

TOWN OF STOW PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the October 27, 2009 Planning Board Meeting.

Present: Planning Board Members: Kathleen Willis, Leonard Golder, Steve Quinn, Ernest Dodd and Lori Clark

Planning Coordinator: Karen Kelleher

Administrative Assistant: Kristen Domurad

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM

REVIEW OF CORRESPONDENCE AND MINUTES

MINUTES

October 27, 2009 – Ernie Dodd moved to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2009 meeting, as amended. The motion was seconded by Lori Clark and carried a vote of three in favor (Ernest Dodd, Kathleen Willis and Lori Clark).

The Board will review the minutes of the October 13th meeting at their next session.

PUBLIC INPUT

No public input.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS' UPDATE

Meeting with Bridgestone Associates

Ernie Dodd discussed the meeting that he, Laura Spear, Steve Quinn and Bill Roop (from Bridgestone Associates, Inc.) held the past week concerning off-site affordable units near the Ridgewood property currently owned by Don McPherson. Bill Roop explained that Don McPherson would like to sell the land sooner and there is a good possibility the current renter would be interested in buying it. Bill Roop also stated that he does have interest in obtaining the land to keep it as a residential lot because it is currently built in an industrial zone. and abuts the Ridgewood Development. He would also benefit from building the affordable homes on this lot because the Ridgewood special permit requires a cash payment in lieu of construction of 3 affordable units, build 3 units at middle income and build 4 affordable units for low-moderate income. This parcel could be an opportunity for building the 4 affordable units working with the Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (SMAHT).

[Lenny Golder arrived at 7:11]

Kathleen Willis notified the Board that she would be on vacation from November 17th-December 5th.

COORDINATORS REPORT

Karen Kelleher updated the Board on ongoing activities in the Planning Department:

Assabet Water Line

Karen asked the Board, per Bill Wrigley's request, if they were in support of the Lower Village Water negotiation. He wanted to make sure there was still support from town boards although it passed at town meeting.

Lori Clark expressed concern that the town would be extending the waterline to Lower Village in order to support Assabet Water from going bankrupt. She was apprehensive about their current financial status and costly DEP regulations. She was concerned that the town would be the greatest user thus putting itself at a risk. She also questioned the town about consulting other water companies. Overall Lori Clark was still against the vote to allow for Lower Village Water line negotiations from a business due diligence perspective

Lenny Golder agreed with Lori and felt that the consequence of bankruptcy would fall on the town.

Ernie Dodd noted that Assabet Water has improved the company since the new owner stepped in. He also stated that it would be highly unlikely that Assabet Water would go bankrupt because the DEP would not allow that to happen. He also mentioned that the town would not be the greatest user as they would only need water for the schools, town building, town hall and the library which use limited water compared to all of residential developments, and businesses in Lower Village. In response to Lori's comment on quotes from other water companies, he stated that the town did consult with other water companies as well as locations to install a well in the Lower Village area, but all were uninterested. He believes it is an important move for the town and vitality of its existing business.

Steve Quinn also supported the negotiations to take place for an extension of the Assabet waterline. Steve agreed with Ernie that the town would not be the largest user. He stated that DEP gives grants and loans for water companies to accommodate new regulations if it would create a financial hardship. Steve felt strongly that the water line would be essential for current and future economic development as well as benefit Harvard acres and any other resident who would want to join on.

Kathleen Willis expressed her support for the waterline stating that not many businesses in the Lower Village would survive without it and a desolate Lower Village would look unattractive and negatively effect property values.

Overall 2 Board members (Lori Clark and Lenny Golder) were not in favor of Bill Wrigley continuing negotiations with Assabet Water Co. to the town buildings and 3 members were in favor (Kathleen Willis, Ernie Dodd, Steve Quinn).

Energy Efficiency Grant

Karen Kelleher told Steve Quinn and Ellen Sturgis about an energy efficiency grant available, which the new elementary school building may be eligible

Open Meeting Law Workshop

Karen reminded the Board of the Open Meeting Law Workshop on 11/18/09 and encourage members to attend.

Derby Woods Development

Karen reported that Habitech opted to make a donation to the sidewalk fund in lieu of construction of a sidewalk onsite. The Board discussed adding an additional alternative for developers; construction of sidewalks at an off-site location specified by the Planning Board.

Upcoming Meetings

Karen also told the Board that Martha Monroe would be attending the next Planning Board meeting on November 10th to discuss the Trefrey Lane Emergency access way.

Detention/Retention Basins

Karen offered to compile a checklist for subdivisions that the Town has accepted in need of ongoing maintenance for detention/retention basins by the Highway Department.

Kathleen suggested Sue Sullivan/Carter evaluate appropriate clearing methods for each detention and retention basin.

Linear Reality

An email was sent to Linear Reality requesting to attend a Planning Board meeting to discuss signage in Lower Village with the Planning Board. Kathleen noted, Linear Reality had yet to place trashcans outside and should do so before winter.

APPOINTMENTS

Linda Cornell

Linda Cornell from the VNA Assisted Living Facility in Somerville was invited to speak about their experience working with the city and possible zoning bylaws that may inhibit or allow for such structures.

