

TOWN OF STOW PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the November 9, 2010 Planning Board Meeting.

Present: Planning Board Members: Steve Quinn, Ernest Dodd and Lori Clark

Associate Member: Brian Martinson, Malcolm Fitzpatrick

Planning Coordinator: Karen Kelleher

Administrative Assistant: Kristen Domurad

The meeting was called to order at 7 P.M.

REVIEW OF CORRESPONDENCE AND MINUTES

Minutes

No minutes were reviewed.

Public Input

No public input at this time.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS' UPDATE

Pedestrian Walkway Planning Sub-Committee (PWP)

Lori Clark reported on the PWP committee's latest meeting. She said that letters were sent out to property owners abutting the proposed walkways for Phase I. The committee plans on going door to door this weekend to talk with these homeowners individually. The committee also plans on holding a special meeting for abutting property owners to discuss the details of the plan. Lori said the PWP committee will be holding a public forum on November 17th at 7 P.M. which will include a discussion on current Phase I planning and an interactive activity to explore criteria for selecting priority walkways for Phase II.

Elementary School Building Committee (ESBC)

Steve Quinn reported on the ESBC's latest meeting. He stated that the project is moving along successfully and that the steel frame should be erected sometime in the middle of November.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Ernie Dodd stated that the continued public hearing with Star Tower/T-Mobile for the proposed cell tower on the Wedgewood Pines Country Club property would be held on Monday, November 15th.

Lower Village Committee

Karen Kelleher reported that the Lower Village Committee would be meeting on Wednesday November 10th. They are fine-tuning the streetscape standards including the placement of street trees. The Lower Village Committee is also working on the outline for their final report.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Karen Kelleher reported on the on going activities in the Planning Department.

Boxboro Road Hammerhead Lot

Karen explained that a hammerhead lot located on Boxboro Road was conveyed to a neighbor who has no plans to develop the property at this time but wishes to make changes to the common drive. The plan shows a common driveway to access both lots, which was required by the Planning Board due to concern about sight lines. The common drive will remain, however access to lot 2 will not cross over lot 3. Karen told them there was no need to revise the plan as long as single access exists – there was no requirement for lot 2's drive to cross over lot 3. Planning Board members agreed.

Malcolm Fitzpatrick asked if there was a submission requirement for a common drive maintenance easement.

Karen informed him that this information was already submitted.

Stow Shopping Center

Karen reported on her conversation with Gordon Whitman. He notified her that Citizens Bank had planted a tree to replace the one that was taken out. Gordon also told her that Roger Sturgis is working on plantings in front of Citizens Bank. Linear Retail is still working on the type and location of the planters near the trash bins. Karen told him Board members liked the hanging planters near the Liquor Store, but Gordon said they would be too labor intensive.

Steve Quinn said he thought the planters were supposed to be located at the end of each line of parking.

Karen offered to check the plans.

Karen Kelleher noted that Craig Martin the Building Commissioner and Zoning Enforcement Officer, told her the owners of the Red Ginger wanted to light their sign internally. Craig told them it was not allowed under the bylaws. Craig is not sure if they plan on seeking a variance through the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Craig reported that the owners of the Red Ginger just pulled a permit for their ventilation equipment so there was still a good amount of work to complete before opening.

Conferences/ Workshops

Roundabouts Northampton

Karen reported on the Roundabout workshop held in Northampton, which she attended with Linda Hathaway.

She said they observed the new roundabout at the intersection of Route 9, Bridge Road and vehicular access to Look Park. At this conference they learned the following:

- The site has lots of pedestrian traffic (school just down the street; Look Park; two rail trails)
- They observed vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic during peak traffic hours. They never saw more than 3 cars backed up for a very short period of time. Truck traffic could navigate with ease.
- Before installation – Route 9 traffic was backed up bumper-to-bumper – waiting through multiple cycles of lights.
- The roundabout very aesthetically pleasing.

- The speaker noted positive stats in terms of reduction in traffic incidents and injuries.
- Although the traffic speeds are slower (15mph) Stats on a roundabout in NY indicated traffic moving through a signalized intersection took 6+ minutes and was reduced to less than 2 minutes with the roundabout.

Karen will be receiving photos and literature from Rhode Island and Northampton to share with the board.

Web Conference

Karen and Kristen participated in a webinar on Blending Conservation Design and New Urbanism with Randall Arent. Randall Arent supports the idea of the Town mapping out a greenbelt so developers will be on notice that they should draw their plan based upon the greenway plan.

