

TOWN OF STOW PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the October 14, 2008 Planning Board Meeting.

Present: Planning Board Members: Ernest E. Dodd, Laura Spear, Kathleen Willis and Steve Quinn

Associate Member: Bruce E. Fletcher (Voting Associate)
Lori Clark (Non-Voting Associate)

Planning Coordinator: Karen Kelleher

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC INPUT – None

CORRESPONDENCE

MAGIC Meeting

The MAGIC meeting will be held on Thursday, October 16, 2008, 7:00 p.m. in Concord. The focus of the meeting will be on the 2010 Census activities and the 2009 TIP (Transportation Improvement Plan) amendment.

Building Permits

Kathleen Willis noted surprise at the number of building permits issued in September and October.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS' UPDATES

Assabet River Rail Trail/Lundy Property

Laura Spear recused herself from this discussion, as she is an abutter to the property.

Ernie Dodd reported that he attended a Joint Boards Meeting to discuss the Lundy Feasibility Study, which included a financial analysis, appraisal and various development scenarios. The Appraised Value is \$505,000.00 for a 6-lot conventional plan, \$310,000.00 for a 5-lot (with a duplex on one lot) Planned Conservation Development Plan, and \$32,500.00 for a trail easement.

Karen Kelleher said she didn't think it sounded promising for a rail trail location due to wetlands issues and constraints on Sudbury Road. Ernie Dodd said it would be difficult, but there is no other feasible alternative. He thinks the Town should purchase the easement. Karen Kelleher noted that a possible land swap with Honey Pot Orchards would help avoid a good amount of wetlands. There was also discussion as to whether the Sudbury Road bridge could handle the traffic. It was noted that constructing the rail trail on Sudbury Road would significantly alter the character of the area. It was suggested that a rail trail through the Lundy property could connect to a pathway system on Sudbury Road with possible future plans to upgrade the Sudbury Road pathway to rail trail standards.

Karen Kelleher noted that, if the property is ever sold to a developer, the concept plans prepared for the feasibility study will be helpful to the Planning Board in steering the developer toward a preferred plan.

Laura Spear, speaking as an abutter, noted that the Lundy property is very wet and it is not likely that the lot just off of Sudbury Road is developable.

Land Use Task Force – Kathleen Willis reported that the Land Use Task Force Joint Boards Meeting on a proposed Chapter 61 policy was not very well attended. They did get good feedback from those in attendance. The Land Use Task Force is encouraging different departments, such as the housing committees to identify parcels they would be interested in. The Stow Recreation Commission/Working Group has information on some properties, but they seem hesitant to share the information. The Committee backed away from trying to rank the properties, as they are private property and such ranking might influence the price. They hope to present a final report to a 2009 Spring Town Meeting.

Banks Property, Walcott Street – Kathleen Willis said she heard a rumor that the Banks property sold.

Elementary School Building Committee – Steve Quinn reported that the Elementary School Building Committee advertised for an Owners Project Manager. Responses are due Friday, October 17, 2008. The Committee will narrow down the responses on October 27, 2008 and will start interviews shortly after. They received 12 or 13 responses the last time, but expect more this time because MSBA gave the go ahead to advertise.

Lighting – Kathleen Willis noted that the lighting at the Harvard elementary school is a good example for Stow's proposed school project. Steve Quinn noted an area in Falmouth that had full cut off fixtures; however, the fixtures seemed to be very close together.

Lower Village Committee – Laura Spear reported that the Lower Village Committee is looking at the sign bylaw. Steve Dungan volunteered to take the first look at the bylaw and will collect comments for discussion at the next meeting. Laura Spear volunteered to help.

COORDINATOR'S UPDATE

Karen Kelleher reported on ongoing activities in the Planning Department.

Cushing Property – Mrs. Cushing called the office to inquire as to whether Habitech has contacted the Board about development plans. Habitech is looking for an extension of their Purchase and Sales Agreement and one of the stipulations is that they have done some due diligence. It was noted that the property is no longer enrolled in Chapter 61B. Steve Quinn noted that the property has development constraints and questioned what value it would be for Stow. It was noted that the Town's proposal was for a mix of affordable housing, open space, and recreation.

Stow House of Pizza – Kostas, owner of the Stow House of Pizza Plaza, advised that he plans to install new lights at the Stow House of Pizza/Bank Plaza. Karen advised that he review the site plan approved by the Planning Board and consult with the Lighting Committee before purchasing light fixtures. Laura Spear questioned whether the permit has expired. Karen Kelleher said she thought the permit is still active because work has begun. The Board will review the permit at a future meeting.

Master Plan Consultant – The Selectmen will be discussing the request to fund a consultant for the Master Plan update this evening.

Meadowbrook Estates (Trefry Lane) - A complaint was received from a Trefry Lane resident about lack of process on the Emergency Access Way. They are concerned that the area is a safety hazard because it has not been cleaned up since trees were cut down. The Permit is now expired. Karen Kelleher recommended that the permit be extended so that conditions can be incorporated with a timeline for the area to be cleaned up. Because the permit is expired, a new permit and abutter notification is required. Town Counsel agrees.

ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Laura Spear reviewed the list of action Items:

- Evaluate need to update road slopes in rules and regulations.
 - Check with Sue to see if she has recommendations for reducing grades with certain turning radiuses – *Karen to check with Sue Sullivan*
 - Add support for super-elevations to the rules and regs? - *Karen to check with Sue Sullivan*
 - Get chart of AASHTO standards - *Laura*
- Arrange for a presentation of the soils of Stow for a working meeting - Karen to contact *Ingeborg Hegemann and Becky Mattison*
- Get MA Highway standards for T and Y intersections – *Bruce Fletcher to provide*
- Check with Mass Planners' list serve re: trust funds for road maintenance – *Karen to check with Sue to see if she has information*
- Change currently allowed use in Business District: remove salesroom for automobiles, farm implements, boats and similar equipment (leave Salesroom for bicycles) – *Karen to draft warrant article*
- Arrange public visual preference presentation; add use discussion to it: recruit MAPC (Mark Racicot?), find out how much the cost would be – *Master Plan Committee to hold public forum*
- AAN bylaw, S 5.4.9.B.ii.c: change to reference S 8.9.6.1 - *Karen to draft warrant article*
- Back burner: change in number of AAN affordable units required to be built
- Review proposed changes to Section 7.8 of Rules and Regs with Bruce (Board didn't understand why many of the changes were recommended) – *Discussion postponed for December 9, 2008 Working Meeting.*
- Section 7.9 of the Rules and Regs: add that Applicant cannot get credit for street sweeping

Continuing:

- Sign needs to be posted for the Hiley Meadows fire cistern – Letter sent to John Anderson. – *Karen to send second notice.*
- Sign needs to be posted for the Pulte AAN fire cistern – Letter sent to Pulte Homes. *Karen to send second notice.*
- Develop policy: tie fire cistern sign to occupancy permit – Spoke with Fire Chief agrees that Fire Department should not be responsible for the sign and he agrees with the policy to require sign prior to occupancy – *Update handbook?*
- Need official zoning map of Stow, convert to GIS – Propose as Zoning Bylaw amendment for May TM – *Karen to draft warrant article.*

SUBDIVISION RULES AND REGULATIONS

Members reviewed Section 7 of the Subdivision Rules and agreed to proposed amendments (attached).

UPCOMING WORKING MEETINGS:

October 28, 2008 – Subdivision Rules, Sections 8 through 11

November 24, 2008 – Subdivision Rules, Appendix

December 9, 2008 – Subdivision Rules, Sections 7.8.2.3 and 7.8.2.4

SIDEWALKS

Members discussed the need for a comprehensive sidewalk plan including funding sources. It was suggested that Stow should apply for a tourism grant as the Town of Sudbury did. It was also noted that the Town of Sudbury uses Community Preservation Act recreation funds for sidewalks. Karen Kelleher noted that the meeting with Sudbury Town Planner Jody Kablach was very informative. They have been successful in constructing sidewalks because they have a comprehensive plan in place. In addition to developer donations, they use Community Preservation Act funds and tourism grant funds. If a neighborhood wants sidewalks they must submit a petition with 75% of the residents on the street supporting the request. Sudbury does not purchase easements; however, in some instances, they do provide landscaping to a property owner providing an easement. Although Sudbury has a successful process in place, it is very time consuming.

Members discussed whether a sidewalk committee should be appointed or if there are resources to hire a consultant, possibly using Community Preservation Act administrative funds. It was also noted that the Town should be proactive in seeking grants.

It was agreed that the best solution would be to hire a consultant to prepare a sidewalk master plan. The Consultant's scope should include:

- Prioritize locations
- Implementing policy
- Work with property owners
- Maximize funding (Sidewalk fund, CPC Funds, Grants)

Karen Kelleher will work with the Town Administrator on a draft Request for Proposal.

Sidewalk Policy

Ernie Dodd moved to amend the sidewalk policy to accept donations to the sidewalk fund in the amount of \$35.00 per linear foot for frontage on an existing road and \$20.00 per linear foot for the subdivision road. The motion was seconded by Steve Quinn and carried by a unanimous vote of four members present (Laura Spear, Kathleen Willis, Steve Quinn and Ernie Dodd).

Bruce Fletcher noted that when he worked for the Highway Department, sidewalks were one of his priorities.

LOWER VILLAGE

Fence Specifications – The Lower Village Sub-Committee recommends updating the fence specifications by reducing the length of the Granite post to 6'. Members noted the Board already voted to adopt the recommended change.

Crosswalk – Laura Spear reviewed a revised plan for the crosswalk location across Pompositticut Street and pathway for Town land adjacent to Shoemaker property, as recommended by the Lower Village Sub-Committee. Members had mixed opinions as to the proposed change to locate the crosswalk at the intersection. It was agreed to seek input from the public safety departments.

Bruce Fletcher noted that MUTCD, Section 7C.03 says that all attempts should be to locate crosswalks at an intersection. He also believes that an engineering study is required. As the Highway Department does not have an engineer on staff, Bruce suggested the Board could seek input from its consulting engineer.

Karen Kelleher will look at the Traffic Study done by Faye Spoffard and Thorndike to see what they recommended.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Kelleher
Planning Coordinator