

TOWN OF STOW PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the April 17, 2012 Planning Board Meeting.

Present: Planning Board Members: Steve Quinn, Ernest Dodd, Kathy Sferra, Lenny Golder and Lori Clark
Planning Coordinator: Karen Kelleher
Administrative Assistant: Kristen Domurad-Guichard

Absent: Brian Martinson, Voting Associate

Called to order at 7:05PM.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS' UPDATES

Comprehensive Permit Policy Review

Ernie Dodd reported on the informal meeting held at 6PM with Kathy Sferra, Ed Tarnuzzer, Bill Byron and Karen Kelleher. Donna Jacobs was unable to meet as she was out of town. The group reviewed the original 2002 copy of the policy and shared suggestions on what should be taken out and things to consider adding.

The group will meet next May 1, 2012 at 6PM. Karen will update Donna Jacobs on the comments made by the group at tonight's meeting.

PUBLIC INPUT

No public input.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Finance Committee

Karen reported on the Finance Committee's meeting held last week. She stated that the Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of the Planning Board's department budget and special articles including the large format printer/scanner.

Cushing Property

Karen stated that Jeff Brem forwarded a two lot subdivision plan today and wanted to discuss it with the Board during the "public input" session of tonight's meeting. However, when Pennie Cushing received a copy of the plan she said it was not what she wanted and therefore, directed Jeff not to come to the Planning Board meeting.

Karen stated that Penny wanted the plan to show more than two lots so she would have the ability sell the house lot as well as a lot or two at this time. Karen informed her that the Board may not be willing to waive requirements to construct the roadway if she is proposing more than two lots.

Karen asked the Board if they would want a complete subdivision road and what number of parcels would they be willing to waive construction standards for. Members noted that it is not

their job to design the subdivision and reiterated their concerns, stated in the letter in response to the ANR Plan about the importance having a full vision of the property.

MAPC Agricultural Grant

Karen reported that MAPC was awarded a Sustainable Communities Grant for a Comprehensive Agricultural Planning for the Towns of Stow, Boxborough, Littleton, Lexington and Bolton.. The idea is to establish advisory committees, hold agricultural forums, establish best practices for retaining agricultural uses in town, and developing a farm land preservation tool kit.

Willis Property, Walcott Street

Karen reported that Mark White has the Willis property under agreement.

Wireless Service Overlay

Karen stated she received an email from David Maxon, he is looking for feedback from the Planning Board on potential parcels to add into the overlay district.

Request for Zoning Map Amendment

Leigh Hildebrandt is scheduled to meet with the Board on May 1st to discuss her request to Re-zone 196 Great Road from Business to Residential.

Golf Course Water Monitoring

Karen reported she had not heard anything back since sending the letter to the Board of Health.

Brandymeade Drainage Basin

Ernie Dodd stated that this is an opportune time to do the work on the Brandymead Circle drainage basin because of the dry weather.

Karen stated that she is still waiting to hear back from one more property owner to sign off on the access easement agreement. She noted the work was awarded to a local contractor a while back but we have been unable to move forward until we have both property owner's sign off. Ernie stated the alternative could be to go through the legal easement area, which would disturb the landscaping.

Derby Woods I - Habitech Tree Planting at Sylvan Drive

Karen stated she received a call from a Derby Woods resident who stated that Habitech had not planted the trees. She contacted Dave Coia of Habitech, who informed her they are currently fixing the sprinklers; she reminded him they were supposed to plant the street trees on April 1st.

Ace Hardware Propane Filling Station Proposal

Karen reported that Kevin Whalen, owner of Ace Hardware, is currently working with Linear Retail about the doorway entrance to the back of the building.

APPOINTMENTS

Public Hearing Continuance – Sprint Wireless Service Facility 501 Gleasondale Road

Lori Clark opened the public hearing continuance at 7:30PM.

Peter Fales, Radio Frequency Expert Vijay Nidadavolu, and Mark Cook were also present, representing Sprint Wireless.

Peter stated at the first meeting of the public hearing the Board expressed concerns with aesthetics. He stated they are able to address three of the points the Board made with mitigation measures. Sprint is willing to move the cable tray to the back side of the building towards the north facing the woods hill and install a more opaque fencing material to disguise the utilities.

Peter stated that the most contentious issue, flush mounting the antennae, is not something Sprint is willing to do but they are willing reduce the measurement of the antenna mounts to 9.5' for sector one and sector two and 11' for sector two, which faces the hill. He explained that they cannot be any closer than that because they need a certain separation from one another for future expansion.

Lenny asked how far out they plan for expansion.

Vijay stated that they usually plan for 2-3 years and it is based on capacity (population growth and the way the town is building).

Ernie Dodd asked if they check the usage of their towers. Vijay stated they do conduct comparisons.

Lori Clark asked Board Members if they were comfortable with the proposed reduction for the antenna mounts. Members noted they are comfortable with the proposal noting that the 11' mount would not be as visible because it is in the back, facing the hill.

Ernie Dodd asked if they got an answer from Sprint about painting the cupola.

Peter stated that they have not determined whether the cupola was painted. Members pointed out photographs of the cupola indicating that it was not painted. Lori stated that this requirement was in the original decision so it will still be a condition in the modification.

Kathy Sferra moved to close the public hearing for the Wireless Service Facility Site Plan Approval Modification at 501 Gleasondale Road. The motion was seconded by Ernie Dodd and carried a vote of five in favor (Kathy Sferra, Ernie Dodd, Lori Clark, Lenny Golder and Steve Quinn).

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

Wireless Service Overlay District

Karen asked the Board how they wanted to proceed. She noted that we have received GIS data from abutting towns who have the available information. Karen noted Planning Board members were going to look into parcels they felt might be beneficial in adding to the overlay district.

Steve Quinn asked Peter Fales what site characteristics wireless companies look for when trying to site cell towers.

Lori asked how companies start, do they first look within the overlay district or first at their needs.

Peter stated that all companies have different needs and he could not speak for one in particular but most of the time there is a radio frequency team that identifies the need and population. He stated that as a site acquisitionist the way they find a site is not always based on where the overlay district is, but where the need is. He noted they do try to co-locate on existing towers before constructing new towers.

Lori stated that she thought Isotrope was going to recommend more specific areas to be included such as he did with the Minute Man property. She said it would be more helpful to the Board if he showed the gap areas with as well as the ideal location so that the Board will have a better idea as to what areas to further explore.

Steve questioned if the Board should even consider finding new areas to expand the overlay district because cell companies don't even know where they would locate.

Ernie stated that if there is a soft spot area and there are no customers, and development is unlikely, the possibility of a cell tower being located there is quite small.

Peter stated that it is hard to predict what the carriers are going to say on what is prime or valuable for a certain location. He noted it is very difficult to delineate in an overlay district. He stated that some municipalities use the special permit process and tailor it to what they want to see for wireless service facilities. He stated that carriers are not in the prediction game but if an application comes to them they have a good idea of what the town wants to see.

Lori stated that, to Steve's point, towns have been completely unsuccessful and the companies basically sue them in order to get a tower or any amendment located where they want.

Steve stated that maybe we could determine the boundaries of the overlay district by determine areas where we do not want cell towers. Karen noted the Town of Hudson started out with an overlay district. Because it was constantly being challenged and overruled, they decided to get rid of it and use a special permit process.

Lenny stated that with increased technology maybe there won't even be need for the towers in the future.

Members agreed with Lori's suggestions to have Isotrope identify specific areas.

Karen will relay the Board's wished to David Maxson of Isotrope. .

Timeline for Lower Village Business District Planning

Karen asked the Board how they would like to move forward on Lower Village zoning. Karen noted the Board did go through part of the Table of Uses and made comments to add/remove certain uses within the district.

Resident Mark Jones asked if increasing the density near the Lower Village was a possibility.

Karen noted the Board did investigate this several years ago with a transition zone involving mixed use zoning and higher density outside the business district. She noted this was not well received so the Board decided to concentrate on the business district for the time being.

Ernie stated that no matter where you go you hear complaints either way.

Lori stated that the main concern from residents was that they did not know what the zoning changes would look like within the village so they wanted to wait and see how these changes would play out first before changing zoning outside the Lower Village.

Mark Jones asked if the Board planned on trying to get water into Lower Village before working on zoning changes.

Lori explained that the Board plans to work on zoning proactively before water is brought to Lower Village so they can direct development in the way the town would like to see.

Steve stated that zoning bylaws should encourage the type of development you want to see.

Karen agreed and stated that we should be prepared for potential redevelopment of the Presti site and the Beef and Ale site which are basically the gateway to Lower Village.

Kathy suggested the Board look at the use table they were previously reviewing.

Karen stated she could pull this information together and that parking would be an important aspect to consider.

Meeting Schedule

Members agreed to meet:

May 1 - Sprint Decision; 196 Great Road

May 8 - Working Meeting discuss Wireless Service Overlay District, Master Plan Priorities and Lower Village Planning

May 22

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Domurad-Guichard