

Montague Planning Board

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September 27, 2016 7:00 PM

Town Hall – Upstairs Meeting Room

One Avenue A

Turners Falls, MA 01376

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ron Sicard – Chair, Fred Bowman, George Cooke, and Bob Obear (7:04 pm)

Members Absent: Bruce Young

Staff Present: Walter Ramsey, AICP- Town Planner, David Jensen – Building Inspector

Ron Sicard opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Fred Bowman to accept the August 23, 2016, 2016 minutes. Seconded by George Cooke.

Motion passed unanimously.

Zoning Workshop: Open Space Planning and Subdivision technical assistance project-kickoff:

Guests: Peggy Sloan and Alyssa LaRose – FRCOG Planners, David Jensen – Montague Building Inspector

A discussion was held between the Montague Planning Board and the FRCOG planners who have been hired by the town to explore and recommend different zoning techniques that could help protect natural resources and open spaces along with subdivision regulations. The work is funded by a grant from the Executive Office of Environment and Energy (Mormon Hollow Landscape Partnership)

Peggy opened the presentation with a comparison between cluster/open space design (OSD) and natural resource protection (NRPZ). (See exhibit: Comparison between OSRD and NRPZ). The discussion revolved around the following elements of the zoning bylaws:

NRPZ After hearing about both options there was consensus that NRPZ may not a direct practical application to Montague. There is an example of this type of subdivision in Shutesbury.

OSRD The Board would like to consider OSRD by right in the AF-4, AF-2, RS and RB zoning districts. There is an example of this type of development at Ice Pond Road in Northampton.

Back Lot Development in Ag Protection District- Added to Zoning Bylaw in 2004. Has not been used to date. Peggy advised that is a good tool to have. It is good to have this option regardless as to whether it have been used or not. David Jensen feels this bylaw is far too cumbersome to ever be used.

Flag lots- These could encourage infill development in the villages. Would allow back land to be developed. This would be consistent with goal in the Housing Plan and Open Space Plan. Peggy was directed to explore flag lot application in the RS- residential district.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)- Peggy recommends a PUD district. The Board felt ID, GB, and HI may be appropriate.

Table of uses- Peggy recommended consider a “table of uses” in the zoning bylaw to clarify what is allowed for users and regulators. The Board agreed that this is necessary. It is a standard practice. Building Inspector disagreed.

Agriculture Forestry- A big question remains about how to best regulate the large AF District. It seems counter-intuitive to have ½ acre zoning over prime agricultural land. The group may consider making the back lot development by right or special permit in this district rather than just the “Ag Business Overlay”

Transfer of Development Rights- If the town is interested in protecting and increasing the density while following more historical development patterns the town could consider a transferred development right option where if you want to protect farm land you could transfer the density into some of those lots. Given the complexity of the program, lack of demand, and implementation challenges, the Board was not inclined to pursue TDR at this time.

FRCOG will draft an OSRD bylaw for the next meeting.

Motion by Fred Bowman at 8:15 PM to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by George Cooke. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Next scheduled meeting: October 25, 2016

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Exhibits:

Comparison between Cluster/Open Space Design and NRPZ- DRAFT 9/23/2016