

TOWN OF STOW PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the August 2, 2011 Planning Board Meeting.

Present: Planning Board Members: Leonard Golder, Ernie Dodd, Lori Clark, and Kathleen Willis
Planning Coordinator: Karen Kelleher
Administrative Assistant: Kristen Domurad

Absent: Planning Board Member: Steve Quinn
Associate Member: Brian Martinson

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

MINUTES

Ernie Dodd moved to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2011 Planning Board meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Kathleen Willis and carried a vote of three in favor (Ernie Dodd, Kathleen Willis, and Lori Clark).

CORRESPONDENCE

Sudbury Road Sidewalk Guardrail Estimates

Members reviewed quotes for guardrails at the Sudbury Road sidewalk. Lori Clark stated that she felt the cost of the guardrails were very expensive.

Ernie Dodd stated that only 75ft. of guardrail is really needed and that the rest Mike proposed is not necessary. Karen stated that she does not know exactly where he will be placing it, but there are two sections where there is a drop off, one section on the Pine Point Road end and one at the Barton Road end.

Kathleen Willis stated that the problem is the Planning Board's lack of funding.

Ernie Dodd stated that \$9,000 is too much and stated that James Fenton owes sidewalk to the Town still and maybe this could be used for it.

It was noted that this item was not on the agenda to vote on tonight.

Kathleen stated that if the Planning Board had the money they could help but they should really be using the sidewalk funds for projects they have already agreed upon such as the Route 117 Phase I walkway.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS' UPDATES

C.W. Fuels

Ernie Dodd stated that he reviewed the CW Fuels Special Permit Decision and visited the site. He found that they are meeting all of their requirements of the Planning Board's decision. He noted that the Conservation Commission is having some compliance issues with the site.

Pompositticut Use Study Group/Randall Library

Lori Clark reported that the Library would no longer be seeking to move to Pompositticut School.

Lori stated that the Pompositticut Use Study Committee would be asking for funds at town meeting to do a study

[Lenny Golder arrived at this point in the meeting.]

Comprehensive Land Use Reform and Partnership Act (CLURPA)

Ernie Dodd asked if any other members had additional comments to the draft changes to CLURPA from Jeff Lacy. Kathleen Willis stated she reviewed his comments and did not have anything to add. Karen Kelleher stated that Rep. Hogan is not available to meet on August 16, 2011.

Karen responded and stated the Board was very much interested in meeting with her and was willing to meet during the day as well.

Arbor Glen

Ernie Dodd reported that he drove through Arbor Glen yesterday and noticed the paving was very rough and not done very well. He said it looked like it's falling apart and torn up.

Karen will ask Sue to look into this.

Kathleen reminded the Board that there would be a site walk to discuss landscaping on August 18, 2011 at 9AM.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

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

Wireless Service Facilities

Karen reported that Town Counsel and Town Administrator inquired as to whether the Planning Board would be willing to entertain a warrant article to expand the Wireless Overlay District – taking a look at the entire town. Karen told him that the Board might be willing to do so, if they had some technical assistance, but does not have a budget to do so. Bill said he might be able to find the funds. Karen stated that she contacted David Maxon to get an idea as to what would be involved in terms of scope and cost.

The process David recommended is as follows:

- 1- Hold a public meeting to solicit input from residents on what areas of town lacks service.
- 2- Meet with the Planning Board to discuss input from the public meeting and identify specific sites to fill in the coverage gaps.
- 3- Hold a follow up public meeting for input on design criteria.
- 4- Meeting with the Planning Board to draft bylaw revisions for Town Meeting. Revisions could be in the form of simply adding sites to the existing overlay district with the same criteria, or have graduated criteria for design taking site conditions into consideration.
- 5- Present to Town Meeting for adoption.

It was noted that they would want more than just public input.

The cost would be \$5,000 - \$10,000.

Karen reported that there is about \$5,000 in the Planning Board's engineering consulting account for the rest of the fiscal year. She suggested the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen come up with funds to support this study.

Ernie Dodd asked if they could look into requiring the small antennas that are placed on telephone poles.

Karen noted that at the MAPD meeting this topic was discussed and the use of small antennas work better in densely populated areas where there is a high level of users.

Kristen Domurad noted that it is not financially feasible for companies to use this in areas such as Stow.

