

TOWN OF STOW  
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the December 6, 2016 Planning Board Meeting

Planning Board Members Present: Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Len Golder

Voting Associate Member: Mark Jones

Absent: Margaret Costello, Steve Quinn

Lori Clark called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

**Discussion of Meeting Minutes**

**Minutes of November 15, 2016**

*Ernie Dodd moved to approve the minutes as amended.*

*Len Golder Seconded.*

**VOTED: 3-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Len Golder-Yea).**

**Public Input**

None.

**Member Updates**

Mark Jones attended a recent Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, and noted two special permits for non-conforming lots. Mark Jones stated concern over the status of the AG's approval of the amended Planned Conservation Development bylaws, as the applications for the special permits included requests for variances from their conservation land setbacks. The ZBA granted the variances, as the PCD bylaws have not been updated, though they have been approved. Jesse Steadman located the approval from the AG's office and circulated the letter to the Planning Board.

Ernie Dodd gave an update on the revisions to the state fire code, stating that single family and duplex units are exempt. Ernie Dodd expressed interest in updating Stow's rules and regulations to alter requirements adequately addressing access to common driveways.

**Planner's Report**

**Jillian's Lane**

Jesse Steadman said that Places Associates, Inc. and the Fire Department have provided comments on the modification, though the public hearing needs to be continued until December 13<sup>th</sup>. Jesse Steadman said that the legal documents for the original subdivision

permit need further work, so those will need to be discussed at the next Planning Board meeting as well.

### **Lot 7 Goshen Lane**

Jesse Steadman said that staff and members of the Planning Board attended a site walk at Goshen Lane on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Cap on Adult Active Neighborhoods**

In regard to lifting the cap on Adult Active Neighborhoods (AANs), Mark Jones stated that the Planning Board should be concerned about creating units to meet a potentially temporary demand, noting that if the age of the population decreases in the long term, owners will have trouble selling restricted units. Mark Jones said that focusing on long term needs may prevent future Planning Board action to convert neighborhoods, taking off the age restriction.

Len Golder said that there is a need for diverse housing options, and perhaps there is room for flexibility in age restrictions so that units could convert back to marketable rates. Len Golder noted that the presence of AANs meets both a revenue and social need.

Ernie Dodd said that in the foreseeable future, there will be a demand for AANs, as the age in Stow is currently trending this way. Ernie Dodd stated that flexibility could be found through the Homeowner's Association, if they have the ability to vote to come out of the age restriction if the market does change. The current zoning would prohibit this, so it would require Planning Board action.

Laura Spear said that what she finds compelling is the current demographics in Stow, with an aging population and most students in the middle school and high school range. Laura Spear noted that there is a need for smaller units, and that whether or not there's flexibility built in, a 2 bedroom unit is in demand. Laura Spear stated that the size of AAN developments is tied to water usage, which is a special limitation for the senior population. Years ago, seniors were assumed to use less water, and therefore the regulations around water altered to reflect a lower number of gallons per day, which is in fact prohibitive.

Lori Clark summarized that the Board is open to increasing the limit, though there is a concern around future demographic shifts and housing needs. If the limit were increased, it would need to be done thoughtfully, as AANs are allowed in non-residential districts, which could create concerns regarding tax benefits, as the units would not have a similar effect were they to be converted.

Brian Ahern said that he wanted to bring this topic to the Board to discuss their perspective on an increase, understanding that it would need to go to Town Meeting for a vote. Brian Ahern asked about zoning and convalescent care, as well as friendly 40Bs in Stow.

Laura Spear responded that Plantation 2 was designed to include convalescent care, with a communal meeting room, small individual rooms, and onsite staff. The expansion is currently being reworked.

Lori Clark noted that affordable housing doesn't tend to be popular at Town Meeting, and that with the fiscal analysis the Board received from Regency at Stow and demographic trends, increasing the cap on AANs is something the Board is willing to consider.

Laura Spear said that the research that went into creating the Housing Production Plan highlight the demand for downsizing opportunities, and that given property taxes in Stow, affordability of housing is certainly affected by living on a fixed income.

Lori Clark and the Board agreed that any increase in AANs would need to be informed by data, including the number of people moving from a home they can't afford to an AAN, and the future of industrially zoned land in Stow.

