

TOWN OF STOW PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the February 21, 2012 Planning Board Meeting.

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

Called to order at 7PM.

APPOINTMENTS

Interview Applicants for Planning Board Member Vacancy

Lori Clark stated that the Board had two general questions they will pose to all applicants; what is their experience as it relates to the Planning Board, and what is their vision for the town.

Kathy Sferra – Kathy introduced herself and thanked the Board for their time. Kathy stated that she has a Master Degree in Regional Planning, has worked as a staff planner at the Cape Cod Commission doing large project, infrastructure, and commercial project reviews. She has worked on three town master plans including Truro, Wellfleet and Harwich.

In addition, she served ten years on the Planning Board in Marshfield, which was a tumultuous time, working through failed subdivisions of the 80's and budget cuts that lead to a reduction in staff requiring Board members to take on more responsibilities. Kathy stated that in the 90's they suddenly saw rapid growth dealing with 4-5 subdivisions at any one time, 40b's, a new master plan, and zoning changes which she presented at town meeting.

Kathy noted that she worked on rezoning the commercial strip of Marshfield which led to major downtown revitalization. They had an almost empty downtown and now 20 years later it has become a much more exciting place to be.

Kathy stated that her involvement in Stow has been on the Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, Land Use Task Force and other planning related projects. She stated that she loves planning.

In terms of her vision, Kathy stated that if she were appointed and hopefully elected, her highest priority would be Lower Village. She would want to rework the zoning to enable development that people would like to see. She noted that a lot of work has already been done and would like to learn more about that and help this effort move forward. She would also like to see the golf course zoning study completed. This was a project she has been working on as a member of the Open Space Committee and would like to look comprehensively to identify land to protect and land to develop. Kathy stated that planning is being proactive so you're not just reviewing subdivisions that come before the Board.

Kathy also noted that she felt the Master Plan was great and she thinks there are already a lot of things happening to implement it. She stated that if she were elected she would like to see the Planning Board meet with the Selectmen annually to make sure they reprioritize.

Ernie Dodd asked Kathy what her thoughts were about the Gleasondale Mill.

Kathy stated that she felt it was important but Lower Village was more of a priority at this time and would want to tackle Lower Village before moving onto the Gleasondale Mill.

Steve Quinn asked if she plans on running in the election.

Kathy stated that she did plan on running.

Lenny Golder asked if there was anything specific she would want to see implemented in terms of zoning.

Kathy stated that she would want to look at the form and function, transportation, and landscaping in Lower Village and get town officials together with major business owners to discuss the downtown. She would like to look at bringing development closer to the street without a sea of parking lots in front to make it more pedestrian friendly. She would like to work with the businesses to accomplish this. Kathy noted that in Marshfield they worked together with business owners and made drastic changes like moving a street and relocating a house.

Lenny asked if she had any ideas about sign design.

Kathy stated that there is definitely work to be done there, she stated that she would rather see what has been done before tossing up any ideas.

Lenny asked if she believed there was anything that could be done without water.

Kathy stated that water does allow for more types of businesses, but there are things you can do to improve the Lower Village without water. She stated that the town can continue to work on the Deerfield Lane opportunity for water, but also need to find someone to provide the services.

Selectmen Charlie Kern asked Kathy what committees she is currently on.

Kathy stated that she is currently on the Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee and serves on the Community Preservation Committee for the Conservation Commission. She stated that she has told the Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee she plans on resigning if she was appointed. She noted that either way she plans on resigning from the Conservation Commission but if she were elected, would resign from the Open Space Committee as she feels it could create the appearance of a conflict.

Charlie asked if she were elected, would she be open to serving as the Planning Board representative for the Community Preservation Committee.

Kathy stated that she would if she were asked to.

Brian Martinson –

Brian introduced himself and thanked the Board for having him.

Brian stated that he currently serves as the Voting Associate Member of the Planning Board and was appointed twice to this position. He stated that he is a hard worker and known to do his homework. He contributes to the discussion and makes interesting and valuable points to consider.

