

TOWN OF STOW PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the February 7, 2012 Planning Board Meeting.

Present: Planning Board Members: Steve Quinn, Lori Clark, and Lenny Golder
Voting Associate Member: Brian Martinson
Planning Coordinator: Karen Kelleher
Administrative Assistant: Kristen Domurad-Guichard

Called to order at 7PM.

REVIEW OF CORRESPONDENCE and MINUTES

Minutes

Steve Quinn moved to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2012 Planning Board meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Lenny Golder and carried a vote of three in favor (Steve Quinn, Lori Clark and Lenny Golder).

Steve Quinn moved to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2012 Planning Board meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Lenny Golder and carried a vote of three in favor (Steve Quinn, Lori Clark and Lenny Golder).

Correspondence

Lower Village Traffic Reports

Brian Martinson asked about the Lower Village Traffic Reports.

Karen stated that these were copies of the incident reports from the past five years. She noted that John Morgan of Coler and Colantonio had found more reports on the Mass DOT website that he would share with them tonight.

PUBLIC INPUT

No public input at this time.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS' UPDATES

Elementary School Building Committee (ESBC)

Steve Quinn stated that he was out of town for the last ESBC meeting, which was held last Wednesday. He said the goal of the meeting was to gain clarity on the project's schedule. The contractor ensured the committee they would be finishing on time.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) Public Hearing 218 Boxboro Road

Lori Clark reported on the ZBA Public Hearing she attended last night. She reported that a few abutters spoke with concern about a mcmansion being constructed on the lot if it were grandfathered for the residential use. Others were concerned about an industrial use on the lot as it has been used as residential for a long time.

Lori stated that the ZBA closed the public hearing but did not render a decision. She noted that one member was interested in conducting a site walk but the rest of the members did not feel that was necessary.

Karen Kelleher asked Lori if anyone from the Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (SMAHT) was present.

Lori stated there were no SMAHT members that she was aware of present and there was no conversation about affordable housing.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Karen Kelleher updated that Board of the on-going activities in the Planning Department.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Karen reported on the upcoming meeting agenda items:

February 15th – David Maxon of Isotrope is scheduled to discuss the wireless service overlay district study.

February 21st – Candidate interviews for open Planning Board position (Selectmen will be in attendance)
– Habitech, discussion on street tree locations

February 28th – Joint Boards meeting with Board of Selectmen to vote on the appointment for Planning Board member

FY 2013 Budget

Karen reported on her meeting with Town Administrator, Bill Wrigley. She stated that she explained that the Board originally ask for \$5,000 to replenish walkway funds to be used towards the next phase implementation plan but after discussions with Bruce Fletcher and Lori, it seems that this additional money could be used to complete the Phase I walkway plan. Bill suggested that the Byway account be used instead of moving forward with this special article request. Both Bill Wrigley and Karen will speak to Supt. of Streets Mike Clayton about this suggestion. The Board agreed it would be appropriate to use the Byway account.

Karen stated that Bill suggested the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and Superintendent of Streets meet to discuss and overall plan concerning walkways once the final Walkway Plan is submitted so that all departments are aligned with a long-range approach for construction and maintenance of sidewalks before going forward with any capital requests.

Karen also noted that it does not seem like the Board is quite ready to request town meeting for the \$75,000.00 capital request for Lower Village Traffic improvements at this time. She suggested that the five-year capital request begin next year (FY14), when the Town has a better idea of a preferred plan.

Lori, Steve and Lenny agreed.

Mistletoe Farm

Karen asked the Board when they would like to schedule Mark Harnett for the Accessory Apartment and Historic Preservation Special Permit Public Hearing.

The Board agreed to schedule them for March 13, 2012. They will not meet the first Tuesday of March due to the primary elections.

Karen asked the Board if they wanted any further detail on the plans submitted by Mark Harnett.

The Board requested that dimensions (setbacks, and distances) and placement of well and septic be shown on the plans.

Track Road

Karen noted that John Akers of the Multi-Use Track Road Committee reminded her that the Committee is happy to help with any signage recommendations for Track Road in accordance with the Special Permit for the Kayak/Canoe Rental Use.

Pilot Grove and Plantation Apartments

Karen reported on the Selectmen's meeting with Stow Community Housing Corporation. She stated that the group is going for another round of funding. It was insinuated that if the Town had appropriated more money to the project they would have received more points and obtained the first grant they were denied.

Karen noted Plantation Apartments is still under appeal.

Deerfield Lane Open Space Parcel

Lori asked why this item was going back to Town Meeting. Karen explained that there was an error in the language of the Conservation Restriction that needed to be amended.

