

Sutton Planning Board
Minutes
July 15, 2013

Approved _____

Present: R. Largess, T. Connors, J. Anderson
Staff: J. Hager, Planning Director

General Business:

Minutes: Tabled until next meeting for lack of quorum of those who were in attendance.

Form A Plans: None

Correspondence/Other:

Potential Bylaw Changes – J. Hager presented the Board with a list of potential bylaw changes recommended by the Master Plan.

Low Impact Development Bylaw- This bylaw would encourage less invasive/mechanical methods of dealing with development impacts like drainage. It tends toward less piping and structures and more “old School” methods like open swales and rain gardens to process storm water. These methods require less expensive maintenance and repair and potential problems are more readily recognized and resolved.

Village Center Zoning- This change would potentially allow more uses in areas like Sutton Center. It would need to be combined with size limits and design guidelines to maintain the integrity of these areas. The areas would likely be defined by the limits of existing State and National historic district boundaries.

Design Guidelines – This bylaw would give guidance and the scale/massing of structures, preferred materials, types of roof lines, etc. that will ensure development that is unique but still in keeping with the Blackstone Valley and the Town.

Sign Bylaw Changes- This bylaw is in need of an update to deal with new methods of signage and generally needs to be better organized.

Inclusionary Housing Bylaw- This bylaw would require a percentage of affordable housing on most new housing developments.

Form Based Zoning- This type of bylaw is similar to a design bylaw but focuses on new development maintaining the same form as existing development. An example is new housing in the village areas being scaled smaller and placed close to the street like older development to maintain the integrity of the villages.

Earth Removal Bylaw Changes- This bylaw needs revisions to make the regulations consistent with actual permitting process. There is currently an active General Bylaw Review committee reviewing and recommending a revamp of this entire bylaw. The Planner recommended that the Board allow the Committee to make these changes. They have consulted with the department in their work and are expected to bring recommendations in the spring.

Re-Zonings- The Board needs to decide if they want to pursue re-zonings like changing the Industrial zoning of Aggregate to Office Light Industrial which will allow most of the same uses but will also allow some retail and better permitting control. The Board also discussed more innovative zoning like Transit Oriented development which would allow a mix of uses that would take advantage of the rail line.

R. largess noted they were novices with respect to Earth Removal. He suggested that perhaps the Board meeting with a veteran, like John Slocum, to make sure before changes are made to the Earth Removal Bylaw that they weren't there for a reason. The Board also agreed sign companies should be included in discussion about changes to the sign bylaw to gain insight on new types of signage, etc.

T. Connors noted that the Board needs to ensure that zoning accommodates growing technology like electric cars, etc.

The Board noted they will not bring action on all of these issues to this falls Town meeting. They asked that sample bylaws for a few subjects be brought to each of the next three Board meetings. They will begin discussion at their next meeting with LID Bylaws, Sign Bylaw changes and re-zoning.

Public Hearing Scenic Road – 281 Central Turnpike

J. Anderson read the Hearing notice as it appeared in The Chronicle.

Brian Darling and David Phaneuf were present to discuss re-building the rubble wall along the frontage of 281 Central Pike. They plan to use existing stone, but will likely need more stone. The Board advised they can bring in more stone but it needs to be the same type of stone. Mr. Darling also asked if they need to fill in all the beaks that have developed over the years or can they maintain some of the breaks, close others and make some adjustments to the widths of the openings? The Board stated as long as stones that are removed stay on the property, breaks can be adjusted to accommodate the practical use of the property.

On a question about interior stone walls and their re-use, Jen Hager explained that the scenic roadway law protects trees and stone walls along the front boundary of the lot which is also the Right of way line for the Towns ownership of each street. There is an additional State law that says you cannot alter interior stone walls if they are boundary markers. So if the stone wall represents your side or rear lot line you cannot alter it, but if the stone wall was established in the interior of lot through past farming practices as soil was tilled and stones removed and/or to separate areas inside the lot, this stone can be relocated, but should still stay on the property.

The applicant stressed their wall will not be a flat look. Their stones are rounded boulders. They would like to install slightly higher elements at the driveway that would need to be cemented, but the cement will not be visible. The stone wall will be about 32" high and be dry laid. The "pillars" would be about 12" to 18" higher and would have cement on the interior that would not be visible.

R. largess thanked the applicants for coming in instead of just proceeding without the proper permitting. He noted he previously hayed this lot and the breaks were largely for the agricultural use of the property. The location and width of the future structure of the wall can reflect the current use of the property, but stressed the stones need to stay on the property.

Motion: To allow the rebuilding of the stone wall at 281 Central Pike per the drawings and materials presented with the following conditions: R. Largess

1. The applicant shall use existing stones to rebuild the wall and will supplement only with similar stones
2. The wall will remain located along the property line
3. The applicant can adjust the breaks in the wall, but any stones removed in this process will remain on the property

2nd: T. Connors
Vote: 3-0-0

Motion: To close the public hearing, R. Largess
2nd: T. Connors
Vote: 3-0-0

Motion: To adjourn, T. Connors
2nd: R. Largess
Vote: 3-0-0

Adjourned 7:50 P.M.