Other suggestions:

- Include the greenway plan in the Subdivision Rules
Plan should include:
 - Primary greenway (emerald necklace)
 - Secondary greenway (slopes/wetlands/woodlands)
- Require a site walk with the Board or representative BEFORE the Plan is drawn so that members are familiar with existing conditions
- Require site analysis Map first
- Require development consistent with existing contour of the land – Placing homes on high ground and the green space on low ground, minimizing drainage intersections.
- Examples he showed had greens parallel to the street and/or behind the houses.
- Recommends at least 25% Open Space with density of 3-4 units per acre and 50% Open space with low-density development.
- Also incorporate pocket parks in larger developments

RidgeWood Estates – Permit Extension Act

Karen reported that Jon Witten confirmed that the Permit Extension Act allows extension of the RidgeWood AAN Decision an additional two years beyond the Board extension to 6-25-2011. The extension would be to 6-25-2013.

APPOINTMENTS

ANR PLAN-HYDE CELL TOWER

Karen reported on a conversation she had with Town Counsel who advised her that it is permissible to endorse an ANR plan creating a parcel without frontage, provide that there is a note on the Plan indicating it is not a buildable lot. The Hyde ANR is different than the Collings plan, in that:

- The Collings plan involved land that was, in fact part of a subdivision that was approved and is currently under appeal. Therefore, it should have been a modification to the subdivision.
- The Collings plan did not include a note indicating that it is not a buildable lot and could not have included that note because there is currently a building on the lot. The only way he could modify the lot is if the building was in existence prior to adoption of the Subdivision Control Lot.

Karen stated that Town Counsel believed they should consider modifying the judgment before endorsing the ANR plan, but that it would be the Boards discretion to do so.

Donald Hyde's Attorney, Adam Costa explained that they revised the plans. They are proposing to create lot 2A and B. They added a note, which states the ANR lot is not to be built upon.

He stated that Dotty Wilbur, Town of Stow Assessor informed him that separating the commercial use to its own parcel would be beneficial to the Town as it would help with tax classification by creating a clear residential lot and commercial lot.

Attorney Adam Costa stated that the judgment was not specific as to indicating what would trigger a modification to the judgment. Adam Costa stated that he and Attorney Bobrowski read that the intent of the language in the judgment was to allow for small changes like a boundary change without having to go back to court. They do not think the judgment requires an amendment.

Steve Quinn questioned if a cell tower was considered a structure and if it would meet all required setbacks.

Attorney Costa stated that the plan before the Board shows the cell tower meeting all setback requirements.

The Board reviewed the definition of a structure and building in the Stow bylaws and noted that Section 4.3 states that building a structure is subject to the requirements of the table of dimensional requirements. (Sections 4.3.26 and 4.3.2.7 refer to Buildings and Structures).

Karen stated that the judgment refers to the 4-lot subdivision that was filed, but never acted upon. She stated that the judgment mentions this, so the judge did understand the land would be built out, but she was unsure if this was specific to that particular plan.

Ernie Dodd noted that one-day cell towers may no longer be used for whatever reason and that creating this lot could be a burden for Mr. Hyde because the lot would be unbuildable and of little value.

Attorney Costa stated that an amendment to the judgment could take a few weeks to a couple of years and that there is no specific paragraph stating this can be done but also nothing saying it cannot be done without an amendment.

Ernie Dodd suggested carving out two hammerhead lots including the cell tower in one.

Mr. Hyde explained that they wished to separate the cell tower to make the other lots more marketable. He said he was no longer interested in owning any of the properties or developing them.

Lori Clark stated she understood what Town Counsel was advising them on, but did not see anything in the judgment that would call into question a change in the lot dimensions.

Board members and Karen Kelleher reviewed the revised plan.

Ernie Dodd moved to approve the ANR Plan located off Wheeler Road Titled Plan of Land in Stow 11/9/2010, Prepared by Foresite Engineering for Douglas Hyde as presented and to authorize Karen Kelleher to endorse the plan. The motion was seconded by Lori Clark and carried a vote of three in favor (Ernie Dodd, Lori Clark and Steve Quinn).

PUBLIC INPUT

Associate Member Malcolm Fitzpatrick stated that he would like the Planning Board to consider initiating a discussion on locations for a new fire station
Steve Quinn noted the Elementary School building project made space available in their plans for the fire station to expand in the rear of the building.

Ernie Dodd stated a fire station could be located where the old town barn is.
Lori noted that it is better the have the fire station located in the center of town for proximity reasons.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

Arbor Glen Trail Easement

Karen Kelleher stated that she is waiting on Town Counsel to review easement documents submitted by the Arbor Glen Condo Association's attorney.

Review of RFP Submissions for Lower Village Existing Conditions Plan

Karen Kelleher stated that she spoke with Town Counsel who informed her that Chapter 30B, the requirement for RFP requests, does not apply to this project.

