fire Chief and the Building Commissioner to review site concerns, such as lighting, signage and parking. Jesse Steadman said that the Chiefs discussed federal firearms licensing and approval from the ATF, and looked at fire alarms, the safe, motion sensor cameras, and windows.

Katie Fisher asked for more information on the on-site training the proprietor would provide. Jesse Steadman said that he is an NRA certified trainer, and that he would run a gun safety course without live firearms.

Mark Forgues, *9 White Pond Road*, asked about the approval process for the shop, wondering if the Board of Selectmen would need to hold a public hearing. Jesse Steadman said that wouldn't be necessary, and that any approvals would be more administrative.

### **Member Updates**

Karen Kelleher said that the Complete Streets Committee met earlier in the day with Howard Stein Hudson, the consultant for the Prioritization Plan. Karen Kelleher said that the first public forum is scheduled tentatively for the evening of December 6. Karen Kelleher said that Howard Stein Hudson showed the committee an online mapping tool that residents can use to pinpoint areas of concern or other comments related to the streetscape or bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular infrastructure. Karen Kelleher said that the deadline for Tier 2 submission is April 1, 2018 and the deadline for Tier 3 submission is May 1, 2018. Jesse Steadman said that Stow achieved Tier 1 status with the approval of the Complete Streets Policy, and that Tier 2 is the Prioritization Plan process, leading to Tier 3, when Stow can apply for funding from MassDOT.

Mark Jones said that the ZBA met on November 7<sup>th</sup>, and heard multiple applications for Variances or Special Permits to construct garages outside of setback requirements. Mark Jones noted that he would like to discuss reducing non-conformity in neighborhoods such as Lake Boon. Mark Jones said that other public hearings include grandfathered uses, such as at Quinn Electric and on Rich Presti's property at 92 Great Road.

Mark Forgues asked if it is the Planning Board that makes changes to the Zoning Bylaw. Karen Kelleher said that anyone may propose zoning changes, and the Planning Board would be required to hold a public hearing prior to a Town Meeting vote.

Lori Clark said that a member of the Finance Committee contacted her to gauge interest in funding the Town's participation in a website that would track spending by department. Lori Clark said that she doesn't feel this is relevant to the Board's purview, as it doesn't offer any context with data available. Mark Jones said that the Economic Development and Industrial Commission may be more interested, as the website would display demographic information. Jesse Steadman noted that the Finance Committee would like to be more active in budgeting, and said that he would like to invite our liaison to a future meeting to discuss the Planning Board's budget.

### **Planner's Report**

#### **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant**

Jesse Steadman reported that Valerie Oorthuys has been creating a request for qualifications to send to the various MVP Certified providers in the state to allow the Climate Adaptation Working Group to make an informed decision on which consultant to partner with. The expectation is that the Working Group will review consultants in November, work out any contract details and preliminary research during December and begin the workshop and data collection January.

#### **Joanne Drive**

Jesse Steadman updated the Board that he is continuing to draft the Decision for Joanne Drive and hopes to have something for the Board's review on November 14.

#### **Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Grant**

Jesse Steadman reported that he and Valerie are in the process of writing a grant for the Department of Housing and Community Development's Downtown Initiative Program for the purpose of obtaining assistance in the preparation of a business district assessment and market analysis for Lower Village. Jesse Steadman said that such a study can help direct the Board to the most applicable zoning upgrades and allow for the Board to build on Lower Village's strengths in the region rather than compete at a disadvantage with regional shopping centers that are better positioned in their particular niche market.

#### **Historic Survey**

Jesse Steadman reported that the Gleasondale Area Subcommittee have worked with Planning staff to develop and distribute a survey to all homes in Gleasondale regarding resident's thoughts on historic preservation initiatives.

#### **Street Trees**

Jesse Steadman noted that he has been in touch with the Tree Warden and it appears that some of the trees along portions of Great Road that were slated for removal may be able to be retained. He will be working with the tree warden, the contractor and the property owners to further discuss prior to any action being taken.

#### **Regency at Stow Minor Modification Decision Endorsement**

The Planning Board endorsed the Minor Modification decision, as it had been discussed during their meetings of October 10 and 17.

**Erosion Control Special Permit and Site Plan Approval, 77 White Pond Road-  
Decision Endorsement**

The Planning Board reviewed the Decision for 77 White Pond Road, and decided to endorse the decision at the next meeting, once minor amendments are made. The public hearing for the application was held on September 26, 2017.

**Lower Village Traffic Improvement Project**

Jesse Steadman said that tree removal and construction will likely begin within the next two weeks, and a letter was sent to all abutters within 300 feet of the project as well as residents on each of the roads off of Great Road in Lower Village. Jesse Steadman said that the letter would be published in an upcoming edition of the Stow Independent.

Jesse Steadman said that a pre-construction meeting and site walk was held on October 25, which provided the opportunity to walk the length of the corridor with the resident engineer of Howard Stein Hudson as well as with representatives at E.T.&L. Corp.

Jesse Steadman said that E.T.&L. Corp noted that a few trees slated for protection during construction may need to be reconsidered. Jesse Steadman said that he discussed their concerns with the Tree Warden, who deemed a tree along 118 Great Road a hazard and asked for a sycamore to be retained, also at 118 Great Road. Jesse Steadman said that it may be possible to find funding to add landscaping along the corridor once the project is completed.

Jesse Steadman said that E.T.&L. Corp is still looking for a site for equipment staging, though they may place infiltration basin equipment by Gardner Street at the Linear Retail site.

Jesse Steadman said that landscaping and aesthetics regarding the pedestrian refuge islands is being discussed, and that some of the medians are about 6 feet by 8 feet, and that the plans call for them to be loamed and seeded. Jesse Steadman said that the Superintendent of Streets and the general contractor feel that the grass would die, and it may be better to put woodchips over the loam and seed. Jesse Steadman said that after construction, it may be possible to add plantings, such as drought tolerant grasses.

Jesse Steadman said that a member of the Economic Development and Industrial Commission relayed conversations with Stow school parents regarding their needs and vision for Lower Village. Jesse Steadman said that it is helpful to hear from this demographic, and that their needs are in line with previous visioning for the neighborhood.

Jesse Steadman said that an unresolved aspect of the traffic improvement project is the relocation of signs at the White Pond Road traffic island.

Jesse Steadman said that during construction, he plans to attend weekly on-site meetings with the contractors and consultants. Jesse Steadman said that Kerry Maynard, the Project Manager at E.T.&L. Corp noted that asphalt plants are announcing closures for the season. Jesse Steadman said that in order to proceed, MassWorks will send a contract for the Town to sign and return.

Jesse Steadman said that he discussed erosion control plans with the contractors and consultants.

Jesse Steadman said that the project is now in the construction phase of invoicing, and that he is confirming charged hours for lump sum tasks. Mark Jones suggested drafting a placeholder article for warrant for Annual Town Meeting, in case additional funds would be required, which could be amended on the floor. Ernie Dodd noted that sidewalk funds can be used to complete elements of this project, and that developments that owe these funds could be contacted.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys