

TOWN OF STOW
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the February 12, 2014 Planning Board Meeting

Planning Board Members Present: Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Mark Jones,

Absent: Steve Quinn

Non-Voting Associate Member: Dan Beaudette

Lori Clark called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm

Correspondence Update

None.

Discussion of 2.6.2014 Meeting Minutes

Ernie Dodd moved to accept the minutes of February 6, 2014 as amended.

Mark Jones seconded.

VOTED: (3-0) Unanimously in favor. (Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Mark Jones)

Len Golder arrived.

Correspondence Updates

Member Updates

Ernie Dodd said that the Lower Village Proposal team met this morning to discuss the current traffic design proposals, selecting five of the nine proposals for an interview. Ernie Dodd said that the majority of the proposals were impressive.

Planner's Report

Collings Foundation

Karen Kelleher reported that the Collings Foundation acquired the Maynard Sand and Gravel 28+ acres which abuts Collings Foundation Land and the Town of Hudson. Karen Kelleher said that Mr. Collings requested a list of abutters for an Application for Earth Removal Permit.

Gleasondale Project Update

Karen Kelleher reported that she and Jesse Steadman met with Gleasondale residents to discuss the formation of a Gleasondale Neighborhood Committee. She continued, saying the intent is for this to be an informal neighborhood group. Karen Kelleher reported that the meeting was well attended and those present seemed to be excited about being involved in the overall Planning efforts. Karen Kelleher noted that the biggest immediate concern was traffic speed and lack of enforcement. They were also interested in short term

tasks such as initiatives to improve the school lot to be used as a park, creating walking trails throughout the Kane Well Site and engaging neighbors that have not yet been involved said Karen Kelleher.

Karen Kelleher expanded, saying the group talked about how to engage residents that have not yet been involved and agreed that it would be good have a list serve or blog or hold neighborhood coffees or lunches. The group also expressed interest in creating sub-groups for those categories defined in the initial Gleasondale effort, including: Land Use; Environmental/Conservation/Recreation; Industrial/Commercial; Residential and Infrastructure/Capital focus groups.

Karen Kelleher said she and Jesse agreed to sponsor another meeting in three weeks, adding that we also have word that the final report for Phase II is expected to be delivered on Friday. Phase III has begun with students have had site visits over the past two weeks. They plan to two meetings:

- The first to be held in mid-march which will be a charrett- style meeting mid-march consisting of an exercise where residents will choose specific uses for different sections of the mill and discuss their implications. And to also provide input on modifications they wish to see to the site, open space and village streetscape.
- The second to be held late April or early to present final designs and related plans, detailed next steps for the town and residents to take, including methods to mitigate the effects of the revitalization.

Lower Village Proposals

Karen Kelleher said the Selection Committee met this morning to discuss the 9 proposals that were submitted and narrowed them down to 5 to be interviewed. The interviews will be conducted on February 19, 21, 25, 26 and 27. After the interviews are complete the Committee will open the price proposals. Once the fee proposals are included in the evaluation, the Selection Committee will make its final recommendation to the Board and the Procurement Officer. Karen Kelleher noted that the RFP indicated that notification of the award will be made by March 7 with the project kick-off meeting with the Superintendent of Streets and Staff to be held during the month of March.

Wheeler Road Hammerhead Lot Special Permit

Karen Kelleher said the Applicant's engineer advised that they will be requesting another public hearing continuance to allow the Applicant time to have his final house plans which is necessary to complete the drainage design. Karen Kelleher said the engineer will need at least 4 weeks.

Homestead Lane Special Permit

Karen Kelleher said the applicant has submitted a fee deposit so that the Board can ask for a legal opinion from Town Counsel on the Application.

Natural Resource Protection Zoning Discussion

Joint Board meeting with Open Space Committee

Members Present: Chris Rhodstrom, Bob Wilbur, Eve Donahue, Vin Antil, Brian Mulcahy

Introduction to Topic

Lori Clark introduced the impetus for the NRPZ bylaw amendment, noting its main benefit is that it allows various boards to give input into the best land to be preserved when land is subdivided. Lori Clark continued, explaining that the NRPZ attempts to find the balance between protecting open space and community character, while encouraging a developer not to choose the conventional approach. Lori Clark and Ernie Dodd explained that many in the development community recognize that the Board prefers Planned Conservation Development Special Permits over conventional subdivisions, but that NRPZ really allows for more Town input.

The Board's discussed the difference between a by-right bylaw versus a discretionary special permit.

Priority Issues and Opportunities

Both Board's agreed that there needs to be early communication when a property comes under consideration. Such communication needs to be well thought out in terms of process to make it an efficient process the group discussed.

Bob Wilbur said that irregular open space configurations and the need for early recognition of stewardship plans are actions that can be bettered through early involvement. Ernie Dodd said he would also like to see more contiguous open spaces rather than fragmented configurations.

Chris Rohdstrom said there has been fair amount of agreement on the broad spectrum of the NRPZ, but adding that one of the more contentious issues raised is the concept of clustering developments on small lots to gain meaningful configurations of open space.

