



TOWN OF NORWELL
Norwell Town Offices, Room 112
345 Main Street
Norwell, Massachusetts 02061
(781) 659-8021

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TOWN CLERK
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*Office of Planning Board &
Town Planner*

Norwell Planning Board Meeting Minutes January 18, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. with Chair Brian Greenberg presiding and Board Members Michael Tobin and Brendan Sullivan present. Members Tripp Woodland and Donald Mauch were absent. Also present was Director of Planning and Community Development Ilana Quirk. The meeting was held in the Planning Office, Town Hall Room 112.

CALL TO ORDER/AGENDA

Motion by Chair Greenberg to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Member Sullivan and unanimously voted (3-0).

CITIZEN COMMENTARY

Joe Caruso, 20 Otis Hill Road, commented on traffic safety issues stemming from a neighbor's landscaping that Mr. Caruso asserts obstructs sight lines when exiting Otis Hill onto Grove Street. Mr. Caruso raised the issue with Highway Superintendent Glenn Ferguson and Police Chief Lee. The Chief has increased patrols in the area. Mr. Caruso has also spoken with the neighbor in question, who has not taken any action so far.

Chair Greenberg visited the neighborhood yesterday and understands Mr. Caruso's concern. Planner Quirk checked with Superintendent Ferguson and learned that he had a survey performed that confirmed that the vegetation in question is not within in the Town's right of way – either to Grove Street or Otis Hill Road. To respond to the concerns raised, the Superintendent moved the stop line and sign further out toward Grove Street; however, both are out as far as they can safely go. Planner Quirk noted that sight lines may not have been as heavily scrutinized as they are today when this subdivision was built in the late 1960s. The Superintendent asked DOT to agree to reduce the speed on Grove Street; however, DOT rejected the request. MassDOT needs evidence of harm or property damage in order to reduce the speed limit.

All discussed options to improve conditions in the area, including addition of a blinking light or the residents hiring a traffic engineer.

Mr. Caruso indicated that he understood that the Planning Board does not have jurisdiction over this issue and that he would continue to work with Highway, Police and the Traffic Committee.

SUBDIVISION, SITE PLANS, SPECIAL PERMITS & OTHER PROJECTS

Curtis Farm Subdivision

Public Meeting / Review Status

Planner Quirk noted that Consulting Engineer John Chessia has reviewed the as-built plans provided by Toll Brothers and raised several issues. TB now is preparing a response to Engineer Chessia's comments, as they are seeking an additional surety reduction. Quirk briefly reviewed the history of the development and construction of the project (involving a bankruptcy by the original developer). TB takes the position that it did not take the place of the developer when it went bankrupt and TB purchased most of the lots and TB completed many of the outstanding items. Some of the required drainage infrastructure is not in place. TB did not retain the right to work in the lots once sold and TB asserts that some of the Lot owners may have removed or required drainage infrastructure that was installed. TB asserts it voluntarily completed certain subdivision construction items and is not responsible to finish all items. However, TB is looking for a return of surety that guarantees completion of the items. The possibility of a settlement was discussed.

Bay Path Extension

Public Meeting / Surety Update

Engineer Chessia is reviewing the developer's recent surety reduction request and the developer also asked about street acceptance. Highway Superintendent Ferguson is willing to support acceptance of the way so that it can be plowed, but would oppose taking over responsibility for the drainage.

The developer has indicated it is willing to retain control of drainage infrastructure (which would be taken over by the HOA) as well as some other maintenance, so an agreement may be within reach.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 4 meeting were distributed and reviewed.

Motion by Chair Greenberg to approve the Minutes of the January 4, 2023 meeting as amended. Seconded by Member Tobin and unanimously voted (3-0).

REVIEW CURRENT MAIL

The following mail was received at the Planning Office:

HANOVER, PB, DECISION DSA W/CONDITIONS TO CREATE ROADWAY TO ACCESS LOTS 334 KING STREET
PROPOSED SUBDIVISION
HINGHAM, PB, MOD EXIS PARKING DRIVE THRU, 1835 WASHINGTON ST
HINGHAM, PB, PH, SPR, GOLF SIMULATOR AB 19 CLUBHOUSE DRIVE HINGHAM, PB, SPR, REPAVE, 0 BURR RD
HINGHAM, PB, HHS SP & SP PARKING 181 NORTH STREET
HINGHAM, PB, HINGHAM LIGHT MOD SP, PARKING, LYNCH FIELD, 226 BEAL STREET
HINGHAM, PB, DFRD UNDER SPR, CONSTRUCT 8 SF DWELING 213&215 CUSHING ST
HINGHAM, PB, SPR, SINGLE FAMILY DWELING, POOL, 102 DOWNER AVE
HINGHAM, PB, DECISION, GRANTED, AMAZON TRAFIC SIGNAL
HINGHAM, ZBA, DECISION GRANTED, CONSTRUCT TWO BUILDINGS, 73 ABINGTON ST
HINGHAM, ZBA, DECISION GRANTED, WIRELESS TOWER. 900 MAIN STREET
HINGHAM, PB, ADU PROPOSED AMENDMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION
PEMBROKE, ZBA, PH, SP SELF STORAGE 4 STORY, 108 CHURCH ST
PEMBROKE, ZBA, DISTRICT CHANGE 260-280 OAK ST
ROCKLAND, ZBA, DEMO EXSISTING BUILDING BUILD NEW FIRE STATION, 99 CHURCH ST

