

STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF
TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 2007

On a roll call made by Ms. Morrison, Clerk the following members were present:

Present: Tom Creamer, Chair
James Cunniff
Penny Dumas
Jennifer Morrison, Clerk
Sandra Gibson-Quigley
Bruce Smith

Also Present: Jean Bubon, Town Planner
Diane Trapasso, Administrative Assistant

ABSENT: Russell Chamberland

The regular meeting of the Planning Board was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chairman.

Mr. Creamer read the agenda.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

On behalf of the Planning Board, I would like to extend our thanks to Mrs. Kippenberger, Mrs. Bubon, Mr Dave Barnicle and the members of the Conservation Commission for taking the time to meet with us this evening in what we hope will be the beginning of a process of ongoing dialogue for both entities.

Certainly both the ConCom and the Planning Board have two very distinct and different charges relative to the execution of our responsibilities, but ultimately our roles are not so dissimilar in that we are both obligated with ensuring the very best regulatory oversight, deliberation, and determinations possible, while balancing the rights of proponents that appear before us with our obligation to the Town of Sturbridge as guided by Massachusetts General Laws, the General Bylaws, and Zoning Bylaws of Sturbridge.

The ConCom is charged with administering the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, the Rivers Protection Act, as well as the Town of Sturbridge Regulations and Policies, so as to ensure the protection of wetlands, related water resources, and adjoining land areas in Sturbridge.

The Planning Board on the other hand (as directed by M.G.L. via a Master Plan or Strategy Document and articulated by the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative), is charged with planning for inevitable growth, and to do so in a manner which:

- minimizes costs and conflicts,

- ensures clean water and air,
- provides for a healthy economy with local jobs
- assures good schools and other general services
- provides for housing appreciation, availability, and affordability
- ensure the efficient use of taxes
- strives for adequate recreational areas and open space
- and ensures the protection of natural and cultural resources.

To this end, Planning Board decisions are, and must be based upon MGL, the Subdivision Control law, Site Plan Review, the Town of Sturbridge General Bylaws, the Town of Sturbridge Zoning Bylaws, with additional guidance taken from the 1988 Master Plan and the more recent Dialogue for the Future.

With this in mind, it is not lost on this board that at times our determinations which are guided by law, may appear to be in conflict with criteria the ConCom may need or wish to impose, and thus communication and ongoing dialogue is important for all of us. We certainly recognize as well, that information provided to one board by a proponent may not always be consistent with information provided another board, and thus it is incumbent for us to ensure the information flow is consistent and accurate.

The following members of the Conservation Commission were present:

Kelly Kippenberger, Conservation Agent

Dave Barnicle, Chair

Ed Goodwin, Donna Grehl, Dave Mitchell and Frank Damiano

Both Boards agreed that there needs to be better communication between Boards and a better understanding of how each Board works. It was agreed to keep an open dialogue between the Boards and maybe have a liaison between Boards on major projects.

Both Boards agreed to meet again on May 8th for a work session at 6:30 PM.

Both Boards thanked each other for the opportunity to meet together. The meeting was successful in that it clarified a lot of questions and opened the door to communication.

ALEXANDRA MCNITT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CHAMBER – TOURISM UPDATE

Alex McNitt, Executive Director of the Chamber and Paul Wykes, Executive President of Old Sturbridge Village, spoke on tourism.

Ms. McNitt stated that tourism is down in Sturbridge. The chamber has a fund of \$300,000 from Mass Office of Travel & Tourism to research and gather data on the economic impact of tourism activities, including the following:

1. Retail
2. Dining
3. Lodging
4. Culture
5. Recreation

Ms. McNitt feels the Chamber and Town must work together to keep Sturbridge as a destination for people to stop at and enjoy. We need to bring to the Town, destination places and, identify what people are looking for and what our strengths are. What will it take to be competitive with places like Boston, the Berkshires and Cape Cod?

Mr. Wykes stated that OSV numbers are down. He feels that there is a need for more family activities. There is nothing after 5 PM; we need mini golf, movie theaters, entertainment. We need businesses to stay open longer, as well as offer nighttime entertainment.

We need to be more business friendly. There is concern about the businesses that are vacant on Route 20. We need to have more dialogue with the business community and try to work together and keep the economy going and growing.

Mr. Creamer and the Board members would like to see quarterly updates from the Chamber and work together with the Town Planner and businesses.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Made by Ms. Morrison to approve the amended minutes of April 10, 2007
2nd: Mr. Smith
Discussion: None
Vote: 6 – 0

TOWN PLANNER UPDATE

1. Working with Department Heads on a Guide Book for Developers.
2. Letter from Bertin Engineering requesting to Name Cul-de-sac Roadway of an Approved Definitive Subdivision.
3. D'Angelo Site was in violation, work stopped, seems to be on the right track now.
4. Email from a resident stating that individuals need to talk into the microphones at the meetings, so that the listening audiences can hear.
5. Master Plan is on the web site.
6. Mr. Smith stated that CMRPC had not had a copy of the Route 20 Study. He is bringing a copy to them.

7. Ms. Bubon stated that she was invited to speak at the breakfast meeting of the Community Business Association.

Ms. Dumas stated that she and the Town Planner and T. Goodwin toured the seven sites of preserve landscape with the Heritage Landscape Survey.

Next Meeting

May 8, 2007 – 6:30 PM

Meeting with the Conservation Commission

On a motion made by Ms. Quigley and seconded by Mr. Cunniff, and voted unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.