

Planning Board Minutes of the Regular Meeting August 10, 2020

Meeting held remotely via Zoom.

Members Present: Judy Eiseman, Lexi Dewey, Pete Wilson, Leslie Laurie, Anne Stoddard (recording)

Others attending: Rusty Rowell, Assessor; David Shanabrook, member of Select Board; Ruth Elcan, Gail Kenney, Barbara Cooper, Tilman Lucas, members of Housing Committee; Stacey McCullough; Peter Serafino, Tom Kegelman, HCDI; Brendon Stratton; Kevin Rothchild-Shea, Architecture Environmental Life, Inc.

Meeting called to order at 7:01 pm.

Announcements.

Conservation Committee will meet Thursday (8/13) at 7:00. Agenda includes the enforcement order for the Meeting House road property and wetlands/zoning issues the driveway.

Judy recently circulated the draft for the solar by-law to board members. She needs comments ASAP so it can be revised and ready for the Town Meeting Warrant. Leslie will check on the schedule for fall Town Meeting.

Should we have a discussion limiting marijuana sales within 200 yds. or 500 yds. of Town Center? We may need to redefine Town Center. Because the town voted overwhelmingly in favor of the marijuana referendum, there is not a moratorium on marijuana sales in town.

Matt Wollaver has brought up the issue of a pavilion. Money was approved about a year ago but the issue was dropped and no plan exists. More citizen input is needed.

The Board approves of a town-wide requirement to wear masks but feels it should come from the Board of Health. Leslie will contact Bill Pula to convey our support.

Presentation by developers and architect for Amethyst Brook Apts. of current plans for the 40B project.

Peter Serafino, Director of Real Estate Development for HCDI introduced the visitors and the presentation of the design for 22 Amherst Rd. Kevin Rothchild-Shea showed slides and discussed the design plans. He talked about the factors that were considered in the design including the applicable pieces of the by-laws and the rural character of the town. His slide show included drawings of the elevations from all sides, a site plan, etc. He then entertained questions:

1. Will the building look massive? The "L" shape and the eave line at the second floor will break up the look of a 3-story block.
2. What about landscaping? The hill is steeper than it looks in the drawing. They hope to manage the slope so it is longer and slower.
3. How many units per floor? Lower level 2, 1st floor 8, 2nd and 3rd floors 9 each. Total is 28. Plus 6 units at 20 Amherst Rd.
4. Is there a full basement or will it be built on a slab? The "L" will be on a slab because it is on ledge. The main part of the building will have a full basement.
5. Will there be cell phone and Wi-Fi service? The internet will be wired in.
6. What is the heating system? Energy Recovery Ventilators (ERVs) Electric with high performing heat recovery. There will be liquid propane for hot water. It will be solar ready as required by code.
7. What is the configuration of the apartments? All are 1 and 2 BR. (There will be 1 3BR apartment at 20 Amherst Rd)

8. What are the plans for 20 Amherst Rd? The plans are in process. They are in discussion with the Historical Commission.
9. How will the community room be administered? The property manager and maintenance staff will handle scheduling and cleaning, respectively. The priority will be for the use of residents.
10. Will there be high efficiency toilets and appliances? It will be the highest performing building in town including R40 or R50 walls.
11. Why is there not more glass facing the brook? Need to maintain “passive house” feature. Strike a balance between look at energy.
12. What is the time frame? Not much will happen in the next 90 to 120 days. They will send site plans to the Conservation Commission and meet with the Historical Commission. Will submit Chapter 40B application to the Zoning Board near the end of the year. The ZBA process is expected to take about 6 months. Then they will apply for funding. Construction is expected to start in about 1 year.
13. What are the most challenging issues? It is a complicated site. There will be a significant investment in infrastructure. Controlling costs. Funding takes time.
14. Next step is a more comprehensive plan for 20 Amherst Rd.
15. Q. for Tilman: What is the status of the Habitat House? Moving forward. He recently met with Adamcek (HWY superintendent) and Habitat to discuss driveway access. The site is being surveyed. They will bring the plans to the PB.
16. The town tabled the use of CPC funds for the 40B project. How does that impact the project? Not a problem.
17. The project calls for 34 units. Is there any consideration to reducing that number? It doesn't make sense to reduce the number of units because of economies of scale for construction and operation.

Note: The Planning Board will consider these questions and responses as it prepares an assessment for the ZBA public hearings.

Other business

Meeting House Road issue. There was more discussion of the problems at that location. It is now owned by the Bank of America but they are holding off doing anything for now. They will reimburse the town for mitigation expenses. Members of the PB are concerned and will look into options like the Quabbin Valley Health district.

The next meeting will be August 24, 2020 at 7:00PM. The main agenda item will be the solar by-law. Jeff Lacy will be invited. Send comments to Judy by August 18.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Stoddard