Brian stated that he has a Master Degree in Policy and Public Administration. He has worked in the federal environmental protection field, has worked with private industry to become more environmentally responsible and socially responsible, you can often find him in the middle trying to balance the different interests, personalities and goals.

He stated that in the past few years he has changed his focus, concentrating more on the federal environmental side crafting laws and regulations. He has written policy issue papers and has spent several years as member of the Lower Village Committee in addition to working here with the Planning Board.

Brian stated that his vision for Stow is all about balance. He stated most people he knows want to preserve the good things about the town, still knowing good development interests that they want to encourage. He stated that if there are interests they aren't in favor of, there are ways to mitigate these developments that's why the zoning bylaw and special permit process is in place.

Brian stated that the Lower Village is of great concern. He stated that he served on the Lower Village committee for several years and has a great grasp of the draw backs and needs. He stated that he believes the Board also needs to revise several of their bylaws. Brian stated that the one bylaw that comes to mind is the sign bylaw which he has been involved with trying to get revised for several years.

Brian stated that administration of the Solar Bylaw is another interest of his. He stated that the Board has not implemented it yet but will be soon, and there are a whole set of processes that will have to be worked out.

Brian also noted that he has been involved with some of the studies concerning the Golf Course Water Monitoring project and would like to see a bylaw dealing with golf courses, if not zoning than something with the Board of Health to protect aquifers that will at some point be needed.

He stated that he is interested in serving out Kathleen's term and does expect to run for the next coming election.

Lenny Golder asked what types of development in Lower Village he saw as positive development.

Brian stated that he thinks the town needs development in Lower Village and would like to see store fronts filled where both business people and residents can benefit. He stated that in planning you can dream up all types of businesses that you want to see but it doesn't mean they will necessarily happen. He stated that the Planning Board cannot stop people from moving in, but does have an interest and responsibility when it comes to negative consequences and to protect the public health and welfare of the citizens. He stated the Lower Village has so many

issues and he is very concerned with the public safety issues and wants to make it more pedestrian friendly and in some way addressing the difficult traffic issues that will become more difficult in the future.

Lenny asked Brian how he would feel about a medical facility if it were proposed on Mr. Presti's property.

Brian stated that it is an allowed use in this district, but he doesn't see why it would be an issue, the only thing he'd see as a potential problem is that it is not a retail business. He stated that he would not like to see Lower Village turn into a professional office park.

Laura asked Brian what he feels is a priority based on the Master Plan and how he would plan to move forward with that priority.

Brian stated that he thinks there are a lot of opportunities for improvement, but he would like to work on the sign bylaw and zoning in the Lower Village to encourage different types of development and uses. Brian said he would be interested in mixed use development. He stated that the main reason he feels he should be appointed is that he has a lot of skills in policy analysis and doesn't like making decisions based solely on feelings.

Charlie asked if he felt all the bylaws were equally important or if he had certain priorities of what bylaws were more important than others.

Brian stated that he believes it is the responsibility of all citizens and property owners to comply with the bylaws. He said there are some bylaws that he is particularly interested in personally and/or professionally.

Charlie stated the Board of Selectmen, as a group would like to promote business in Stow, more specifically in the Lower Village and asked if he had some ideas of what the town could do to promote that.

Brian stated that he also has those exact sentiments, but also lives in that area so its impact on him is more personal. He stated that one way to make it more appealing is for town to invest a little in improving the aesthetics, making traffic islands more permanent and having a village that is more pedestrian friendly and would be more appealing to businesses.

Martha Monroe –

Lori Clark gave an overview of the two questions asked to the candidates.

Martha thanked the Board for having her and introduced herself to the members.

Martha stated that she is a Non-Voting Associate Member of the Planning Board and just finished up two years on the Pedestrian Walkway Planning Sub-Committee. She said she has been attending meetings as a non-voting associate member and providing input when she can.

Martha said she is a CCD teacher for 7th and 9th graders for St. Bridget's in Maynard, is an Air force Reservist in addition to her regular job, as far as working with groups and committees she has done this with all her jobs and past volunteering.