The Planning Board reviewed the submissions from Coler and Colentonio and from Places Associates. They made the following comments:

Coler and Colentonio

- Submission came in lower all together and individually for survey and transportation engineering.
- They have experience doing the same type of project for other towns, such as Norfolk, MA.
- They have experience in helping to identify financial sources to supplement the Town's money.
- "In house" services
- They have done work in Stow (Stow recreation facility)

Places Associates

- Price was higher all together and individually for survey and transportation engineering.
- They have experience and a great track record working in Stow
- Some services are not in house
- No mention of providing help in identifying financial sources

Karen Kelleher noted that she spoke with the Town Administrator, Bill Wrigley who suggested the Planning Board, Selectmen and Highway Department split the cost three ways. Karen also noted that Mike Clayton, Highway Superintended is very invested in this project and had met

with her and Coler and Colentionio to discuss their services in helping applying for a Safety Lieu grant.

Karen offered to get in touch with Bill Wrigley and Mike again to verify the amount each is able to provide.

Malcolm Fitzpatrick asked what the intent of the RFP study was. He was concerned that the drainage from the south side of Great Road, which drains into pond behind the Stow Shopping Plaza, would not be included in this study.

Lori Clark explained that the purpose of the study is for an initial existing conditions plan for issues with traffic flow and management and drainage.

Karen Kelleher noted the plan's intent is also to identify what is possible within the right of way. Steve Quinn noted that this is just the first of many steps and that they will take his concerns into consideration as the plans and research evolve.

Ernie Dodd also reminded him that the Board has limited funds.

Karen suggested the Board vote on the proposal contingent on obtaining funding sources. She said she should hear back from the Selectmen two weeks.

Ernie Dodd moved to accept the proposal from Coler and Colentionio for the sum of \$25,000 contingent upon available funding from the Board of Selectmen and Highway Department and successful review of the terms and conditions by the Town Administrator. The motion was seconded by Lori Clark and carried by a unanimous vote of three in favor (Ernie Dodd, Lori Clark and Steve Quinn).

Lower Village Planning Effort

The Planning Board reviewed their comments for each key element that focuses on the high-level goals for Lower Village they made the following statements for each key element:

The vision of a small New England town with tree lined street and small shops along a sidewalk and limited on-street parking. The area along Great Road should encourage the presence of people shopping and eating. It should be an inviting area.

High-Level Goals

- **Safety**
- **Beautification**
- **Encourage businesses we want**
- **Aesthetics**
 - Old New England town building styles (barn, historic house style)

Key Elements

- **Placement of buildings**
 - Placement of buildings close to the street so that the buildings define the look and feel of the village area and NOT the parking lots. Stagger facades and encourage pseudo random distribution.
- **Overall height of structures**
 - Mixture of one and two-story structures and maintain a 35' height restriction.
- **Building design (building style, roof styles, consistency of design with surroundings and surrounding structures)**
 - Building design consistent with a New England village look and compatibility with surrounding buildings. Design standards should encourage house-like structures with dormers and gables rather than "big box" look. Materials should be clapboard, brick or stone (or made to look like) siding, peaked or pitched roofs (or made to appear as such from the front),
 - Prohibit contemporary glass and steel structures.
- **Degree of apparent mix and types of uses**
 - Allow but not mandate residential uses provided it is secondary and incidental to the main business use.
 - Create pedestrian friendly spaces and uses that are not vehicular-driven.
- **Relationship among uses: integration and linkages vs. separation and buffering**
 - Encourage pedestrian access to, from and throughout the village.
 - Create "greenway" connections, with pocket parks dispersed throughout the village to create a community feel.
- **Appropriateness of particular uses for specific areas**
 - Create a comprehensive list of existing and proposed uses and determine which uses are most appropriate for Lower Village.
- **Streetscape, Landscaping and Community Areas**
 - Implement the Lower Village streetscape (granite post & split rail fencing, sidewalks and street trees).
 - Adopt a cohesive desired landscape plan, using drought tolerant and easy maintenance plants, incorporating pedestrian walkways and community gathering areas.
 - Bury utilities.
 - Create an entrance at either end of the Village incorporating a gateway sign and landscaping.
- **Traffic patterns**
 - Create a comprehensive desired state for traffic patterns including roadways, bicycle and walkways, parking lots, curb cuts and inter-lot connections.
- **Lighting**
 - Establish a standard for light fixtures to create a village theme.

- **Signage**
-Establish a standard for signage to create a village theme.
- **Parking placement**
-Encourage parking in the rear of buildings and consider the potential for on-street parking.

Once the Planning Board solidifies their key concepts they plan to hold a joint boards meeting, then a meeting with the property owners, followed by a meeting with the general public.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ernie Dodd moved to enter into executive session for purposes of discussing the ongoing litigation concerning the Meadowbrook Estates (Trefry Lane Subdivision) emergency access easement and The Riverhill Estates Subdivision and to adjourn at the conclusion. The motion was seconded by Lori Clark and was carried by a unanimous roll call vote (Ernie Dodd, Lori Clark, Steve Quinn).

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Domurad
Administrative Assistant

