

Pelham Planning Board
Meeting Minutes: Monday, December 16, 2019
Pelham Community Center

Present: Board members: Present: Judy Eiseman, Chair, Leslie Laurie and Lexi Dewey; Absent: Linda Spink and Peter Wilson

Members of the Housing Committee: Jim Lumley, Amy Spaulding-Fecher, Tilman Lukas, Ruth Elcan, Gail Kenney ; Board of Health Chair, Bill Pula

Others: Rusty Rowell, Otis Rowell, Pam Burris, Jefferson Johnson

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:15.

Tilman Lukas Chair of the Housing Committee discussed the potential purchase of the Rankin property at 8 Amherst Rd. Habitat for Humanity is interested in building 2 affordable single family homes on the 1.67 acre parcel which is in the Village Center Neighborhood District. There is currently 226' of frontage. Additional frontage of 24' is needed and will be donated by Tom Kegelman, the abutter at 18-22 Amherst Rd.

Judy Eiseman noted the need to check for potential environmental issues on the property including topography, setbacks and frontage requirements and that even when the lot dimensional requirements are met, an ANR approval does not mean the lot is buildable if it cannot meet environmental requirements of the Conservation Commission, including storm water management. Tilman Lukas mentioned that the project could take up to 2 years to complete.

Members noted that the Board and townspeople have demonstrated a commitment toward improving affordable housing availability in town and the Board welcomes affordable housing projects at appropriate sites that may become available.

Discussion on the proposed Chapter 40 B project. Tilman Lukas asked members of the Planning Board what their concerns are regarding the project. The following were noted:

Eiseman and others noted that the project keeps evolving and that until there is an actual proposal and plan, concerns will continue to be expressed which is natural since some townspeople are unaware of the project or only just becoming aware. Once a time line and actual proposal has been received, she indicated that the Board will offer specific comments and concerns that can be addressed through the process in which the ZBA, not the Planning Board, will make decisions under the state's 40B regulations.

In the meantime questions and concerns for the proponents to consider include:

- o Will Pelham residents have preference in the lottery for the apartments?
- o Are the apartments for the elderly, for families or both? How is that decision being made?
- o Will the Housing Committee notify the Pelham community about the project in a mailing and/or by holding meetings?

- o The need for transparency regarding the potential for conflicts of interest given that several people are on multiple town boards and committees. Eiseman read the letter to the Select Board approved by members of the Planning Board at the November meeting on the desirability of notification of potential conflicts of interest. This is intended to ensure that the public understands that many people wear more than one hat in small town government but that does not necessarily mean there is a true or legal conflict.
- o Environmental concerns due to the location of the site and the density of the proposed building of 28 apartments and 49 parking spaces. The developer intends to construct 7 additional apartments in the Petersen house which will involve extensive engineering and changes to the topography in the river front area.
- o Safety of the site due to its location on Amherst Rd with so many additional residents, cars and potential foot traffic. Traffic and speed concerns were discussed. Tilman Lukas noted that he thought the Planning Board should be addressing these issues. Judy Eiseman stated that although a traffic study has been done which gives some direction for improvements in the future, the Planning Board does not have jurisdiction regarding traffic calming improvements on Amherst Rd; these will cost money that is currently unavailable.

MassDOT and the town's DPW can make plans and the Planning Board will be very willing to be involved in discussions about how to achieve improvements, but Eiseman was not optimistic about changes being made in the near future. She encouraged Tilman Lukas to discuss the issues with Rick Adamcek, Pelham DPW Director.

Asked what the Board had envisioned for the site when planning the Village Center, Eiseman explained that with the zoning regulation passage, the Board had anticipated changes to occur over time and that this environmentally sensitive and topographically challenged site was thought to be a reasonable place for a home occupation, offices, small business or cafe-type enterprise or perhaps a multi-family home site. Nothing of the size or engineering complexity of creating a new road was contemplated. Planning Board members indicated that this "end run" around the new zoning promoted by the Housing Committee is not seen as "friendly" or appropriate for the site even though all agree that the developer and the Committee are attempting to satisfy various needs and desires expressed by townspeople.

Planning Board members requested additional meetings with the Housing Committee be scheduled both with the Committee and/or the 40B developer so that all receive the necessary updated information on the project as it moves forward. Members of the Housing Committee indicated that they would like to speak with the two absent Board members.

The Housing Committee left the meeting and the planning board meeting continued.

The November meeting minutes were approved. Judy Eiseman will meet with Anne Stoddard who submitted a letter of interest and her resume for the assistant to the planning board position. Duties include writing meeting minutes, filing and posting board meeting agendas and minutes. Suggested hourly wage is \$15 dollars per hour.

Rusty Rowell discussed the basement space in the Rhodes Building and how it could be used. Materials from various town boards must be sorted and stored in an organized way so that the space is available for use.

Planning board members approved the hiring of Otis Rowell, for \$20 dollars per hour, not to exceed \$500 dollars, to organize the material in the basement of the Rhodes Building. Otis is also digitizing some of the documents and locating maps that will benefit both the Planning Board and the Assessors.

Planning board members approved submitting a Staples bill for \$90.30 to reimburse Judy Eiseman for printer supplies.

Planning board members approved \$1200 dollars out of the Town Center account to pay PVPC staff member Becky Basch to complete the Pelham Permitting Guide and Site Plan Review procedure checklist and instructions for the Planning Board relating to the implementation of the Village Center Zoning Bylaw.

The semi-final draft will be distributed and discussed by members at the January 13th meeting and the project is expected to be completed by the end of January.

Discussion of the draft Preliminary Master Plan will be included in the January meeting agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lexi Dewey, Vice Chair