

STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2008

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

Present:

Tom Creamer, Chairman
Russell Chamberland
James Cunniff
Penny Dumas
Jennifer Morrison, Clerk
Sandra Gibson-Quigley
Bruce Smith

Also Present: Jean Bubon, Town Planner

Mr. Creamer called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:30 PM. and the roll was called by Ms. Morrison.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Made by Mr. Cunniff to approve the minutes of
February 12, 2008
2nd: Mr. Smith
Discussion: None
Vote: 6 – 0 – 1 with Mr. Chamberland abstaining

QUATTROCELLI & CONNELLY SANR PLAN

Mr. Leonard Jalbert was present to explain the plan presented to the Board. He explained that the plan submitted shows the re-division of two existing parcels. The re-division will allow the transfer of a 1,637 square foot parcel from Connelly to Quattrocelli. Mrs. Bubon recommended that the Board endorse the plan since it met the requirements.

Motion: Made by Mr. Chamberland to endorse the plan presented
2nd: Ms. Morrison
Discussion: None
Vote: 7-0

ANDRE CORMIER JR. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF COMPLETION DATE FOR THE LAUREL WOODS SUBDIVISION

At this time Mr. Cormier met with the Board to review progress made on the Laurel Woods subdivision off of Cedar Street and to request an extension of the completion date originally set at March 26, 2008. Mr. Cormier presented an outline to the Board that provides time frames for completion as follows:

1. Infrastructure on Cedar Street on or about June 30, 2008
2. Drainage structures, utilities, base and finish gravel, and base coat pavement on or about September 1, 2008
3. Landscaping, tree planting, sidewalks, on or about November 1, 2008
4. Finish asphalt by early Fall 2009.

Mr. Chamberland questioned the condition of Cedar Street after the sewer line was installed. Mr. Cormier explained the road had settled after the asphalt plants were closed for the season. That is what prevented the road from being repaired properly.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley asked what work had been completed. Mr. Cormier stated that the sewer was installed in Cedar Street, but the curb stops must be installed; the water line must still be installed to Cooper Road for the fire hydrant, and within the subdivision, there has been tree cutting and the land has been stumped and grubbed. Ms. Gibson-Quigley asked when the houses would be constructed. Mr. Cormier stated that they are hoping they can build two to three homes this fall. After they have installed the base coat and drainage structures they will come back to the Board to have lots released.

Motion: Made by Mr. Cunniff to grant the extension of completion date until November 1, 2009, with a status report to the Board at a January 2009 meeting
2nd: Mr. Smith
Discussion: None
Vote: 7-0

TOWN PLANNER UPDATE

Dynamics of Democracy – Ms. Bubon reported to the Board that two students had volunteered to work on a Community Service Project for the Department this semester. The students are Matthew Mitchell and Bryan Wilmot. They will be researching wind energy and wind turbine bylaws and will be creating an educational pamphlet and draft bylaw for consideration. It is hoped that they may present their proposal to the Board or at least representatives of the Board when the project is complete. Ms. Bubon will keep the Board aware as the project progresses.

Citizen Planner Training Collaborative – Registrations must be submitted this week.

Meeting Dates – March 11, 2008 will be held open at this time in case any SANR plans are submitted. If there are any submittals it will be investigated whether the Planning Board could meet where the Finance Committee meeting is being held.

March 26, 2008 has a full agenda. All of the cancellations from tonight will be re-scheduled for the date. Additionally, there is a Public Hearing for Pilot Travel Center's three year review.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Finance Committee – WWTF Issue - Mr. Creamer stated that he had been contacted by Kevin Smith, Finance Committee Chairman regarding its March 4th meeting. He had questioned what the Planning Board considered to be an appropriate size for the Wastewater Treatment Facility. Mr. Creamer stated that the Planning Board had not been asked for a formal opinion as a Board. He indicated that Mr. Smith thought it was important for the Board to weigh in on this and take a vote on its position.

Mr. Creamer stated that he had sent an email to Greg Morse regarding this issue. He read an email from Mr. Morse that stated in part that Mr. Morse thought that the 1.3 mgd facility was a reasonable minimum size for the facility.

Mr. Creamer stated that he thought that this was an important planning issue for the Board and that the board should offer a recommendation.

Mr. Cunniff relayed a story , the moral of which was: if we don't grow we die. He stated there are many expenditures facing the town and there needs to be funding other than the residential taxpayers. He also felt the town needed ample infrastructure resources especially for commercial and industrial expansion. He questioned how to interpret the cost to users chart taped to the meeting room wall.

Ms. Dumas indicated that she thought she knew the answer but did not feel comfortable explaining but that she believed that the Board needed to be educated before they could make a decision on this matter.

Mr. Creamer indicated that the Board had not been asked for its opinion over the past twelve months but that he did ask the Selectmen if the Board could be part of the process.