Pyramid Network Systems

Karen reported that she received a few calls from Pyramid Network Systems asking what the requirements were to remove a wireless facility but he would not provide the name of the site location. She provided the section of the bylaw that speaks to removal of wireless facilities.

REM Solar Proposal on Teradyne Property

Karen reported that REM was holding a public hearing on March 7, 2012 in town hall for abutters.

RidgeWood AAN

Karen noted that the Board should vote next week to accept RidgeWood's request for withdrawal of their application.

APPOINTMENTS

Public Hearing – Rules and Regulations for Solar Photovoltaic Renewable Energy Installations

Lori Clark opened the public hearing at 7:40PM.

Steve Quinn moved to waive the reading of the Public Hearing Notice. The motion was seconded by Lenny Golder and carried a vote of three in favor (Steve Quinn, Lenny Golder and Lori Clark).

It was noted that correspondence was received from the Board of Health stating that they had no issues with the proposed Rules and Regulations.

Steve Quinn moved to close the public hearing, as no public was present at the meeting and the Board had already thoroughly reviewed the draft document. The motion was seconded by Lenny Golder and carried a vote of three in favor (Steve Quinn, Lenny Golder, Lori Clark).

Steve Quinn moved to adopt the Special Permit and/or Site Plan Approval Rules and Regulations for Commercial Solar Photovoltaic Renewable Energy Installations as written. The motion was seconded by Lenny Golder and carried a vote of three in favor (Steve Quinn, Lenny Golder and Lori Clark).

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

Annual Report

Board members reviewed the annual report and approved it for publishing.

Draft Memo to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Health

The Board reviewed the draft letter. Karen stated that she would contact the Board of Selectmen to schedule a meeting, once a date was set she would then contact the Hudson Department of Public Works to let them know when they could meet.

APPOINTMENTS

Lower Village Traffic Planning

Lori stated that the Board was looking for a conclusion for a long-term plan for Lower Village, but would wait until next meeting when Ernie Dodd was back from vacation to make any decisions. She also noted that the Board would be discussing some short-term plans.

John Morgan of Coler and Colantonio presented a summary of alternative options for Lower Village Traffic Planning and handed out a summary of pros and cons for four alternatives: "Do Nothing," Left Turn Lanes and Traffic Lanes, Elongated Roundabout (Concept 3), Roundabout (Concept 5). [Summary of Alternatives available in Planning Department].

John reviewed the Left Turn Lanes and Traffic Islands alternative. He noted the pros and cons and also stated that it would not slow traffic down as much as a roundabout but would provide traffic calming.

Lori asked him if the temporary traffic islands currently in Lower Village were placed appropriately. He responded that their locations are close to what is shown on the plan.

John stated that the summary of alternatives lists the cost from White Pond Road to the midway of the common. He noted that it would cost approximately another million dollars to complete the remaining 1/3 of a mile west of the common. John noted this price does include sidewalks, widening of road and granite curbing.

Brian Martinson stated that the one thing this alternative does not address is the left hand turns out of Pompositticut and Red Acre Road. John agreed it does not address left hand turns out of Pompositticut and Red Acre Road.

John Morgan noted that some of the accidents were caused by conflicts with eastbound traffic using the day care center to pass vehicles trying to turn left onto Pompositticut.

Lenny Golder noted that most of the collisions happened off peak.

Lori Clark noted that this alternative left hand turn is in line with the goals of the Lower Village Sub-Committee.

John noted that consolidating the curb cut at the day care center would greatly improve safety.

Lenny noted that the current traffic islands they installed didn't cost much and they could probably just put in those where John had indicated on the plan, instead of installing costly ones.

Karen noted that the ones installed right now are temporary.

Lori stated that the Lower Village Committee intended the temporary ones to become permanent if they were successful and they have shown to be very successful. It was also noted that the Stow Police have commented on the lack of accidents in that location due to traffic islands.

Lenny asked why they wouldn't just install temporary traffic islands in the other proposed locations if the existing ones worked so well.

Brian noted that the Board is looking for a long-term plan that is permanent.

Lori noted that permanent traffic islands would be part of the long-term plan. The permanent traffic islands would be aesthetically pleasing and increase usability for pedestrians and motor vehicles.

Brian stated that he thought there were a lot of benefits to the left turn lanes and traffic islands option but that it didn't address some of the key issues.

John noted that it doesn't address existing Red Acre Road or Pompositticut Street but most of those are right turns. He also added that Pompositticut Street has an alternate route through Maynard and there are only a few people at the end of the street that would have to drive a bit longer for the alternate route.