APPROVAL OF PENDING BILLS

The following invoices were presented for payment:

CHRISTOPHER SULLIVAN, PB MINUTES, 1.4.2023

\$ 150.00

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Motion by Chair Greenberg to approve the invoice as submitted. Seconded by Member Sullivan and unanimously voted (3-0).

MAY 2023 ATM PREPARATIONS

The Board authorized Planner Quirk to request 12 placeholder articles for the Annual Town Meeting; she and the Board members will work together soon at a weekend workshop on the potential articles.

Motion by Chair Greenberg to authorize Planner Quirk to request 12 placeholder articles for the Annual Town Meeting. Seconded by Member Tobin and unanimously voted (3-0).

Accessory Dwelling Units

All present discussed the appropriate dimensional requirements for an external ADU, including a 1500 sq ft limit. Chair Greenberg suggested that the grandfathering of existing ADUs be part of a separate article in case this article is not ready or doesn't pass.

MBTA Adjacent Community

As an "MBTA adjacent" community, Norwell must have a zone of sufficient size (50 acres) in which multifamily housing, up to 15 units per acre, is buildable by right in order for the Town to continue to be eligible for certain state grants. Planner Quirk recommended that part or all of the Accord Park /Cordwainer Drive area be rezoned to allow for this housing and preserve the Town's grant eligibility. The area has its septic challenges, but could possibly be tied into Rockland's municipal sewer at a reasonable cost. The Board members present agreed that the entire area be recommended for rezoning with landscaping and fencing requirements as appropriate.

Retreat Lots

Chair Greenberg is working on a draft article.

Solar

Planner Quirk is working on a draft article.

MISCELLANEOUS

ADU Administrative Review Form

All present discussed possible changes to the ADU Administrative Review Form after issuance of the first site plan review approval at the previous meeting. Chair Greenberg stated his goal was for the permitting process to not require any documentation an applicant didn't already have. Planner Quirk noted the number of waivers granted on this first approval and stressed the need for requirements that are the same for all applicants. Chair Greenberg indicated he would be willing to grant a similar number of waivers for any applicant if they provided a similar degree of photographic/documentary evidence of compliance with the bylaw.

Member Sullivan agreed that certain details such as landscaping or fencing could be left off a site plan submitted for SPR, but other details such as parking spaces should be documented. Planner Quirk stressed the need for the SPR process to confirm compliance with zoning, as this would be looked for by Building Commissioner Tom Barry, and the initial purpose of the SPR was to prevent applications from being rejected to ZBA if he was not sure of their zoning compliance.

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Member Tobin agreed that confusion in the process might give Mr. Barry pause, but characterized the hearing as a good working example that allowed the Board to see how everything fit and showed where the process needed tinkering. Member Sullivan agreed that the hearing, while not tidy, was a good test case for the process.

Pathways Committee

Conservation Agent Will Saunders indicated the Conservation Commission may be willing to take on Pathways as a subcommittee, as it could improve communication between the two entities. All of the proposed projects for the past two years (Wampanoag/Grove Street parking lot and Masthead Proposed Project) have been on land within the custody and control of the Conservation Commission. Member Sullivan raised the possibility of the Planning Board keeping Pathways and merging it with Complete Streets, as Pathways' chair is opposed to the committee going under Conservation's aegis, but Chair Greenberg felt the move made sense.

ZBL Code Review Status

Upon passage of Article 15 of the 2022 Annual Town Meeting, the updates to the ADU bylaw were sent to General Code, which printed them without the amendments that were passed on the floor at the time of the meeting. Town Clerk Patricia Anderson is contacting General Code so they can fix this omission.

NEXT MEETING

February 1, 2023 – Town Hall, Room 112, 7 pm

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Chair Greenberg to adjourn at 9:04 PM. Seconded by Member Tobin and unanimously voted (3-0).

I certify that the above minutes were reviewed and approved by a majority vote of the Planning Board on 2.1.23.



George Woodland III, Clerk

Copies:

File with Office of Town Clerk

Post to Planning Board Webpage

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