### **Public Hearing**

#### **Jillian's Lane Subdivision Modification, 113 Walcott Street**

*Ernie Dodd moved to continue without hearing testimony to December 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm.*

*Len Golder Seconded.*

**VOTED: 3-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Len Golder-Yea).**

#### **Approval Not Required Plan- Harvard Road**

Jesse Steadman provided an overview of the plans for altering lot lines between two existing homes on Harvard Road. The applicant is preparing to sell one house, and would like to adjust the lot line to account for the location of a berm.

*Ernie Dodd moved to authorize either Jesse Steadman or Steve Quinn to endorse the Approval Not Required Plan for Harvard Road.*

*Len Golder Seconded.*

**VOTED: 3-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Len Golder-Yea).**

### **Regency at Stow Legal Documents**

Mark Jones recused himself as an abutter to Regency at Stow.

**Present:** *Seth Donohoe, Ducharme and Dillis*

Seth Donohoe discussed the requirements needed for endorsement of the Regency at Stow AAN Special Permit, noting adjustments to the plan made after correspondence with Places

Associates, Inc. A seeding and restoration plan, snow storage plan, and a lighting plan were provided.

Lori Clark said that the snow storage plan should be included in the Homeowners Association documents.

Jesse Steadman said that while the restrictive covenants and Homeowners Association documents aren't necessary to review prior to plan endorsement, the Board will review those at a later time.

Jesse Steadman said that included in the original decision is the documentation of current conditions of Boxboro Road, which isn't necessary for plan endorsement, but will be discussed later.

### **Regency at Stow Open Space- Approval Not Required Plan**

Seth Donohoe reviewed the ANR plans for Regency at Stow to create a separate parcel of land to be accepted by the Town as Open Space. Seth Donohoe said that the ANR plans are consistent with the recorded plan, creating a Parcel X and incorporating a 25' sidewalk easement, allowing for the frontage on Boxboro Road to be conveyed to the Town for future widening. Seth Donohoe explained that it is drawn in different ways on the plan in an effort to mitigate any timing issues, wanting to be clear that Regency isn't cut off from its frontage.

The Board agreed that the plan should only include one parcel X.

*Ernie Dodd moved to authorize either Jesse Steadman or Steve Quinn to endorse the Approval Not Required Plan for Open Space at Regency at Stow.*

*Len Golder Seconded.*

**VOTED: 3-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Len Golder-Yea).**

### **Regency at Stow- Minor Modification**

Jesse Steadman said that Regency at Stow submitted a request for a minor modification, as the original permit stated that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) would need to approve units to the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) prior to the issuance of the first building permit, which could create significant timing concerns.

The Board agreed that the decision can be amended to tie SHI approval to the 10<sup>th</sup> Certificate of Occupancy.

### **Regency at Stow- Discussion of Public Walking Path Plans**

Jesse Steadman said that in the decision, the public walking path plans were listed as needing to be reviewed by both the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board. The

Conservation Commission stated preference for an alternate safety fence, perhaps a post and rail fence rather than chain link. Seth Donohoe said that the Conservation Commission can note this in their order of conditions.

The Board approved the public walking path plans, as long as the safety fence is constructed to be in keeping with the rural character of the town.

### **Letter to Selectmen- Regency at Stow land donation**

The Board discussed the language of a letter to the Board of Selectmen that describes the intention behind the donation of frontage at the Regency at Stow site. Ernie Dodd and the Board discussed including more detail regarding the timing of the transfer, which will take place at Town Meeting.

### **Lot 7 Goshen Lane Discussion**

The Planning Board discussed their site walk and the conversation with Mark Bobrowski from November 15<sup>th</sup>. The Board reviewed ANR requirements and discussed private right of ways and considered the legality of subdivisions built off of them.

### **Lower Village Improvement Project**

Jesse Steadman provided an update on the Lower Village Complete Streets project and described the next steps of the project, including negotiations with Howard Stein Hudson. The Board discussed the scope of work remaining, budgeting, and the path towards completion of the project.

*Len Golder moved to authorize Jesse Steadman and Lori Clark to proceed with ongoing negotiations with Howard Stein Hudson, without dispersing funds.*

*Ernie Dodd Seconded.*

**VOTED: 3-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Len Golder-Yea).**

### **Budget Discussion- FY 2018**

The Board discussed the major line items to be on the Planning Department budget for FY 2018, including housing, the Lower Village Complete Streets project, Gleasondale projects, and traffic safety planning.

### **Meeting Adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Valerie Oorthuys