She stated that she has done this in different environments and what she brings to the table is helping groups with a limited amount of time and a lot of work and completing it efficiently and coming to a resolution efficiently but allowing everyone to have a voice and getting all the facts out and separated from assumptions in order to make the best decision possible. She stated that she has a lot of experience in group dynamics, problem solving and how to work through problems and conflict resolution, and keeping an open mind and listening to opinions of others without taking personally if one's opinion does not come to the top.

Lori asked what her thoughts were about priorities for the town and her vision for the direction of the town in relating to planning.

Martha stated that she hears a lot about people wanting Stow to remain rural, but it is tough with the congestion with the traffic and heavy volume it is hard to vision the downtown to be rural because you have to deal with that. In addition she would like to look at what has already been developed in the Lower Village and see how it could be recovered from large setbacks like Shaw's. Martha stated possibly the Board could work on the opposite side of the street.

Martha also felt that preserving the colonial homes as residential in the Lower Village area and building where there are empty spaces should be a priority in order to keep the flavor of the old colonial homes that are already there.

Martha stated that the Gleasondale Mill would be great target area to draw in revenue with office building. She said a lot of people in town feel the taxes are getting very high and she understands that the library, and fire station should be upgraded, and they definitely should do something about Pompositticut School but something should be done to offset the taxes. She stated that the town needs to draw in revenue but people don't want to bring in an Applebee's because it takes away from the town's rural character. The town should concentrate on larger companies like Bose.

Martha stated that she used to work for Pepsi Co. and large companies like this donate a lot of money and things to towns they are located in. She noted that she was once on a committee at Pepsi Co. that donated \$30,000 for employees of that town for the schools and bought a football sign with a scoreboard.

Laura asked, in terms of the Master Plan, what areas she would be interested in driving. Martha said she would be interested in working on bringing businesses into the Gleasondale Mill to bring a large commercial tax base into the town, the second areas she would want to work on is Lower Village.

Charlie asked how she would promote businesses in the Lower Village and what she would like to see done to promote it.

Martha stated that she would like to encourage services needed for people in town and to make it attractive for businesses to want to locate there by using surveys etc. She suggested using tax incentives for businesses to locate in the Lower Village, but ones that are balanced enough where the town was benefitting not losing out.

Lenny asked if she had any other ideas in addition to tax benefits.

Martha stated that there are always other offers the town could put out there. She noted that she has taken a customer centric selling course in which you learn to negotiate with businesses to get what you want and understand their needs to know what both sides would be willing to give up. She stated that we already have a sign and lighting problem and they won't go away until a mutual relationship is built.

Ernie stated that he knows Martha has done a thorough study of the bylaws and rules and regulations.

Lori thanked all the applicants for their time.

REVIEW OF CORRESPONDENCE AND MINUTES

Minutes

Steve Quinn moved to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2012 Planning Board meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Lenny Golder and carried by a vote of four in favor (Ernie Dodd, Steve Quinn, Lori Clark and Lenny Golder).

PUBLIC INPUT

No public input at this time.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS' UPDATES

Elementary School Building Committee (ESBC)

Steve Quinn stated that the committee toured the building. He said the district is moving everything this week while the kids are on vacation and the kids should be in the new wing when they come back on Monday. He noted there is still a punch list of items to do. They hope to occupy the renovated part of the building by September.

Habitech and Sidewalks

Lori stated that the Board received a response from Habitech stating they agree with the Board's proposal for sidewalks at Villages at Stow; they just want to review the plans which Karen has forwarded.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Karen Kelleher updated the Board of the ongoing activities in the Planning Department.

Wireless Service Facility Overlay District

Karen stated that she passed on the Board's message to Town Counsel, Jon Witten, and Bill Wrigley that the Board is willing to support either a bylaw change or variance request to allow a 150' cell tower on the Minute Man Airfield property. Jon said he would be in touch with Star Tower.