Steve noted that Pompositticut Street only had eight cars exiting at the peak hour.

Brian stated that in his experience as he lives at the end of Pompositticut Street, they mostly turn right and turn around in a shopping center to change direction.

John said that the island might help someone turn out onto Great Road and go left.

John stated that he thought this option was worth considering. He stated that the roundabout options are both still worth considering but there will be long queues in the peak hours.

Karen asked what the additional delay was.

John stated about 1,800 feet about 7-8 minutes, which is the worst-case scenario. He also noted that the traffic light option would increase the delay beyond 7-8 minutes.

Brian stated that the goal is to calm traffic not necessarily speed it up through Lower Village, but we also don't want to cause long delays.

Lenny Golder asked if putting traffic lights at the end of Red Acre Road and Pompositticut Street, would help them exit if they were both timed simultaneously.

John stated that this would increase conflicts if both were green at the same time and that they are not far apart enough to have signals. He also noted that a signal light would cause large back ups and delays on Great Road, more so than the roundabouts.

John explained the cons of both roundabout options. He noted that the Great Road approach has over 1,200 cars, which exceed the recommendations for a single lane roundabout and there is not enough room for a two lane roundabout nor did he think it would be appropriate for this area. He noted that the number of vehicles is not evenly distributed among all legs of the roundabout.

Steve stated that the roundabout, Concept 5, did not seem practicle because the volume of traffic on Great Road exceeds the recommendation for a single lane roundabout and costs \$700,000.00. He noted that the elongated roundabout is not a well-tested standard and is the most expensive. Steve stated that he felt the left turn lanes and traffic islands would make the Lower Village more aesthetically pleasing and help with traffic calming. He stated that his opinion would be the "Do nothing" option or the left turn lanes with traffic islands, which is still expensive.

John noted that if they wanted to keep the cost down they could eliminate some the aspects of that plan.

Lenny agreed that the roundabout options were costly and would not accomplish all of their goals. He stated that the left turn lane and traffic islands was costly and he wasn't sure how far we could get the cost down to make it viable and wondered if there was something in between the do nothing approach and the left turn lanes and traffic islands.

Steve noted that he was not sure that refining that option down to a certain amount would be appropriate until we go through some other phases.

John noted that if the Board wanted to continue the sidewalk and streetscape all the way down, they could look into obtaining grant money.

Lenny stated that he felt we should start with a temporary cheap option like the existing temporary traffic islands instead of jumping into an expensive project.

Steve explained that the Board is looking for a long-term plan to improve lower village. He noted that the left turn lanes and traffic island alternative would not just be sandbags nailed into the pavement they would be permanent and landscaped etc.

Lenny suggested using police details, speed limit signs and rumble strips to calm traffic as an alternative.

Brian noted that these were not long term effective engineering controls.

Lenny stated that these have been shown to be very effective.

Brian stated that the Board is trying to do long range planning.

Steve noted that it is part of an over all picture for Lower Village.

Lori stated that if you look at the full plan it does become a large project and you start by setting your goal and then work on how to get there.

John noted that burying the utilities would be another million dollars but the other option would be to move them off the road.

Lori stated that the whole idea is to build on the long-term plan and figure out how we want to move forward on this.

John noted that once the Board has an idea of what they want to implement you can start applying for grants and they will know how much to ask and what for.

Steve agreed and added that once we have an overall picture we will know what short-term measures could be taken that would not impact the long-term plan. It would also help in working with property owners like Rich Presti. If he comes forward with a plan to redevelop his property before the long term project is completed we will know how to work with him to be sure his plans do not conflict with our overall plan.

Steve asked John Morgan what his preferred option would be out of the four alternatives.

John stated that he would choose the left turn lane and traffic island alternative. He would not choose the “do nothing approach.” John stated that there are no examples of elongated roundabouts and there is a potential for increased speeds along the straight portions. He also noted that both roundabouts exceed the recommendations, in terms of traffic count for a single lane roundabout and therefore would probably not be able to obtain funding from Mass DOT. He noted that you may be able to get funding from a Mass Works grant but the TIP would most likely not support the project.

John noted that MassWorks grants could be used on streetscape and other things that TIP funding cannot.

Lenny asked if there was any funding he was aware of for electronic speed limit signs.

John said he was not aware of any.

Steve asked John if there was any drainage work recommended.

John stated that they just have some catch basins relocated.

Steve stated that installing a water main with the future intent of a water line.

Lenny stated that the rumble strips and electronic speed limit sign or just lowering the speed limit were very simple things to do.

