

PLANNING BOARD

DATE: November 9, 2023
TIME: 6:00 P.M.
PLACE: Fire Station 37 State Road
FOR: Regular Meeting
PRESENT: Pedro Pachano, Vice Chair; Jonathan Hankin; Malcolm Fick; Jeremy Higa
Jackie Kain, Associate Member
Chris Rembold, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Planning and Development

Mr. Pachano called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M. He read the opening statement.

Mr. Higa had not yet arrived.

There was an issue with the internet so the meeting was not on Zoom or being recorded because there was no internet service.

FORM A PLANS: 434B STOCKBRIDGE ROAD

Heather Brown from Foresight Land Services was present with a Form A application on behalf of 434B LLC for a parcel of land. Parcel A contains 6,343 square feet of land. It is not to be considered a separate building lot and is to be conveyed by the Town to the abutting land of 434B LLC.

Mr. Hankin made a motion to endorse the plan, Mr. Fick seconded, all in favor.

Mr. Higa arrived at 6:07 PM.

MINUTES: OCTOBER 26, 2023

Mr. Hankin made a motion to approve the minutes of October 26, 2023 as amended, Mr. Fick seconded, all in favor.

HOUSING DISCUSSION:

Mr. Pachano had arranged for a representative from Construct to attend via Zoom. The internet was down so the discussion was postponed to an extra meeting on November 30. Mr. Rembold will confirm.

MASTER PLAN REVIEW:

Ms. Kain said she attended the Cultural Council meeting. She said the Council didn't understand they had responsibilities from the Master Plan. She said they didn't realize they had the opportunity to press for activities in Town. They received the information incredibly well. Mr. Fick said he went to the Historic District Commission meeting. There was discussion of the HDC's responsibilities. The Commission was not aware they had responsibilities from the Master Plan.

Ms. Kain said this is why we need to do this.

Mr. Pachano said the Tree Committee is listed in a several areas of the Master Plan for planning and planting of trees.

Mr. Higa asked about trees that were cut down on Stockbridge Road.

Mr. Rembold said they were dead ash trees that were on the State's property.

Mr. Higa asked if National Grid or Verizon cut down trees.

Mr. Rembold said the Tree Committee needs to know about trimming around lines as part of maintenance. If a tree is a hazard it can be cut down. If a tree is not a hazard there needs to be a conversation with the Town before being taken down.

Mr. Pachano provided the Board with notes from his attendance at the Tree Committee meeting.

Ms. Kain suggested everyone provide a similar document after attending a meeting to discuss the Master Plan. She said the information could be collected to figure out how to incorporate the information into the revised Master Plan or addendum to the Master Plan.

Ms. Kain said there isn't much reference to climate change or impacts in the current Master Plan.

Mr. Rembold said the Planning Board and Select Board set out on Master Plan path in 2010-2013. The Planning Board at the time set out a plan for working on a new Master Plan through discussion with many people working on specific topics. There can be new topics added if necessary and the previous topics can be reviewed.

Mr. Hankin said a lot has changed since the previous Master Plan, but he wasn't sure if there has been as much change since 2010.

Ms. Kain suggested looking at everything through the eyes of climate change. She said we can ask the community about what they would like to see.

Mr. Pachano encouraged everyone to look at the Master Plan and he encourage everyone to put together a document after visiting their designated board or committee.

Mr. Rembold said other states require zoning to comply with the Master Plan but Massachusetts does not. He said we look at the Master Plan when considering zoning. He said the Master Plan is foundational for going to the Annual Town Meeting to pass zoning laws. He said the Master Plan also helps with getting grants. It is a strategic document.

Mr. Pachano encouraged everyone to do their homework.

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

Mr. Rembold said the Attorney General's Office disapproved the citizen's petition for cellular communications. He said he sent the decision around.

BOARD & COMMITTEES/ISSUES & CONCERNS:

Ms. Kain said the Department of Transportation in Arizona was incredibly town friendly. ADOT engaged in public art and provided money to the towns for public art. She asked if there is an attitude in Massachusetts about anything on the roads. She said she is thinking about mapping and where things can be done.

Mr. Rembold said he is not aware of any support/help from MDOT.

Ms. Kain asked if there is a 1% tax for art.

Mr. Fick said there is a hospitality tax.

Mr. Rembold said that tax money goes into Free Cash.

Mr. Pachano said he interviewed people from MDOT when he had a radio show. He said there seemed to be an openness to ideas.

Mr. Higa said Sam Nickerson attend a Housing Sub-Committee meeting. Mr. Nickerson is now working on redevelopment in Lee. He said there was discussion about a per acre value analysis. He briefly explained, for example, that the per acre value throughout town is astronomically higher than in the shopping center. He said this can be used as a mechanism to think about how we use land in our Town.

Mr. Higa said the Housing Sub-Committee will have a joint meeting with Great Barrington Housing Trust on December 6.

Mr. Higa said the CPC passed all of the step 1 applications. He said there were a lot more applications.

CITIZEN'S SPEAK TIME:

No one was in attendance to speak.

Having concluded its business, Mr. Pachano adjourned without objection at 7:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly L. Shaw

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Planning Board Secretary