Derby Woods Site Walk

Karen reported that Sue Carter, Consulting Engineer, conducted a site walk at Sylvan Drive. She found that several residents have encroached into the open space and was not sure how the Board wanted to handle it. Sue also noted that Habitech has left construction materials in different places which they need to clean up. Sue will be writing a site report for the Board and Habitech.

Karen stated that she could write a letter to abutters reminding them that encroachments into the open space are illegal and must be cleaned up before the Conservation Commission takes over the land.

Karen will draft a letter to be addressed at a future meeting.

Commercial Solar Photovoltaic Renewable Energy Installations

Karen stated that she will be meeting with Don McPherson tomorrow to discuss the Solar Rules and Regulations. He has been in touch with a resident and the Conservation Commission about taking trees down.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

Subdivision FAQ

The Board reviewed the draft Subdivision FAQ and made suggestions.

Karen suggested the Board could put an advertisement in the newspaper, put the document on the website, and/or add them to the Planning Board Handbook.

Steve also suggested also putting the FAQ document in the Building Department.

Lower Village Traffic Planning

Ernie stated that he spoke with Lori who gave him a quick update on the Board's last meeting with Coler and Colantonio.

Ernie said that he agrees with the Board's initial opinion, that the left turn lanes and traffic islands scenario may be the best approach. He stated that he was disappointed that we spent money on the previous concept plan by FST because FST did the traffic counts and we are now finding out that a single lane roundabout is not feasible with the level of traffic on Great Road. He suggested the Board also consider no left turns off Pompositticut Street during certain peak traffic hours.

Lori stated that it seemed the members of the Board, present at the last meeting with John Morgan of Coler & Colantonio had a consensus that the left turn lane scenario was worth pursuing, and to continue looking into a long term plan with the Board's additional goals including underground utilities and drainage.

Brian stated that he agreed that the Board members seemed to coalesce on this one measure but he does want to note that there are still a lot safety problems and high traffic volume and we should plan for the future when traffic volumes will increase. He also stated that John from Coler and Colantonio did not say there shouldn't be a roundabout, he said it might be challenging to get funding because ironically it wouldn't solve enough of the problems.

Karen stated that one of John's suggestions was making the left turn lane at Pompositticut wide enough so there would be room in the future to construct a roundabout if needed. John also noted that TIP funding would not be available because based on the traffic counts dictate a two lane roundabout.

Lenny stated that short term measures are worthwhile and very practical. He noted that rumble strips were also mentioned and having police detail in that area during the high volume times.

Brian stated that the Board discussed that most of the accidents are occurring during non peak hours and having a police detail is very costly and not an effective control. He stated the Board needs to implement low cost engineering controls.

Ernie stated that curbing at Stepping Stone would solve a lot of the problems.

Karen stated that most of the accident reports showed incidents in this area.

Lori stated that accidents are occurring during non peak hours most likely because people are going faster in.

Lori noted that the Board needs to catch everyone up on the conversation and figure out a communication plan.

Ernie said he thinks they should meet with Mike Clayton, Supt. of Streets, and the Board of Selectmen first.

Resident Mark Jones asked if the Board would still consider taking land for a roundabout.

Ernie stated that any land used for the roundabout would have to be a mutual agreement if they did consider that.

Lori stated that the Board agreed that a two lane roundabout would not fit in with the character of the town.

Bruce Wheeler, Habitech - Sylvan Drive Street Tree Planting Plan

Bruce Wheeler and Attorney Lou Levine were present.

Bruce Fletcher, Tree Warden was also present.

Attorney Levine presented a plan which Bruce Wheeler and Dave Coia prepared showing street tree locations, representing input by each property owner. Attorney Levine reviewed the memo sent to the Board which describes the location and type of tree to be planted on each lot. (The memo can be found on file in the Planning Department).

Bruce Wheeler stated that Dave Coia and Bruce Fletcher, Tree Warden also staked the locations where the trees are to be planted.

Bruce stated that one extra tree was not noted in the memo, but is noted on the plan to be located on lot 11, which they have not yet conveyed and has plenty of frontage.