Ms. Dumas restated her discomfort

Mr. Creamer and Ms. Dumas debated the accuracy of the Board of Selectmen's numbers for the WWTF and how the flow would be allocated.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley stated that she agreed with Ms. Dumas citing her inability to attend or watch every meeting, though she does keep herself generally informed. She wasn't willing to provide a recommendation without any information or board level discussions. She tends to be on the side of the professionals that were hired and Mr. Malloy and Mr. Morse. As an individual she could say what she wanted but not as a Board member.

Mr. Chamberland stated that he was well-informed for several reasons, and as an individual he would agree with the professionals that we should build at minimum at 1.3 mgd facility. But, as a Board member he would agree with Ms. Gibson-Quigley that the Board should have been included in the proceedings.

Mr. Smith stated he had been clear on the issue from a planning perspective, but now was not sure he could adequately defend his position. As an individual he would agree with the hired professionals that 1.3 mgd is reasonable and feasible, but if pressed he is not sure he would feel comfortable stating why he made that decision as a Board member.

Ms. Morrison stated that as an individual she has every confidence that 1.3 mgd is appropriate. But, she agrees with the comments that this discussion has not occurred as a Board as the board was never asked to participate; the intricacies from a planning perspective have not been discussed and it would be inappropriate to make a recommendation as a Board.

Mr. Creamer stated that he would stand by the majority of the Board, but he would speak as a resident at the meeting.

Ms. Dumas restated her position. She stated to Mr. Creamer that he could not say at the meeting how many people spoke in support as individuals, and that he shouldn't say that he took a poll. She felt people could speak as individuals, but that the consensus was the Board did not have enough information nor discussion.

Mr. Creamer reiterated he would stand by the Board.

Mr. Chamberland stated that perhaps the Board should vote and that he would be willing to make a motion that the issue was discussed and that as individuals they all have opinions but did not feel they had the proper discussion to make a determination as a Board as a whole, and to note that in the minutes.

Motion:	Made by Ms. Dumas to respond to the Finance Committee that the Board did not have the proper information in front of it to deliberate on this issue and to make a recommendation as a Board
2nd:	Mr. Smith
Discussion:	None
Vote:	7-0

Zoning Articles - Mr. Creamer stated that he would like to have a televised presentation that would provide an overview of the proposed zoning articles for the Town Meeting. He felt that there was not a great job done at educating the public last year and was surprised at the reaction to a couple of the proposals brought forward. Additionally, through Ms. Bubon, he had reached out to the Sturbridge Retirement Community and offered a similar presentation to be held at that facility and he hoped to reach out to the condominium community as well since these two neighborhoods would be most impacted by anything on Route 15.

Ms. Dumas indicated that she had never heard of anything like this and wondered if it was legal to promote a zoning proposal. Mr. Creamer indicated that it would not be promoting a proposal it would be answering questions. Ms. Dumas responded that she was concerned with taking a proposal to a specific neighborhood and felt the Board should get a legal opinion.

Ms. Morrison indicated that the presentation has not yet been prepared and that it should not offer an opinion as to whether it is good or bad, it should just allow people to access information more easily.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley stated that she did not feel there was a problem with an informational meeting provided all articles were discussed, not just the Route 15 proposal. She stated that the Board had already voted to support the articles, so it was clear how the Board felt.

Mrs. Bubon indicated that it is quite common for planning departments to host informational sessions in specific neighborhoods. She stated that an information session does not change anything since the Board has already voted on every article and the only course of action at this time is for residents to vote at the Town Meeting. She stated that the session should be informational only and not offer an opinion one way or the other on each article. She stated that when she spoke to Mary Berry, of Sturbridge Retirement Cooperative, she got the impression that residents also had a lot of questions and concerns about the site plan review process and various standards that are in place. She thought that it would be a good opportunity to speak to the group about how the site plan approval process works and to go over the changes that are proposed to add landscaping and screening standards to that section as well.

It was decided that Thursday, March 27, 2008 would be the presentation at the Sturbridge Retirement Cooperative and that Mr. Creamer, Mr. Cuniff, Ms. Dumas, and Ms. Bubon would attend to make the presentation. This will be posted as an information session.

The meeting of April 15th will be used for a televised overview of the warrant articles. The informational materials will also be posted on the web site.

Sound Off – Mr. Smith presented the Board with a “Sound Off” clipped from the *Sturbridge Villager*. The piece stated that the Planning Board should be more “business friendly” and cited the conditions of no work on State holidays imposed upon G & F Industries as an example of being business unfriendly. Mr. Smith stated that it appeared to be miscommunication since the condition of no holiday work was for the construction only, not the manufacturing operation. He stated that since there is a recreation area there that was an appropriate condition. Ms. Gibson-Quigley stated that the Board has been consistent in imposing that condition and it applies only to exterior construction as a way to safeguard neighbors that may be home trying to enjoy the holiday.

On a motion made by Mr. Chamberland and seconded by Ms. Morrison, and voted unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM.