

Minutes, Regular Planning Board Meeting, March 20, 2014

Present: Diane Poland (Chair), Joe Strzegowski (Vice-chair), Dave Chichester, Mary McClintock and Dave Barten.

There were five agenda items:

(1) Minutes—the minutes for the meeting of March 6 were unanimously accepted;

(2) Zoning—Since the last few changes in the Protective Zoning Bylaws had been discussed with Peggy Sloan earlier in the day, the focus now was on presentation of the changes at Town Meeting. As members addressed the question it became clear to Dave C. that the real thrust of the presentation would be “selling” the proposed changes to residents who will not have known changes were an issue until looking at the Warrant.

This could be done in several ways. First, there may be an opportunity to make a presentation at the Pre-town Meeting on May 5, provided those present choose to hear the matter discussed.

Mary thought there should be, in any event, a two-sided handout that gives a thumbnail sketch of the proposed changes, which could be made available at both the Pre-Town and Annual Meetings. She volunteered to design this.

It was decided that at the Annual Meeting the Board should ask to be allowed a ten-minute presentation, in which a Powerpoint display will show the changes. It was also decided that Diane would introduce the subject, Joe would speak to the changes presented in the Powerpoint, and Mary would provide support as necessary. Joe will design the Powerpoint presentation, and Mary will edit it.

A rough draft of the power point, as well as the handout, will be presented at the Board’s meeting on April 3.

The members reminded themselves that the moratorium on accepting applications to create a marijuana dispensary ends at the Town Meeting, and that the process of creating a detailed Bylaw regarding them is just beginning, with Peggy Sloan’s help. For this reason, no actual detailed Bylaw is ready for the Town’s consideration, though there is mention in the “Use Table” under “Industrial Uses” that both “Medical Marijuana Cultivation & Processing” require Special Permits. For the present, this reference, should the “Use Table” and other changes be accepted, provides for a process, should an application be received.

(3) Town-owned Rose property—The Board members having been at the All-committee Meeting, chaired by Tom H., the discussion addressed how the Planning Board could fulfill its role as the Town’s planning body, given the need to detail further how different projects proposed for the property relate to each other and the property itself.

As to the state of these projects, the Planning Board had commissioned and received a professional study by Stockman Associates detailing where wetlands were located. The Housing Committee has a project in preliminary design phase; The Parks and Rec Committee already had a plan for a regulation-size soccer field, and the Sediment Mitigation project already in the works will lower nearly an acre by two feet to allow the river when in flood to flow into the area, thereby slowing it. "Idea" projects-- those tossed into the hopper, but having not yet been detailed-- include a community garden, and a riverside park that would include a gazebo and a walkway along the edge of the river. It has also been suggested that the property be left in its natural state.

After discussion, the Board decided by unanimous vote to ask Conway's ConCom for a formal "determination of applicability" of the Stockman report. Dave B. volunteered to send Jack Gates (Chair) a digital copy of the report, and request a determination on behalf of the Board.

Joe, who together with Jack Lochhead has been asked by the Selectmen to supervise the Flood Mitigation project on behalf of the Town, interjected that the project may be delayed a year, for there is need for a professional consultant to prepare permitting applications, and the process of hiring such a person is just getting under way.

The focus of the discussion became the role the Planning Board should assume in moving the disposition of the Rose property forward. It was clear from the All-Committee meeting that all vested interests had to be taken into account, as well as timing the likelihood being that the Mitigation project will be underway when one, two or three of the projects projected for the property will also be in some stage of development.

It was decided that to move forward the disposition of the Rose property the Board has to have Natural Heritage's input, since the agency could accept or reject various proposed uses.

Ruth Parnell, a former Chair of ConCom and a professional landscape architect, had suggested at the All-Committee meeting that there be a map that shows all proposed projects in their relationship to the property. This could be done by overlays for each project, which could be made by the Ashfield-based landscape architecture firm Dodson and Flinker.

The members thought that Ruth's suggestion was the best way to proceed in approaching Heritage. The members of the Board voted unanimously to contact the firm and invite a representative to its next meeting on April 3. As with the Stockman analysis, the Board would use its own funds to pay Dodson, should the members decide to have a map made. Diane volunteered to approach Dodson and invite a rep to the next meeting.

Tom H. had requested that all Boards and Committees represented at the All-Committee meeting direct to him answers to three questions: (1) What does the

Board/Committee want as a project? (2) What does the Board/Committee know factually about its project? (3) What is the Board/Committee doing, or will do, to bring its project into being? The members of the Planning Board directed Diane to list for Tom three items on its action agenda. The Board is (a) asking ConCom for a “determination of applicability” of the Stockman Report, (b) has already recommended to the Selectmen, at different times, that both the Flood Mitigation project and Senior Housing project be accepted as projects needing to be undertaken, (c) will approach Dodson about the creation of a map of overlays.

(4) The Center-village septic system-- It was decided by the members that the Board’s interest in studying the feasibility of establishing a center village septic system should not be linked to its effort to get projects delineated for the Rose property. In a short discussion about the septic system, it was decided that an article on the Warrant for Town Meeting should request that the Board’s earlier request for \$9,000 for a feasibility study be increased to \$12,000, so Weston & Sampson could study two sites where treatment plants and leach fields might be located.

Joe, as he has in the past, mentioned the existence of a study about a center-village system done in the early seventies, which it might be useful to look at it. Having discovered a copy in the Field Library, he thought he had given it to Diane, who in response thought she had given it to Dave B, who said he would look for it in what constitutes the Planning Board Archives.

(5) New/old business—The public notice of a vacancy on the Board created by Dave B’s decision not to run for another three-year term elicited no candidates. The other four members expressed their concern, given the need for five members, especially should a situation arise where a “super majority” of the Board has to make a decision, as required by law.

Dave B. decided to reverse his position, and place his name on the ballot at Town Election. To do so he needs a petition signed by twenty-five residents. As a condition of returning to the Board, should he be elected to a three-year term, he asked to be relieved of the tasks of recording minutes of meetings and also of being the representative from the Planning Board on the Community Preservation Committee.

The Board welcomed Dave’s decision and agreed to his two conditions. The members decided that minutes should be written on a rotating basis. Diane thought she might like to be the Board’s rep to the Community Preservation Committee. A formal vote making her the rep will be taken at the point when Dave, if elected, begins a new term on the Board.

There being no further business, the members unanimously voted to end the meeting at 8:30 pm. The next meeting of the Planning Board will be on April 3 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted, David Barten, clerk