

STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2008

On a roll call made by Mr. Smith, the following members were present:

Present:

Russell Chamberland
James Cunniff
Penny Dumas
Jennifer Morrison, Clerk
Bruce Smith

Also Present:

Jean Bubon, Town Planner
Diane Trapasso, Administrative Assistant

Absent:

Tom Creamer
Sandra Gibson-Quigley

Ms. Morrison called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:30 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Made by Mr. Chamberland to approve the minutes of
May 6, 2008

2nd: Mr. Smith

Discussion: None

Vote: 5 – 0

**CORRESPONDENCE – RICHARD LEO REQUEST TO REVERT TO
WOODEN HANDICAP RAMP AT 13 MAIN STREET AS ORIGINALLY
APPROVED BY THE BOARD.**

Ms. Bubon read a letter from Mr. Leo requesting that the handicap ramp be reverted back to a wooden structure as originally approved. The estimates on the concrete ramp were just too high.

The Board had no issue with this request and was in favor of the wooden ramp. The wooden ramp was already approved by the Board as part of the original site plan on October 17, 2007.

TOWN PLANNER

Revised plans for 51 Technology Park Road have been submitted as required

Pre-Construction Meeting with Arland Tool was held on Friday, May 16, 2008

Next Meetings are June 3 and June 17, 2008 – if appointments have been made, the Board should plan to re-organize at the June 3rd meeting

**PILOT TRAVEL CENTER, THREE YEAR REVIEW – EXISTING SIGN
DOCUMENTATION 7 SITE COMPLIANCE DOCUMENTATION.**

Ms. Blakeley of Bertin Engineering spoke on behalf of the applicant. Ms. Blakeley stated that this report was prepared as a requirement of the three-year site plan review process by the Town. During the review process questions arose regarding the number and type of signs, and if signs were in compliance with the Sign Bylaws of the Town.

Ms. Blakeley stated that a new snow storage area is shown on the plan and has been approved by the Conservation Commission. As requested by the Conservation Commission Trash and Snow Management Plan has been submitted and approved by the Conservation Commission. The plan does indicate that a compliance log will be maintained by the site manager.

Ms. Blakeley stated that sheets L-1 and L-2 of the plans show the approved landscape plan with a current status table on the plantings. There are 29 dead or missing trees and fifteen additional trees that have been planted that were not part of the original approved landscape plan

Ms. Blakeley stated that Pilot is requesting that no re-planting be required at this time but that they will remove all the dead plantings. The reason for this request is that Pilot Travel plans a major site re-design in the very near future.

Ms. Bubon stated that she would agree to this request.

A total of 24 signs were found on the site and one offsite. The one permitted offsite was determined to be missing. Nineteen of the on-site signs were associated with Pilot or general site conditions and six were associated with the Quality Inn. Included with the nineteen signs associated with Pilot are signs for the former Sturbridge Isle (total seven signs). Two of these signs are located on the un-used restaurant building, three are at the site entrances and two are in the restaurant parking lot.

The existing Sign Permits associated with Pilot Travel Centers were provided by the Building Department. The Signs Permit numbers are listed in the report.

Ms. Bubon stated that there were nine signs found to be non-compliant with the sign bylaw. The proposal is to remove seven of the signs and to request a variance to the size limitation for Signs 17 and 18 (the “All Cars” signs). Two additional directional signs will be installed stating :”Truck Entry” and “Car Entry”; these signs will be exempt from zoning. Ms. Bubon stated that all non-compliant signs be removed within sixty days with the exception of Signs 17 and 18.

The Board feels that the Stop Sign needs to be replaced immediately; not having a Stop Sign is a safety issue. The Board wants the Stop Sign replaced within 15 days.

Ms. Blakely has been in contact with Mass Highway to replace the signs in the right-of-way.

Ms. Bubon stated that a Guardrail Repair and Replacement Procedure and a Guardrail and Bollard Inspection Log have been submitted.

Ms. Bubon thanked Ms. Blakeley for all her hard work and research with this project.

