

PLANNING BOARD



19 WASHINGTON STREET
SHERBORN, MASSACHUSETTS 01770

MINUTES

June 27, 2012

Members present: Chairman John Higley, Robin Perera, John Stevens, Eric Johnson, Associate Grace Shepard, and Town Planner Gino Carlucci

Absent members: Chuck Yon

The meeting began at 7:07 p.m. in Sherborn Town Hall, Room 204A.

DISCUSSION OF PERMITTING PROCESS

John Higley and Grace Shepard attended the Board of Selectmen's meeting on June 21st and reported feedback for the Planning Board. The Selectmen stated that there is concern about streamlining the permitting process. Eric Johnson asked for more specific information about what the town thinks the Planning Board should work on before the Board makes any general changes. John Stevens sees the Planning Board as being very efficient and used the recent ADESA permit renewal as an example.

Members of the Planning Board want to investigate what other communities are doing. Gino Carlucci noted that many towns have a formal pre-application meeting to provide guidance. He does so informally now and that seems to be working well. Gino Carlucci also pointed out that there is a document on the website which explains the processes. John Higley stated that most people don't know about the online document and digitizing the process might help. Gino Carlucci said that the Town of Grafton created a free program for electronic permitting which coordinates with all boards, which Sherborn could use.

Permitting through the Board of Health is of concern. Grace Shepard pointed out that there is a question as to what standard of chemical contamination thresholds are used by the town, e.g. trace. There are similar concerns about the town's septic system regulations. Sherborn is much stricter than the state. Gino Carlucci stated that Sherborn requires 5' to ground water instead of 4' (which would satisfy Title 5). Also, the town doesn't allow fill (must use natural ground). The perc rate is 20 minutes, not 60 minutes like most other towns. Grace Shepard inquired if Sherborn's rules are defensible because the state requires scientific justification of such regulations. Gino Carlucci said that scientific justification is an issue in any discussion of changing perc rates. Eric Johnson noted that, in his opinion, making changes might actually allow lot sizes to decrease. Eric Johnson also pointed out that it would be interesting to know

how many septic systems in Sherborn have failed under the town rules, but would have passed Title 5. Grace Shepard stated that the important point is how this all affects the town center. Eric Johnson suggested that one way in which the town center is affected is the inability to share a septic system.

John Higley would like to draft a series of survey questions to interview a list of permit applicants and find out about their experience with the process. Robin Perera suggested adding a survey page to each board's application.

TOWN CENTER REPORT

The Revenue Development Committee will play a major role in the feasibility of the Planning Board's several scenarios for the Town Center. John Higley reported that Charles Yon had a meeting with Traffic Safety. They were appreciative to be included in Town Center Report discussions and they were interested in the Northeastern students' study. Traffic Safety was asked for recent data on crashes throughout the town.

John Higley suggested that comments from the other town Boards should be included in the Town Center Report. This would include ZBA, Open Space, Advisory Committee, Capital, and Historical Committee (Conservation Committee and the Board of Health have already been consulted). The Planning Board needs to get dates to be included on their agendas. From there, the Planning Board can use comments from its Minutes and submit them to the Boards to see if they have anything to add or change before the comments are included in the Town Center Report.

Robin Perera said it is important to capture the attention of the community, e.g. Pine Hill parents. John Stevens would like to make a presentation to the townspeople after the Board determines what they want the downtown to look like.

John Higley said that after recommendations are discussed; incremental changes such as the PUD, sidewalk repair, etc., the Revenue Development can look at the area and provide comments. Proposed improvements include common parking areas, the ability to have an accessory apartment, and mixed-use. Gino Carlucci pointed out that current zoning doesn't prevent something like a Starbucks from going in right now.

John Higley declared an action item to take the map of the developed back area, add suggested parking and a back ramp, and run those ideas by the abutters. The map should include the Fitzpatrick land proposal, adding a road in back, reducing curb cuts, making a path, and adding centralized parking. Gino Carlucci will create a hand drawn conceptual map for the next meeting.

CHARLES RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION "SMART SEWERING" PROJECT

Gino Carlucci was contacted by a representative of the "Smart Sewering" project to see if Sherborn would be interesting in participating. Members of the Planning Board agreed that it is an interesting proposition. There are certain commitments the town will need to make in order to participate. "Smart Sewering" wants to establish a Steering Committee to work across departments. Grace Shepard and Gino Carlucci will speak with Julie Conroy, the MAPC project lead, to make known the town's interest and see what the next steps are.

OTHER BUSINESS

John Higley discussed solar opportunities and the Green Communities Grant at the Selectmen's meeting. A preliminary study suggests that the former landfill is not the best site. It may be possible to join another MAPC group of communities. The contract will be awarded in late August, but the Selectman suggested that they want to move faster. 340+ communities are solar (including Sherborn). The communities that aren't are the ones that have their own power companies. John Higley also met with the Town Administrator to discuss the MAPC program. It was estimated that the town could receive a benefit of \$30K per year.

The energy service contract with Ameresco is progressing very nicely. They've done a survey and now are negotiating how to implement the plan.

Gino Carlucci, Grace Shepard, and Robin Perera attended an open space development meeting in Ashland in which a new state model "cluster" bylaw was discussed. In this bylaw, a town or association is in charge of open space. Developments are by right and conventional by special permit. Gino Carlucci questioned if the bylaw creates legal issues, but representatives from the Attorney General's office seemed to think it is ok. Most towns (including Sherborn) require a special permit to develop that way. There are many communities which use this design, such as Lincoln and Hopkinton. Robin Perera expressed concern that lots will lose yard space and she would like to research examples. Eric Johnson stated that there are two main benefits to this type of plan. One is that it encourages open space and a sense of community, and the other is that there is less road way for the town to maintain.

John Higley declared an action item to look into cluster zoning. Gino Carlucci will look for pictures and examples from towns such as Lincoln, Hopkinton, and Carlisle. Grace Shepard will look at the book "Rural by Design."

MINUTES

The June 13, 2012 Minutes will be reviewed at the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Planning Board will be July 11, 2012.

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Pettit

Clerk