

TOWN OF STOW PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the July 18, 2006, Planning Board Meeting.

Present: Planning Board Members: Ernest E. Dodd, Malcolm S. FitzPatrick, Laura Spear, Kathleen Willis and Leonard Golder

Planning Coordinator: Karen Kelleher

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

LIGHTING – PROPOSED ZONING BYLAW

Russ Willis, Greg Troxel and Bill Chiarchiaro, of the Planning Board's Light Pollution Study Sub-Committee, met with the Board to discuss proposed amendments to the Zoning Bylaw.

Light Pollution Sub-Committee members noted they did not address internal store signs, although they feel strongly that internal store signs should be turned off at the close of business. They noted that neon lights are not a light pollution issue - just an aesthetic issue.

The proposed amendments are to put a cap on the amount of light per acre. Malcolm FitzPatrick is concerned about counting wetlands as part of the acreage. He is concerned that a large AAN development could have a considerable amount of lighting if they had a lot of wetlands on the parcel. Greg Troxel said he is not sure that issue is worth the complexity that would entail in drafting bylaw language.

Malcolm FitzPatrick asked if the Bylaw exempts municipal lighting. Greg Troxel said it is not intended to. Malcolm FitzPatrick said the Bylaw should specifically state that the Town is NOT exempt. He will provide the text. Karen Kelleher suggested it be incorporated into Section 9.9 of the Bylaw.

Greg Troxel noted that the Union Church will be putting in new lighting and he worked with representatives from the Church on the type of lighting. After his review, the proposed lighting was reduced by a factor of 5. They will install full cutoff fixtures with shields to prevent lighting other properties. He noted that the Stow Town Building is about right as to the amount of lighting; however, the fixtures are not recommended. Greg Troxel also noted that box floodlights prevent you from seeing clearly. Russ Willis noted that floodlighting is illegal compared to today's standards.

Len Golder asked if the proposed Bylaw will affect streetlights. The Sub-Committee responded yes, there are two types that Hudson Light and Power uses, one of which is unacceptable. Hudson Light and Power typically puts in whatever fixture they can get the best price on. Greg Troxel said that a bad example of a streetlight is the one at Whitney Road because the glass is below the fixture. He said the Light Pollution Sub-Committee will work with the Board of Selectmen and Hudson Light and Power to address streetlights. Greg Troxel said there are approximately 60 streetlights in Town and his guess is it would cost approximately \$10,000.00 to \$20,000.00 to bring the fixtures up to acceptable standard. The Light Pollution Study Sub-Committee will prepare an estimate.

Kathleen Willis noted that when the lights are turned off at the Office Building on Hudson Road, there is still plenty of light.

Malcolm FitzPatrick questioned the 35' height limit and asked if you would be able to see the light source if it is too high. Greg Troxel said you don't see much with a tall pole and recommended that Malcolm look at the lights at Bose and the Stow Shopping Center. He said most poles are about 25'

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to 30' high and he doesn't see a downside to a height limit of 35', which is consistent with the dimensional requirements of the Bylaw. Malcolm FitzPatrick said he would like to see the Bylaw based on good design. Greg Troxel said that 30' is not bad design and agreed to check to see the pole height of the poles at Bose and the Shopping Center.

Malcolm FitzPatrick said he feels there should be a cap on the lumens for lighting in the Residential District. He also asked if solar lights should be exempted, noting the walkway lights. Members of the Light Pollution Sub-Committee agreed that they should be exempt.

Ernie Dodd noted concern about lights at the end of people's driveways, which can be distracting.

Members also discussed seasonal lights and if they should be exempted entirely or if the length of time they are up should be limited.

Malcolm Fitzpatrick asked what type of lighting will be installed at the Villages at Stow. Greg Troxel said the Light Pollution Sub-Committee reviewed the plans, but the Zoning Board of Appeals did not incorporate their comments into the decision.

Greg Troxel will revise the draft bylaw and forward it to Karen Kelleher, who will create an annotated version, similar to what is typically printed in the warrant, and schedule a public hearing.

DRAINAGE

Members will discuss Malcolm Fitzpatrick's recommended zoning amendments relative to Drainage at the next working meeting. Karen Kelleher will distribute copies of Malcolm FitzPatrick's correspondence with Sue Sullivan for Board Members to review in advance of the meeting.

ARBOR GLEN

Karen Kelleher asked if the Board wants Sue Sullivan to perform construction inspections at the Arbor Glen AAN site. She advised that the Board does not typically inspect Special Permit Sites because they are not intended to be public ways; however, this is the first Active Adult Neighborhood Special Permit granted by the Board and there will be significant site work involved. Members agreed that given the extensive amount of cut and fill and drainage work at this site, it is important that the Board's Consulting Engineer conduct construction inspections, typical of inspections made for a subdivision.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Malcolm FitzPatrick asked that the Board limit public hearings to one meeting per month, as he will be spending much of his time in Vermont during the summer and would like to arrange his calendar so that he will be available for Public Hearings. Karen Kelleher noted that the Public Hearings are scheduled for two meetings next month (08/08 for the RidgeWood AAN and 08/22 for the Riverhill Estates Subdivision) and noted that they were specifically not scheduled on the same date because there would not be sufficient time to do them on the same night and there are legal deadlines that the Board needs to follow. It was agreed that future public hearings will be scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Kelleher
Planning Coordinator