

**STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF
TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 2012**

Ms. Gibson-Quigley called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:30 PM. On a roll call by Ms. Dumas the following members were present:

Present: Charlie Blanchard
Russell Chamberland
James Cunniff
Penny Dumas
Brian McSweeney
Ginger Peabody
Sandra Gibson-Quigley, Chair

Also Present: Jean M. Bubon, Town Planner

Absent: Diane Trapasso, Administrative Assistant

Ms. Gibson-Quigley opened the meeting and read the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Made by Mr. Blanchard to accept the amended minutes of February 28, 2012.
2nd: Mr. Cunniff
Discussion: None
Vote: 6 – 0 – 1 (Ms. Peabody)

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN PRESENTATION

Materials presented:

Town of Sturbridge Open Space and Recreation Plan 2011

The following members of the Open Space Committee were present: Carol Goodwin, Elissa Gelfand, Lynne Sarty, and Randy Ellithorpe. Pat McGarrah, Trails Committee member and contributor to the Open Space and Recreation Plan was also present.

The purpose of this meeting was to provide Planning Board members with a copy of the final approved Open Space and Recreation Plan and to discuss implementation of the Plan. Members discussed specific goals of the Plan that the Planning Board and Town Planner were charged with working towards. The Seven Year Action Plan was reviewed and high priority items were highlighted. The link between Open Space and Recreation and economic

development was also discussed with access to the Quinebaug River and linkages to shops and eateries from trails highlighted as one mechanism to promote economic development. Examples of other towns such as Burlington, VT and Putnam, CT were also provided as good examples of communities that were able to integrate trails into the economic development and livability aspects of the communities. Finally, Pat McGarrah provided an overview of the Walker Pond Development as one that was created many years ago with linkages through the development via a network of paths available to the residents of that neighborhood to use. He also discussed potential linkages to the proposed regional trail network from that community.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley stated that it has been a very positive experience over the past several years to watch all of the various planning activities coming together with common goals. Additionally, it is refreshing to see so many Boards and Committees working together to achieve these goals.

BURGESS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – PUBLIC HEARING FOR SITE PLAN MODIFICATION

The Public Hearing for Town of Sturbridge for modification of the Site Plan for the Burgess Elementary School located at 45 Burgess School Road was opened at 7:08 PM and the legal notice was read.

Mr. Jeffrey Squire of The Berkshire Design Group was present to explain the proposal to the Board.

Materials presented:

- Cover letter dated February 27, 2012;
- Application for Site Plan Review submittal date March 7, 2012 (left out of initial submittal and provided electronically on March 7, 2012);
- Stormwater Drainage Supplemental Summary for Burgess Elementary School, Sturbridge, MA dated February 17, 2012 and prepared by The Berkshire Design Group, Inc., 4 Allen Place, Northampton, Massachusetts, 01060;
- A plan entitled “Additions and Renovations to the Burgess Elementary School, Sturbridge, Massachusetts – Application for Special Permit and Site Plan Review” dated 02/27/2012 and containing Sheets L304, L404, L504. Plans were prepared by Drummey Rosane Anderson, Inc. (DRA) 141 Harrick Road, Colby Hall, Newton Centre, Ma. 02459-2218. (Plans are now revised through March 23, 2012)

Mr. Squire explained to the Board that the Site Plan, originally approved on May 18, 2010 did not include work on the existing baseball fields at the southern-most portion of the site. The proposal now is to construct one full size baseball field, a sand volley ball court, gravel parking area for 18 cars and a paved walkway which provides a pedestrian connection between the gravel parking area associated with this project and the school site. He stated

that this would replace the two existing fields at that location that are in fair to poor condition.

Mr. Squire stated that the plan has been revised in response to staff concerns. The modifications included the widening of the access drive to 18' and the rain garden had been elongated and the depth has been reduced in response to safety concerns raised by the DPW Director. There are also proposed signage locations noted on the plan in response to concerns raised by the Town Planner. The signs will advise visitors that additional parking is available at Burgess School. If the Board approves this plan, a modification must be submitted to the Conservation Commission.

Ms. Dumas asked for the access to the upper school site to be clarified. Mr. Squire stated that the access was a walkway only for pedestrian use; not vehicular use. Ms. Peabody asked if any bleachers were proposed. Mr. Squire stated not as part of this proposal. That is something the school may address in the future.

Motion: Mr. McSweeney to close the Public Hearing at 7:25 p.m.
Second: Ms. Peabody
Discussion: None
Vote: 7-0

Motion: Mr. McSweeney to approve the Site Plan Modification was approved as requested as shown on the revised plans dated March 23, 2012 with the following conditions of approval:

1. All construction and site improvements shall be in conformance with the plans submitted and approved by the Planning Board.
2. All State and Local Zoning Bylaws, Building Codes and Regulations must be adhered to.
3. All other necessary permits must be obtained prior to the start of construction.
4. The site shall be kept in a neat and orderly condition throughout the construction process.
5. Exterior construction shall only occur during the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8:00 a.m. to Noon on Saturday. No exterior construction shall occur on Sundays or State Holidays. The applicant shall notify the Planning Department office forty-eight hours prior to the start of construction and shall provide emergency contact information to the Planning Department and Police Department prior to the start of construction.