Planning Board members did not feel comfortable expending money from their consulting engineer account for a wireless overlay district study but stated that they would be willing to ask for money at Town meeting to conduct this study.

Karen noted that the Town Administrator was hoping to have a proposed zoning district revision ready for the November Town Meeting. She will ask him if the Selectmen would be willing to fund the study.

PUBLIC INPUT

Linda Hathaway requested to speak on the Pedestrian Walkway Phase I proposal.

Lori Clark stated that they would allow her to speak about this during their discussion.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

Linear Retail Pylon Sign

Gordon Whitman of Linear Retail and Don Reed of Barlo Sign were present to discuss the pylon signs at the Stow Shopping Center.

Don Reed explained the new design they brought with them today. He showed the Board that they moved the poles inside the footprint of the sign making it visually smaller. He stated that it now has the same square footage of the existing pylon sign. Don noted they changed the color of the background lettering to cream instead of off-white. He said they maintained the letter height to allow motorists to read the information at a reasonable distance.

Lori Clark asked how important it was for Linear Retail to have extra space underneath the sign. Don Reed suggested the sign could be lowered so that the beginning of the sign it is no higher than 3 feet off the ground to allow for snow build up. (The sign could be lowered by 1' 8")

Gordon Whitman stated that by lowering the sign by the requested 1' 8" it would be lower than the existing sign.

Lenny Golder stated that they want to avoid future businesses coming in for even larger signs like Route 20. He noted that it becomes visually over stimulating and difficult to notice specific signs because of their size.

Gordon stated that Linear Retail's signs are different because they have such a large shopping plaza and it is significantly set back. They need larger signs out front because people can't see the signs on the storefronts.

Kathleen Willis stated that she can clearly read the storefront signs and that they are visible from the road.

Gordon stated that the ones on the east most side are not visible because of the angle of the building.

Ernie Dodd asked if they could change the background color of the H&R Block sign from black to the cream color.

Kathleen also noted that the Papa Gino's background color is also very dark.

Ernie Dodd asked if they would be willing to use the same color for all logos.

Gordon Whitman said that he would not be able to do this because they need effective advertisement and the colors are one way to attract people to their businesses. He stated that the purpose is to keep the businesses alive. Businesses are going out and he needs a sign to keep them alive.

Kathleen Willis stated that Lori came across some research from Mass Highway, which stated that on a major rural road 6 inch lettering is the minimum size which is readable for cars passing at 40 miles an hour. She noted that the larger size lettering that Linear shows could be decreased bringing the size of the sign down, specifically on the west pylon sign.

Gordon stated that he had to come to an agreement with Shaw's to allow their sign lettering to be a certain size.

Kathleen asked if the west pylon sign would be moved back as well.

Gordon confirmed that the sign depicted in the plan is where it will be moved back to, and that it would be consistent with the east pylon sign.

Lori Clark invited the Light Pollution Study Sub-Committee to share their comments with Linear Retail.

Russ Willis and Greg Troxel of the Light Pollution Study Sub-Committee were present.

Greg stated that the Board should consider Linear Retail's existing lighting violations before any new lighting is proposed to the site. He noted that several spot light fixtures are still in the back of the building, the lighting of the H&R Block sign is in violation and the lighting of the existing sign is in violation of the bylaw. He also noted several stores keep their lights on pass business hours.

Greg asked if they had data for the LED lights shown on the plan.

Don stated that they will be white LED lights and no bulbs would be visible. He offered to provide the lumen output levels for these fixtures.

Greg stated that the bylaw requires a lighting plan if the lighting exceed 100,000 lumens. Ernie Dodd noted that the Planning Board waived the requirement for a lighting plan in their special permit, as the majority of the work to be completed was for facade improvements and landscaping. He said the Board decided that it was a significant expense and unnecessary for the amount of lighting they were adding.

Kathleen stated that, this was the Board decision then, but now that they are asking for additional lighting, the Board may now want to ask for a plan.

Board members also noted that there are repeated requests for compliance with the requirements to turn lights off at the close of business and to change out the security lights in back of the building are being ignored. Gordon noted that he has told his tenants several times to turn their lights off at the close of business and that he supports the Town issuing fines if they don't.

Greg Troxel stated that he was unaware that the Board did not require the photometric plan, and that the proposed white LED lighting complies with the bylaws as long as they are shining down.