John stated that in order to lower the speed limit it would require a traffic speed study and then it would need to be submitted to the state. Karen noted that the state typically bases the speed limit on existing speed. John agreed.

Lori noted that if we were to do this, we should try to slow traffic down now before a study.

Brian said they could narrow roads.

John stated that if they want to narrow the roads they do need to be careful to accommodate bike riding.

Lori stated that she wanted to make sure to give Ernie a chance to discuss this with the Board and to get him up to speed when he comes back.

Lori noted that the Board should include business owners and residents once the Board comes to a consensus in order to gain feedback from them.

Brian asked John if he could advise whether we could make the existing traffic islands permanent at this point.

John stated that they could look to see if they are approximately in the same place as their concept plan. He noted that removing them and resetting them would not be a huge deal if they were to repave and surface in the future.

Board members noted this could help gain support if people saw a permanent traffic island and how it could look in the future.

Lori noted the next step is to gain support around a plan. The Board will further discuss the pros and cons when Ernie returns and get back to John with a preferred alternative.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

Walkways – Update on Meeting with Habitech

Lori reported that she and Ernie met with Bruce Wheeler of Habitech.

They identified with Bruce which walkways he owned and the current status:

1. Habitech owes a sidewalk on Harvard Road along the Derby Woods Subdivision. According to the decision the Board can specify it be built elsewhere in town.
2. Habitech owes a sidewalk along the Pilot Point Subdivision, but the decision does not include language for it to be built elsewhere in town, so it would need to be modified.
3. Habitech was not required by the Zoning Board of Appeals to build a walkway in front of the Villages along the west side, but was required to contribute \$10,556.00.

Lori stated that when they first met Bruce was not open to any of the ideas they suggested and he was looking to maximize what he would get for the easement. Lori explained to him that they were less concerned about acquiring the easement from Habitech because they could ask the condo association after ownership has been transferred.

Lori stated that at this past meeting he was open to exchanging one of the walkways, either Pilot Point or Harvard Road and having the \$10,556.00 from the ZBA decision waived in exchange for building the walkway along the west side of Villages at Stow. In their conversation with Bruce he stated that Pilot Point walkway would be much easier to build than Harvard Road but has not specified which walkway he would exchange building.

It was noted that the ZBA decision would need to be changed in order to make this agreement legal.

The Board agreed it would be easier to swap out the Harvard Road section and require Habitech to still build Pilot Point, as they had already indicated that this section was easier to build and does not require a modification to the decision.

Lori noted that after they contact Bruce and make the agreement they will need to then make sure this agreement is acceptable to the ZBA.

Karen suggested that the Boards proposal include language requiring Habitech to complete their other sidewalk obligation on the Villages site while constructing the section to the west.

Golf Course Groundwater Monitoring

The Board decided to move forward with the Golf Course Groundwater Monitoring information they had received from hiring the consulting engineer. They felt it was necessary to come to a conclusion as they spent money on the consultant and have recommendations from him.

Karen will contact Jay Billings, engineer consultant and ask him for information from other towns that have adopted a regulation banning the Zone II banned substances.

The Board agreed that they would compile all the necessary information and example regulations and provide this to the Board of Health. If the Board of Health decides not to move forward with the recommendations, we will at least have something on file.

Other Business - Zoning Compliance

Brian Martinson asked Karen if there was any response from Kostas of Stow House of Pizza or Craig Martin, Building Commissioner on the letter the Planning Board sent in regards to the lighting violations at Kosta's site.

Karen stated that she spoke with Kostas who had received the letter from the Planning Board. She also checked in with Craig. Craig stated that he promised to get to both the

request of zoning violation from the Planning Board in regards to Kosta's site and the Bank of America signs.

Brian stated that this was our first test of the agreement the Board made with Craig on the zoning compliance process and would be concerned if this new procedure was not implemented.

Steve Quinn noted that he knows Craig has been very tied up with the Elementary School Building project.

Brian did not think the zoning compliance issue would take long for him to review.

Lori asked if Karen could let Craig know that they would appreciate an update and time frame from him.

Karen agreed to let him know.

Lori stated that she would like to review all special permits for outstanding owed items such as sidewalks.

Karen noted that they should tie the sidewalks to the bond as a separate line item moving forward and that she would talk to Sue Carter, consulting engineer about this so she can help in this regard when she reviews bond estimates.

Lenny asked if we could require development impact fees.

Karen noted that the subdivisions that have been approved in Stow have not been large enough.

Lenny noted the Board still needs to update the policy for sidewalk contributions by increasing the amount.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Kristen Domurad-Guichard