

PLANNING BOARD

DATE: October 28, 2021

TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE: Zoom Virtual Meeting

FOR: Regular Meeting

PRESENT: Brandee Nelson, Chair; Jonathan Hankin; Jeremy Higa;

Pedro Pachano

Chris Rembold, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Planning and Development

Ms. Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. She read the opening statement, revised by Governor Baker on June 16, 2021, from the agenda. She said the meeting was being recorded.

She called for roll call attendance:

Mr. Hankin, present; Mr. Pachano, present; Jr. Higa, present; Ms. Nelson, present

FORMS A:

There were no Forms A presented.

MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

Mr. Hankin made a motion to approve the minutes of October 14, 2021 as amended, Mr.

Pachano seconded.

Roll call vote: Mr. Hankin, aye; Mr. Pachano, aye; Mr. Higa, aye; Ms. Nelson, aye

ZONING DISCUSSION: STOCKBRIDGE ROAD

Ken Walto from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission was present to share ideas about zoning for Stockbridge Road. He said there are two approaches; to amend the SMART Growth Overlay District (SGOD) or to extend the B2X zone. He said the SGOD is extensive. It would need to be amended to create a Stockbridge Road district. STKRD-SGOD would be oriented for creating housing and zoning for housing.

Mr. Walto said the B2X is more complicated. He said the zone could be extended up Stockbridge Road. The parcels that would be included in the zone would be defined. He said not less than 10% of the housing would be affordable. He said not more than 20% should be inclusionary.

Mr. Walto said the draft bylaw allows three stories, 40 feet high, in the B2X. He said 8.3.1 allows the height and stories by-right with Site Plan Review. He said he tried to stick to the existing bylaw. He said with two acres or more of land a five story, 50 foot high, building could be allowed. There would be a requirement for 1 affordable unit for every 10 units built.

Mr. Rembold said there is map of Stockbridge Road as developed to see where density could be added. He thanked Mr. Walto for the good overview.

Mr. Hankin said he has trouble with the inclusionary zoning. He said we tried this approach once with the B-3 zone that resulted in zero applications.

Mr. Pachano said the inclusionary zoning can provide 20% incentives.

Mr. Rembold said the by-right is the incentive. He said on Stockbridge Road there would be one affordable unit for every 10 units built.

Mr. Hankin asked if abutters would have a say if the building is by-right.

Mr. Rembold said it is murky area. It would be hard to challenge,

Ms. Nelson said the SGOD has 20% affordable vs. an inclusionary approach for redevelopment.

Mr. Walto said extending the B2X with incentives brings you closer to what you want. You have to give a lot of incentives. The more you give away the better to get where you can be. If money can be provided it would be a help.

Mr. Pachano said 20% is a lot to ask. Another floor could help.

Mr. Higa said it would be an easier way to get more affordable housing.

Mr. Pachano said not just affordable, we need all kinds of housing.

Mr. Hankin asked if the Fire Department would have an issue with a 50 foot high building.

Ms. Nelson said she didn't think the Fire Department would have an issue. She asked if there would be commercial uses on the first floor.

Mr. Walto said there would be mixed use.

Ms. Nelson said she would rather have text added instead of footnotes. She asked how much more discussion the Board wanted to have. She asked if the Board needed some time to digest the discussion.

Mr. Pachano said the bulk and height incentive language should also include the community benefit.

Mr. Walto said the language could be worked in.

Mr. Rembold said the next step would be to identify a couple of parcels to test this out. He said there needs to be consideration about what development costs are and the feasibility. He asked if the proposal gives enough to get what is wanted.

Ms. Nelson said she likes the idea of extending the B2X, more housing and different types of housing. She said a 50 foot building on the east side could be imposing. She said she doesn't have any concerns about a 50 foot building on the west side. She asked Mr. Rembold to pick a site on each side of Stockbridge Road for a case study.

Mr. Pachano said a huge case study like the Cove and one parcel on the other side would be good. He said an overlay is not a designated district any thoughts about an overlay. He said a developer might like an overlay and if not then they could go with the B-2 zone.

Mr. Walto said an overlay could be developed.

Mr. Pachano said his zoning experience is in New York City where overlays work giving other options.

Mr. Walto said he prefers a less complicated approach.

Mr. Rembold said the B2X could preserve the underlying uses but it would unlock more allowing for over 10 housing units and 9 could be by-right.

Mr. Walto said your ordinances don't lend themselves to density bonuses.

Mr. Pachano said the setbacks move closer to the road with a maximum 10 foot setback.

Ms. Nelson said she doesn't have an issue with creating a street wall with parking in the back. She said she would rather go in the direction of the B2X than the SGOD. The test cases will be helpful.

Mr. Hankin suggested using the Cove Bowling site and the former Wonderful Things site on the corner of Stockbridge Road and Fairview Terrace.

Mr. Pachano said other incentives kick in for 2 acres or more.

Mr. Hankin asked what the point of having incentives for 2 acre lots.

Ms. Nelson said it can be discussed.

Mr. Hankin said the Cove might be the only site on Stockbridge Road with 2 acres.

Mr. Walto said a 2 acre parcel would allow for a 5 story building.

Mr. Hankin said he didn't know if we want to incentivize aggregation of parcels.

Ms. Nelson said she we are not requiring development to 4 or 5 stories.

Mr. Higa said looking at the Wonderful Things property there would be consideration of the adjacent parcel(s). He said as a test piece the adjacent parcel where a sandwich shop was is a good parcel to consider.

Ms. Nelson said look at both parcels, Wonderful Things and the Cove.

Mr. Hankin agreed.

Mr. Nelson thanked Mr. Walto and Mr. Rembold.

Mr. Pachano wondered if the incentive threshold should be lowered to 8 units.

Ms. Nelson said we need to work through the test sites.

BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES/ISSUES & CONCERNS:

Mr. Pachano said the Housing Sub-Committee is meeting to finalize a draft of the Short Term Rental bylaw. The revision will be sent out soon.

Mr. Pachano said the Sub-Committee sent a favorable recommendation on the Senior Tax deferral proposal. He said there are two pieces of legislation regarding transfer fees and transfer fees for affordable housing. He said he was contacted by the NAACP to send recommendations to the representatives. He said it was recommended to have money go to the Great Barrington Affordable Housing Trust to use to help seniors stay in their homes. He suggested a recommendation from the Planning Board to recommend money for the Housing Trust.

Mr. Higa said it could go on an agenda.

Ms. Nelson said the Board could take some action on that recommendation. She said she was working on getting a joint meeting with the Selectboard set. The Board agreed on meeting on Monday November 8th at 5:00 P.M.

Mr. Rembold said the 8th will be good. He said it would be a one hour meeting.

Mr. Pachano said if the Short Term Rental is to be part of the zoning bylaw it will require a public hearing.

Ms. Nelson suggested the Board support local funds to support the Affordable Housing Trust.

Mr. Hankin he has concerns about that.

Ms. Nelson said there will be a public information session for Lake Mansfield Road on November 15 at 7:00 P.M.

Mr. Hankin asked when the next Planning Board meeting will be held.

Ms. Nelson said November 18 at 6:00.

Mr. Hankin said he can attend from 6:00-7:00 P.M.

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

Mr. Rembold said everything he had has been covered.

CITIZEN'S SPEAK:

No one spoke.

Having concluded their business, Ms. Nelson adjourned without objection at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly L. Shaw

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Planning Board Secretary