Linda described the need for affordable assisted living facilities due to the number of older residents who cannot afford assisted living facilities and are unnecessarily placed into nursing homes since funding was cut.

She explained how her VNA group was able to obtain funding from several outside sources to construct an affordable assisted living facility. They now have a second facility under construction on a Brownfield site. They were able to save on the cost of land through funding that was available for revitalization.

The Board asked for her recommendations on separate bylaws for assisted living and/or modifying zoning bylaws to allow for similar projects in Stow. Linda explained that Inclusionary housing is one avenue, but unless the town was looking to define Assisted Living, the restrictions are probably already in the bylaws. She also recommended the Board be cognizant that the level of affordability would decrease the amount of taxes that would be brought back to the town thus she recommended the Board not look at this type of site as a revenue source.

Ernie Dodd asked about expanding areas in town where they could be permitted, Linda explained that very few town restrict these structures to their business district, and that most are in a residential zone.

She explained that few deliveries are made, approximately 10 just food trucks a week for about 50-60 residents and once a week trash removal.

Linda explained that it could be difficult to find developers who would be willing to work on a completely affordable project because the financial return is minimal. She mentioned that the project could obtain more interest from developers if only 20% affordable units were set aside but this may not produce the level of affordability needed in the town.

Steve Quinn asked how many units would be required to makes this a viable project. He was concerned there would not be enough need to fill the amount of units required to make services affordable. He mentioned that a few people that provide these services in their own home as long as they are certified.

Kathleen Willis suggested the Board review the current zoning bylaws and then ask Linda if there are particular areas where the Board could put mechanisms in place that would allow affordable assisted living sites.

Linda Cornell offered to have the Board and others from the COA visit their new eco-affordable assisted living facility. She also suggested the Board visit the Federal Home Loan Bank online where a video is posted about their property at fhbb.com.

SMAHT (Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust)

SMAHT and their consultant Karen Sunnarborg attended to discuss the proposed zoning and planning reforms in the Housing Production Plan and aspects that are/are not appropriate and to agree upon 3-5 items that should be addressed.

Mike Kopczynski mentioned that the current Housing Production Plan was really just their suggestions, adding everything even if it was not appropriate for Stow.

Karen Sunnarborg explained that a main priority of this plan is to meet state requirements but still have Stow residents' needs and priorities met. She suggested focusing on zoning which can direct development and housing diversity one of the state's top priorities.

Laura Spear clarified that the state wants to see towns making efforts towards diversity in housing through policy and bylaws such as enhancing Inclusionary zoning.

The Board and SMAHT agreed to consider increasing density of lot sizes, researching special zoning districts for Gleasondale and Lower Village and exploring zoning ideas to allow for affordable assisted living.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

Master Plan Expenses

Members reviewed the letter from Michelle Ciccolo from the Ciccolo Group requesting more funding for their consulting work on the Master Plan. Karen Kelleher explained that their reasoning was, the job had turned into a larger project than the Ciccolo group anticipated and has

required much more time and money. The group requested \$6,710 more than the original contract of under \$10,000— although they were the lowest bid.

Michelle Ciccolo did not expect the amount of the work she had undertaken and wrote she would barely break even, not turning a profit on the project.

The Board discussed this request and the specifics of the past contract and creation of an extended contract. They decided they would support the Ciccolo Groups's request for additional funds not to exceed \$6,710 to considered the project completed when the funding runs out, thus having the Master Plan committee finish the document on their own, if necessary.

October 27, 2009 - Kathleen Willis moved that the Planning Board agree to pay The Ciccolo Group's request for additional funds, to be split equally between the selectman, provided the project is completed utilizing those funds and no funds are to be paid beyond that amount, if the selectmen do not approve the additional funds, the Planning Board will revisit the item. The motion was seconded by Ernie Dodd and carried a vote of five in favor (Kathleen Willis, Ernie Dodd, Steve Quinn, Lenny Golder and Lori Clark).

Political Banners and Signs

Calls were received from residents who were requesting the exclusion of political signs on public land. Karen explained the initial problem originated from the vote yes on schools banner. Under the Zoning Bylaws, a banner would be classified as a sign, which this particular one would have been too large in accordance to the Zoning Bylaws.

Lenny Golder suggested confining the issue specifically to the one area of town, seeing as the three banners over route 117 would not always allow for equal opportunity, as there may be more than 3 positions. Karen suggested it be more appropriate to have the Selectman handle the issue within their policy, rather than have the Planning Board create a bylaw.

The Board asked Karen to suggest this policy change to the Selectman from a political content prospective while the Planning Board reviews their sign portion of the bylaw.

LUPA CPAII

The Board decided to wait until Senator Eldridge's recovery to schedule a meeting with Kate Hogan and discuss the LUPA and CPAII legislation at one meeting.

Master Plan Section 4

The Board agreed to complete and send their section 4 comments to Karen by November 3, 2009 for compilation and review at the November 10th meeting. Chapter 7 comments will be discussed at the November 17th meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Meeting Adjourned at 10:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Domurad
Administrative Assistant