Gregg Troxel noted that the Light Pollution Study Committee's intent was to make sure a discussion about lighting took place and advise that the Board is required to impose mitigation to abutters as the intent of the bylaw is to not extend lighting beyond the property. He stated that overall without knowing the data from the LED output, he thought the lighting output levels were much more than necessary but not unreasonable.

He noted that Linear Retail needs to keep in mind they are lighting an area that is more rural and should be in keeping with that. Greg stated that it seems the lighting is 3x more than appropriate for our area.

Don showed Greg the lighting fixtures. Greg stated that they met the definition of full cut off as long as they are angled correctly.

Don stated that they have the option of adjusting the level of lighting that comes out of the fixture by using a different wattage bulb.

Board members asked who would control the lights on the signs. Gordon stated that Linear Retail would control them by a timer.

Lori Clark noted that there was conversation about making the sign out of wood or considering other materials instead of metal.

Don stated that they use a specific sign paint, which is a semi gloss and intended to look like a satin finish, which gives the signs a softer look. He noted that a lot of signs people think are wood are actually a different material. He noted that wood deteriorates and the signs need to be easily cleaned and maintained.

Lori Clark reiterated what the Board and Gordon Whitman agreed upon;

- Both signs would be lowered by 1' 8" (no more than three feet off the ground).

- The background colors of H&R Block and PapaGino's will be lightened to be more in keeping with the other tenants. A summary of the lumen output for the light fixtures, including LED lights will be provided.
- Linear Retail will commit to adjust the lighting level (change out bulbs and/or adjust angle of fixtures) in the field based on light committee's input.
- Linear Retail will commit to put the sign lighting on a timer so that lights go off after hours.

Once the Board receives this information they will make a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Board members noted that they did not think the second pylon sign and lettering on the sign (west sign) needed to be as large as the east pylon sign, but are willing to compromise.

Gordon stated that he would provide the Board with a new sign composition showing the changes and a lighting and provide this Greg Troxel of the Light Pollution Study Sub-Committee.

Kathleen stated that the landscaping at the Linear Retail Plaza was very nice and they were doing a great job. She noted that some areas do not have irrigation and they should think about fixing this.

Award Bid for Great Road Pedestrian Walkway

Pedestrian Walkway Planning Committee Members Kristina Wile, Jim Salvie and Martha Monroe were present for this discussion.

Lori Clark presented a Power Point Slide (available on file in the Planning Department). The Pedestrian Walkway Planning Sub-Committee (PWP) recommended awarding Segments 3 and 4 to Century Paving and a portion of Segment 1 (from the end of Segment 3 to stop at the beginning of Applefield Farm driveway). Only a portion of Segment 1 can be awarded due to financial constraints.

Lori stated that in regards to the letter about on-street parking from Bruce Fletcher, Highway Engineer, the PWP Sub-Committee felt it was not in their purview to be considering parking scenarios, nor should they be using sidewalk funds for Town parking. She asked the Board to look at those issues separately from what the PWP Sub-Committee was proposing.

Kristina Wile stated that they would like to ask the contractor to build from the most western part first and then wait for Segment 4 to accommodate any changes that might come about from parking decisions made by the Highway Department or Selectmen.

Jim Salvie stated that they were not sure how people felt about this idea about adding parking along both sides of Great Road between Town Building and Town Hall, but they would like to have the Highway Department and Board of Selectmen discuss it with the Planning Board and, if determined appropriate, go for extra money at Town Meeting.

Karen stated that when she spoke with Bruce Fletcher, it seemed he wanted to make sure everyone was on board and that he needed funds for engineering plans to see if the markings on the ground were actually feasible.

Jim Salvie said that the warrant closes on September 30, 2011.

Karen noted that Sergeant Lima sent a letter in support for Bruce Fletcher's parking plan. She also stated that the owner of Russell's contacted the Town and was concerned about the pavement markings for parking which may cause a conflict with traffic coming in and out of his business and the residential home next door as site lines are poor.

Ernie Dodd stated the PWP Sub-Committee should just build the walkway plans as shown.

Martha stated that the Town should make a decision on Segment 4 so Century Paving is not put on hold. She suggested including a contingency for Alternative B.

Karen noted that the most recent memo from Bruce Fletcher offers another alternative (leave existing curbing and grass area and install granite curbing against the sidewalk).

Lori stated there was a cost of doing them separately; she noted that Mike indicated he might have some Highway funds to help with the project.