- Motion:** Made by Mr. Chamberland to approve Pilot Travel Center, Three Year Review with the following three conditions:
1. Stop sign replaced within 15 days and maintained continuously
 2. All non-compliant signs be removed within sixty days with the exception of Signs # 17 & 18. These signs shall be allowed while the applicant is going through the variance process. If a variance is not granted by the ZBA, then these signs shall be removed and replaced with zoning compliant directional signs within sixty days of the expiration of the appeal period for that decision.
 3. No re-planting is required because Pilot Travel Center plans a major site re-design in the near future. Remove all dead plantings within thirty days. A replanting plan shall be submitted no later than February 1, 2009 if the site re-design plan has not been submitted for Site Plan Review. The plan shall be reviewed by the Board and all planting agreed to in that shall be installed no later than June 1, 2009.

2nd: Mr. Smith

Discussion: None

Vote: 5 – 0

ALEX McNITT, DIRECTOR OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, TO DISCUSS THE SIGN BYLAW.

Ms McNitt stated that she has received a lot of feedback from the business community about being frustrated with the temporary sign bylaw. The limitation of three per year is very restrictive for advertising purposes. The businesses feel that they are challenged in doing promotions and cannot be competitive. She also stated that the enforcement of this bylaw is not the same for all. There is also a lack of clarity regarding the temporary sign bylaw criteria. Some businesses were told that a-frame signs need to be re-enforced in the ground.

The Board could not find this restriction in the bylaw.

The Board and Ms. Bubon felt that they should meet with the businesses and residents and discuss what changes they would like to see, and work together on a new proposal.

Ms. Belforte, Chair of the Design Review Committee, stated that they are working with the Host on changing their sign design. They are making the sign smaller with slats on the bottom to accommodate special event promotions.

Ms. Bubon stated to Ms. McNitt that a bylaw change is a comprehensive and lengthy process even before it goes before the Town at the Annual Town Meeting for a vote.

Ms. Bubon stated that the Board would discuss and maybe do a survey and check other tourist communities and see how their sign bylaws work. Lines of communication with Ms. McNitt would remain open as the Board worked on this issue.

TOWN PLANNER UPDATE

Ms. Bubon outlined her goals for the year:

- Low Impact Development Bylaw
- Open Space Residential Design (Cluster, Flexible Development)
- Re-Write Multiple Dwelling Project Bylaw
- Update subdivision regulations so that the standards are consistent with current practices (stormwater bylaw, tree planting details, bonds and release, etc.)
- Design Review Guidebook
- Housing Plan
- Open Space Mapping
- Develop a Long Range GIS Plan detailing additional layers to be created, as well as costs and timeframes for this work
- Map hydrant and stormwater infrastructure for inclusion in the GIS

Outstanding Goals

- Inclusionary Housing Bylaw
- Open Space Residential Design

Misc. Town Planner Action Items

- Update Planning Board regulations
- Prepare a Proposed Scope of Services & Request for Qualifications for potential Master Plan update
- Temporary Sign Bylaw

Outstanding Zoning Study Committee Items

- Definitions
- Require $\frac{3}{4}$ acre in all Suburban Residential Districts regardless of whether or not the lot is served by Town water and sewer. Currently a minimum lot size of $\frac{1}{2}$ acre is permitted if the lot is served by Town water and sewer.
- Capping building size in the Commercial District to 75,000 square feet

OLD/ NEW BUSINESS

Park & Ride

- Ms. Budon to ask Mr Malloy, why & when the existing location was picked
- Board of Selectman or Mr. Malloy to ask the Turnpike Authority if the present location is the only location or can an additional areas be created
- Inadequate/Inappropriate signage and lighting for the existing location
- Can it be advertised on Town website and Chamber website
- Board will write letter to Selectman outlining these questions/issues and asking they investigate

NEXT MEETING

June 3, 2008

On a motion made by Mr. Cunniff and seconded by Mr. Smith and voted unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.