Jesse Steadman said that one of the overarching tensions that the Planning Board is trying to balance is the need for more quality open space protection, the attainment of diverse housing options for future residents and retaining community character. He said that all of these issues are linked together in a bylaw such as NRPZ, but hopes the Boards can work together to explore those tensions.

Bob Wilbur said that the Open Space Committee would like to work to create the high quality outcomes that have been shown through the PCD process, but believes there can be even better outcomes.

Infrastructure in the Open Space

Bob Wilbur noted that the allowance of constructed drainage infrastructure in the open space sends a message to the developer that the quality of open space does not need to be of the highest quality. The Planning Board agreed that such a message could be perceived.

Karen Kelleher said the Planning Board is looking to ask an engineer familiar with creating drainage plans, to find what percentage of infrastructure is currently located in the open space portions of some recent PCD subdivisions. Lori Clark said that removing infrastructure from the 60% open space requirement is a fine line to walk and it is a balance between keeping the developer interested in creating a viable development and risking a conventional subdivision.

Jesse Steadman asked the member of OSC if the option of placing the infrastructure under a restrictive covenant to be held by a Home Owners Association rather than monitored by a conservation organization would be a sort of compromise. The Open Space Committee discussed that they believe the ownership of such lands is part of the issue, especially for groups like the Stow Conservation Trust. However, said Bob Wilbur, the best arrangement would be to not automatically require that such lands are to be held by the HOA, but rather that the decision is one left to the Board's and applicant to discuss. This could be especially helpful, said Bob Wilbur, if the land with infrastructure is still so important from a conservation perspective that an organization would like to hold a restriction on it anyway. Bob Wilbur said that Open Space Committee would like to do whatever can be done to improve the outcome.

Bob Wilbur added that there is a desire to have the Open Space land be more than just open space, such as making meaningful use of its attribute to enhance abutting open spaces or preserve a significant natural resource obligation. The Planning Board agreed, adding the importance of the need for certainty in the outcome of the open land. Lori Clark expressed the need for land use decisions to be expressed in the deed. The Board discussed the ability of understanding the best open space and then deciding which areas should be avoided when it comes to the infrastructure placement. Bob Wilbur suggested the potential to have the infrastructure take on a more natural or green infrastructure approach. Jesse Steadman said a start would be to use the rules and regulations to specifically ask for such practices.

Chris Rhodstrom asked about developments with many small lots, and whether such a configuration may lead to a substantial amount of infrastructure on the open land. Jesse Steadman noted that although it is possible, the proposed

Shared infrastructure should be owned by the HOA in the event that it is used said LC. Bob Wilbur said from a public benefit the HOA is the least desirable.

Lori Clark asked if everyone was aligned on not owning some of the drainage aspects.

Narrow Strips of open space

Eve Donahue said that narrow strips of open space, such as those pertaining to a perimeter buffer is much more difficult to monitor or enforce, adding that the resulting issues can frustrate property owners. Lori Clark said that on the other end of the spectrum, developers often like the buffer because it keeps abutters at more of a distance. Eve Donahue said she understands that tension, but the organization responsible for monitoring the CR on such properties has a more difficult job.

The two boards discussed how best to identify open space to mitigate confusion between land owners and open space boundaries. The boards agreed that installing concrete boundary monuments and medallions on trees before the lots are sold would be a better way to communicate the limits of property lines to homeowners. Eve Donahue and Vin Antil stressed that the monuments must be permanent in any situation.

Housing Unit Discussion

Chris Rhodstrom said the housing is one of the least well addressed issues under the open space plan.

Lori Clark said the board has heard a desire for affordability and also arguments against. Chris R. said that the more flexibility in the mix of units allowed the better.

Eve Donahue said she is generally in favor of mixed dwelling unit types. Len Golder said there could be an opposition to rental units and other dense dwelling types.

Karen Kelleher and Lori Clark discussed the possible need for a template to guide the process of input as development comes to the table. Lori Clark said having a set of questions to ask would help in initializing discussions.

Chris R said that it may be good timing the OSRP can be revised to take these issues into account.

Bob Wilbur said they can do a better job conveying specific priorities and themes ahead of new developments coming to the table, including information such as the gaps in the Emerald Necklace.

Infrastructure, not a default that it go to a certain entity but is reviewed and considered as it may be so important that they would like to take it anyway said Bob Wilbur.

Mark Jones asked if a bare bones CR could ever be used for the infrastructure on open space. Bob Wilbur said the state may not acknowledge that.

Regarding public water supplies, Bob Wilbur said not every property is going to be productive or appropriate for a public water supply. The Board's agreed that it should not be a blanket use.

Chris Rhodstrom said it will be important to have some talking points and alignment as we go toward Town Meeting.

Marijuana DRAFT Rules and Regulations

The Board discussed the proposed rules and regulations and made minor edits.

Mark White – Affordable Unit

Mark White stopped by the office and asked if he could pull a building permit for an affordable unit prior to posting the bond. The Board agreed unanimously that he should go ahead with it.

Adjourned