Second: Ms. Dumas
Discussion: None
Vote: 7-0

**PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER AMENDMENTS TO THE TOWN
ZONING BYLAW AND ZONING MAP AS RELATED TO THE HISTORIC
COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AND DEFINITIONS**

The Public Hearing for Town of Sturbridge to consider amendments to the Zoning Bylaw and Map as related to the Historic Commercial District and was opened at 7:35 PM and the legal notice was read. Several interested parties were present.

Materials Reviewed:

A document entitled “Proposed Definition Changes”;
A document entitled “Proposed Amendment Chapter Thirteen – Use Regulations – Historic Commercial District (HC)”;
A document entitled “Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Zoning Map”;
A letter dated February 28, 2012 from Jean M. Bubon, Town Planner on behalf of the Historic Commercial District Review Sub-Committee regarding the Historic Commercial District proposal; and
A map entitled “Town of Sturbridge Proposed New District Delineation Historic Commercial District February 1, 2012”.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley provided a brief overview to those present. She explained that a goal of the Master Plan was to consider revising the Historic Commercial zone and to extend the boundaries of the district to include all of the Publick House property, but to do so in a manner that provided appropriate protections for the historic nature of the area. Basically she indicated that a main goal was to find a way to preserve the look and feel of the Town Common area and allow development and redevelopment within the District.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley provided an overview of the definition changes and the proposed changes for Chapter 13. She stated that the bylaw would apply to those projects subject to site plan review; mainly commercial buildings. Single family dwellings would not be affected by the changes proposed. She stated that the bylaw is broken down into three sections, one for preservation and adaptive re-use, one for additions to buildings, and one for infill development. All sections have the goal of trying to keep the area looking as it does and retaining the same visual appearance. The bylaw provides specific criteria that will guide both the developer and the Board.

Ms. Dumas stated that she agrees with the intent of the bylaw and hopes that the bylaw accomplishes that goal of retaining the same look from the Common. She is a bit concerned with the use of the words “when possible and when practicable” although she was a member of the sub-committee. She referenced an email from Town Counsel that suggested that he could foresee a challenge if the Planning Board imposed a condition of site plan approval based on its determination that retention of historic features was practicable and the owner asserted that the condition was not financially practicable. Counsel indicated that the group may want to add language that while costs may be considered just because something costs

more than another option would not in itself render that impracticable. She stated that this had not been incorporated into the draft. Ms. Bubon stated that the other option Counsel provided as to remove the terms where practicable and that the Sub-Committee had gone through and deleted most such phrases.

Mr. Blanchard stated that he was on the original Route 15 Study Committee and he said that the intent was to preserve the unique character of the Town Common area. He stated that he though the Sub-Committee did a great job on the Draft Bylaw indicating that the proposal inserts guidelines that do not currently exist. He believed the bylaw as proposed provides so much more control over what happens in the District and that it provides reasonable direction for developers. He also stated that he was working with the Sub-Committee for a time and that the group had a great deal of discussion and debate on the zoning map amendment. He was pleased with the final map proposal since he thought that it would be a mistake not to include the Public House property and he also thought it was a wise decision by the Sub-committee not to recommend extending the District any further than it had at this time.

Mr. Cunniff agreed stating that it was also important to note that the Sub-Committee met with the Public House up front to discuss its future plans so that a bylaw could be developed that met both their needs and the town's needs.

Mr. Smith stated that in all he was in favor of the overall plan.

Ms. Dumas stated that she attended every Sub-Committee meeting and is supportive of the Public House. She raised her concerns this evening because she wanted to make sure that the intent of this proposal was well documented tonight.

Motion: Mr. Chamberland to close the Public Hearing at 8:06 p.m.
Second: Ms. Peabody
Discussion: None
Vote: 7-0

Motion: Ms. Dumas to support amending the proposed amendments to Chapter Two as presented this evening.
Second: Mr. Chamberland
Discussion: None
Vote: 7-0

Motion: Ms. Dumas to support amending the Historic Commercial District as shown on the map presented dated February 1, 2012.
Second: Mr. Chamberland
Vote: 7-0

Motion: Ms. Dumas to support amending Chapter 13 as per the draft dated 2/29/2012 and as amended 3/27/2012.
Second: Mr. Chamberland
Discussion: None

Vote: 7-0

Ms. Dumas noted that she did make the motions because she is supportive of the proposal with the intent of keeping the fabric and feel of the historic town common area.

TOWN PLANNER UPDATE

Ms. Bubon advised the Board that Cups n' Cakes bakery will be opening at 425 Main Street.

Street Acceptance documents have been provided to Mr. Suhoski for The Highlands and The Sanctuary.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Peabody commended the Historic Commercial District Sub-Committee and the Open Space Committee on their recent efforts. She thought the outcome of both groups was tremendous.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting date is April 10, 2012.

On a motion made by Mr. Chamberland, and seconded by Mr. Cunniff and voted 7 – 0, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.