Lori Clark invited Linda Hathaway to share her public comment at this time.

Linda Hathaway stated that she was dismayed to hear the Planning Board still plans to construct a walkway across the street at Town Hall when there is an alternative-walking route on Crescent Street, which is much safer. She also noted that the engineer who designed the plans stated that the crosswalk would be safer if it were located further up the street towards the intersection for better site lines. Linda was concerned that the sub-committee was insisting the crosswalk be kept where it was and are not listening to their engineer.

Linda stated that she thought it was a poor reason to place the walkway in this area purely for a showcase.

Ernie Dodd stated that the Planning Board said to just leave the crosswalk where it is currently located.

Linda stated this was a bad idea because the engineer stated that it is currently in a poor location and accidents have already happened there.

Ernie Dodd stated that he doesn't think they should move it.

Kristina Wile stated that the PWP did not think they should move the crosswalk because people are more likely to just walk in a straight line from the existing stone walkway from Town Building.

Linda stated that if the stone walkway were angled toward a crosswalk in the location specified by the engineer, people would walk it.

In addition Linda stated that if there were parking on either side of the existing crosswalk, site lines would be even worse.

Lenny Golder stated that he agreed, and voted before about not having the walkway in this location. He stated that they should finish Segment 1 instead of doing Segment 4.

Kristina Wile stated that she sees people walking on Great Road all the time and that the vertical granite curbing will increase the safety.

Jim Salvie also stated that he sees people walking on Great Road in this location and he does so himself.

Lenny Golder stated that he thinks they should encourage people to walk in a safer location and they should address areas where there are no alternative routes.

Lori Clark stated that you can encourage people to walk around but you cannot make them.

Kristina stated that constructing walkways on each side of Great Road is part of the Minute Man Advisory Group on Inter-local Coordination's (MAGIC) plan.

Linda stated that the town only has a small amount of funds and should use the money where there are no alternative routes.

Kristina stated that in the surveys people were stressing connectivity and were discouraging placing walkways in small areas where there were no connections.

Linda asked if the sub-committee was working on a maintenance plan and thought they should be doing this before anything else.

Kristina stated that they are working on recommendations for a maintenance plan; she noted that they are not allowed to spend any walkway funds on maintenance of existing walkways.

Jim Salive stated that maintenance of the walkways is ultimately the Selectmen's job. He stated that the Highway Department would continue to maintain them when they can and in the meantime he is researching information to bring to the sub-committee. He noted that ultimately he sees a warrant article coming up at Town Meeting in to be included in the consent calendar. Jim stated that he would hate to see questions about this discouraging real walkways and community assets that connect assets.

Jim stated that he thought the key objections toward Segment 4 were diminished as the new parking lot is being constructed.

Lenny Golder asked what was going to be done about snow on sidewalks.

Lori Clark stated that there is no plan for this yet. The sub-committee will be making recommendations to the Planning Board, and there would ultimately be a discussion with the Board of Selectmen.

Ernie Dodd moved to award Segment 3, Segment 4 and a portion of Segment 1 of the Great Road Pedestrian Walkway Plan to Century Paving. The motion was seconded by Kathleen Willis.

Lenny Golder proposed an amendment to the motion, to award all of Segment 1 and Segment 3 only Segment 4 only if it has an alternative route. The amendment did not carry.

Ernie Dodd moved to award Segment 3, Segment 4 and a portion of Segment 1 of the Great Road Pedestrian Walkway Plan to Century Paving. The motion was seconded by Kathleen Willis. Lenny Golder stated that he would rather do all of Section 1 and leave out Section 4, but does not want to hold up the project. The motion carried by a unanimous vote of five members present(Ernie Dodd, Kathleen Willis, Lenny Golder and Lori Clark).

Highgrove Estates Hammerhead Lot

The Planning Board will review the Open Space Restriction and Common Driveway Easement Document at their next meeting.

Chapter 61 Land Evaluation Report

Karen Kelleher explained that Vin Antil requested the Board review the sample of data they are gathering and send comments to their committee.

The Board will review the sample data at their next meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ernie Dodd motioned to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing on going litigation concerning Star Tower/T-Mobile and to adjourn at the conclusion. The motion was seconded by Kathleen Willis and carried by a unanimous roll call vote (Kathleen Willis, Lenny Golder, Lori Clark and Ernie Dodd).

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Domurad
Administrative Assistant