The Board asked Bruce Fletcher if he was in agreement with the location of the trees.

Bruce Fletcher stated he was.

Attorney Levine asked what date they could begin planting. He noted they would like to begin as soon as possible and Dave Coia asked for an April 1st planting date.

Lenny Golder asked if these were spring growing trees.

Bruce Fletcher said they were.

Bruce Wheeler stated that they will need a lot of water as they will be awake by this time.

Bruce Fletcher said an April 1st date sounded good.

Lori noted that the homeowners requested that any work being done (ie. Tree plantings, sprinkler system repairs) all be done at the same time so as not to disturb the lawns.

Bruce Wheeler confirmed that all work they do will be fully taken care of and lawns would be fixed, he stated that the earlier they plant the faster the reseeded areas will grow back.

A Sylvan Drive resident asked if the residents would be responsible for watering the trees as they will all be in the right of way.

Bruce Fletcher stated that he would assume Habitech would have a plan for watering but stated that it would be in the homeowners' best interest to also consider watering, but assumed that it would be Habitech's responsibility.

The Resident stated that the nights may still be cold in early April and was concerned about sprinkler lines being frozen. He said it may be difficult for them to water and most of their irrigation systems would not be running this early in the spring.

Attorney Levine said they would be happy with an April 1st planting date and if something was wrong they would hold off.

The Board agreed to an April 1, subject to the approval of the Bruce Fletcher, Tree Warden's final approval, depending on weather conditions.

Ernie advised Habitech that the Arbor Glen development ran into major issues from not watering their trees.

Bruce Wheeler confirmed the location of the trees are all within the right of way set as far back from the road as possible.

Board members agreed with the plan.

A Resident of Lot 7, Sylvan Drive asked what the third bound marking behind his house was indicating.

Bruce Wheeler stated that this bound marked the property line between his property and the neighboring property. He noted that this marker could be made flush to the ground.

Karen noted if it was abutting the open space it would need to be above ground.

Lori stated that in terms of the pedestrian walkways, they received Bruce Wheeler's email in agreement with the Board's proposal for Habitech to build the walkway along the west end of the

Villages at Stow in exchange for the walkway along the west side of Great Road across from Derby Woods and the donation to the sidewalk account at the Villages at Stow.

Bruce Wheeler agreed and said they would plan to construct the walkways this year. Lori stated that the Board needs to contact the Zoning Board of Appeals so that their decision can be amended. Bruce Wheeler asked if the Board was interested in swapping out the Pilot Point walkway segment for him to go further west on Great Road toward the Recreation Field.

Lori stated that they have decided not to go any further towards the recreation field because Century Paving is constructing to the end.

Lower Village Traffic Planning Continued

Lori restated the scenario the Board has decided to pursue.

Lori asked the Board if they think we should consider plans for the west end of the Lower Village as well, seeing as Coler and Colantonio just showed the east end.

Ernie stated that he felt the plan should include the entire Lower Village.

Lori asked Board members how they felt about moving the telephone wires underground. Lenny stated that he did not think it would make much of a difference and was possibly too costly and that the Board should prioritize where to allocate funds.

Lori stated that she thought we should include putting utilities underground as part of the long term plan. She stated that telephone poles really change the look of the downtown and make it very difficult for landscaping and sidewalks. She stated that it could really define the area.

Steve agreed and stated that aesthetically, it would be a major impact and make a big difference.

Brian stated that he likes the work the Lower Village Committee has done, and what the Board has been talking about are more midterm goals. He stated that the Board should try to make some of these things semi-permanent like the pedestrian refuge islands.

Ernie suggested the Board spend a meeting reviewing all the past documents concerning the Lower Village.

Steve stated that he pictured the Board having a document ready to go out to bid after completion of the contract with Coler and Colantonio.

Karen stated that the Board did decide to put off asking for FY13 funds from Capital Planning, but will still let them know this is a major upcoming project with hopes of beginning in FY2014.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kristen Domurad-Guichard