

STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF
TUESDAY, December 21, 2004

Present Sandra Gibson-Quigley, Chair
Thomas Creamer
James Cunniff
Thomas Kenney
Jennifer Morrison
Milton Raphaelson
David Yaskulka

Also present: Lawrence Adams, Town Planner

S. Gibson-Quigley called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and read the agenda. The minutes of December 7, 2004 were reviewed. L. Adams commented that these minutes were written without the benefit of a videotape and offered to table them or accept amendments. S. Gibson-Quigley felt that if the motions were correct the minutes could be approved.

Motion: to accept the minutes of December 7, 2004, as presented, by J. Cunniff
2nd: M. Raphaelson
Discussion: None
Vote: All in favor

ANR'S

Charles Morse – 22 River Road (the house number had been corrected from the plan presented at the December 7th meeting) – Tauper Land Survey – 3 lots - Revision 0

Philip Messenger – 1 Ladd Road – Para Land Survey – to accommodate a septic system 0

OF PARCELS CREATED 0

OLD BUSINESS

Spring Hill Estates – Bond Release Request – Mr. Kent Pecoy – Due to flooding and a request from the Conservation Commission for additional detention area to protect the properties southwest of Lake Road, this bond had not been released. The work had been completed to the satisfaction of the DPW Director who supported the release of the remaining \$37,671.11 more or less. A review of the quality of the infrastructure would be conducted before the roadway was accepted by the Town as a public way to be sure it met the Town's standards. This review request would require that any necessary repairs be made to the bituminous concrete, berms and catch basins. The bounds would need to be installed to define the roadway's layout and a meets and bounds description from a survey must be provided. T. Creamer expressed a concern with releasing the bond when work might be needed in the future to ensure that the roadway's condition is acceptable before acceptance by the Town, even if this work was outside of the scope from the approved subdivision. L. Adams emphasized that the Board could not hold bond monies from a developer if the infrastructure had been completed as detailed on the subdivision plans. The Board needed to determine if it could hold, on future subdivisions, monies for roadway repairs if there was a time delay between the completion of the subdivision and the roadway's acceptance by the Town as a public way. The Board felt that the developer should be responsible for the road's maintenance until it became a public way. S. Gibson-Quigley reminded the Board that a school bus turnaround had been an issue within the subdivision and

that since the approval of this project, L. Adams had redone the subdivision rules and regulations which the Board adopted to protect the Town from these types of situations in the future.

Motion: to release the Pecoy Performance Bond in the amount of \$37,671.11 more or less, by T. Kenney
2nd: T. Creamer
Discussion: None
Vote: All in favor

DISCUSSION ON ELDERLY DEFINITION

The Board made the following comments relative to the definition of elderly –

- When considering these aged projects the Town’s Bylaws should be respected and not “bent” to accommodate the developers for “active adults” community projects;
- Felt the needs of the elderly and the disabled were greater than the “active adults” and therefore the bylaws should allow for flexibility with elderly projects;
- Some members were still not clear as to which age group they felt should be supported for this definition and what its impact would have on zoning;

L. Adams suggested that the intent of the bylaw, as written, was not affected, but that the Fair Housing Act recognized ages fifty-five or sixty-two in terms of elderly and not age sixty as currently presented in the Town’s Bylaws (adopted 1983) Section 5.02(j). A change to one of these two age groups would align the bylaws with the federal regulations in regards to age restricted communities. S. Gibson-Quigley noted that there would be zoning implications (higher density) to defining elderly.

- Felt the Town should make an effort to aid the individuals age sixty-two who are being “squeezed” where individuals age fifty-five were considered to be a wealthy population;
- Given that people were living longer, to say age fifty-five was elderly was inaccurate;
- Would the Town have a more stable population for a longer period of time if it defined individuals age fifty-five to be elderly;
- For consideration, perhaps the tax base provided by the “active adult, aged fifty-five communities” taxpayer would be of value to the individuals being “squeezed”;
- The market for active adult was geared more to age fifty-five than sixty-two;
- Age fifty-five would be more inclusive than age sixty-two; and
- Strongly suggested that the bylaw should be changed to age sixty-two when defining elderly and the handicapped allowing for higher density, less open space and greater numbers of traffic concentrations and with an additional bylaw, to define the age restricted active adult communities to age fifty-five thus helping to promote this group by providing a clearly defined community with walking trails, bird sanctuaries and well preserved wetlands.

S. Gibson-Quigley suggested the active adult community could be researched and looked into through workshops under the Dialog for the Future. She felt it was necessary to determine what type of housing development the Town needed and wanted to encourage. The Board also recognized that older residents expressed the desire for affordable housing so their young adult children could live within the Town. Members supported T. Kenney’s suggestion for two bylaws, one to address active adults age fifty-five and one addressing elderly at age sixty-two.

OLD BUSINESS (cont.)

Proposed Board Workshop Series – A Discussion – L. Adams presented the Board with a list for potential workshops subjects –

- Training – zoning, subdivision, ANR’s, scenic roads, public hearings, opening meetings, conflict of interest, ethics, disclosures;
- Administration – Site Plan Review, time management, communications, web utilization, meetings, agendas;

Commenting on time management, T. Creamer offered for consideration that the Board allow the Town Planner to review ANR's and specific Site Plan Review requests outside of meeting times in an effort to provide more productive dialog and work during Board meetings. S. Gibson-Quigley felt these issues were for public discussion and that it was important for all Board members to participate in the discussions in the instance that there were questions when an issue "came back" to the Board. Other members felt this would create more work for L. Adams. Given the Board's interest in having dialog on various topics other than agenda items, L. Adams suggested that it set aside one hour every other month on the Board's second monthly meeting for such business. S. Gibson-Quigley recommended starting these meetings at 6:30 PM with the hopes that subcommittee work be come from these discussions. D. Yaskulka commended L. Adams for his work on initiating digital mapping since it would provide important data when developing parcels within the Town.

- Interactions with other permitting boards and departments – S. Gibson-Quigley would like to know what these other board and committees looked at when reviewing a project.
- Planning and Community Goal Setting – Dialog for the Future, Comprehensive Plan 1998, Open Space Plan 1999, Growth Management, Conservation Open Space, Zoning Districts and Uses, Historic Preservation.

There was comment that it would be helpful to have a better line of communication between the Board and the Conservation Commission when reviewing projects.

L. Adams would set up a workshop for January 25th at 6:30 PM to discuss the first topic of issues – the Board's authority and its responsibilities.

Motion: to adjourn, by M. Raphaelson
2nd: J. Cunniff
Discussion: None
Vote: All in Favor

Adjournment at 8:35 PM

Next meeting dates - January 4th January 25th
 February 8th February 15th