

Montague Planning Board

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May 28, 2013 6:30 PM
Town Hall Upstairs Conference Room

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ron Sicard-Chair, Bruce Young, Fred Bowman, George Cooke and Bob Obear
Staff Present: Walter Ramsey- Town Planner

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Ron Sicard-Chair.

Approval of March 26, 2013 Minutes:

Motion was made by, Fred Bowman to accept the March 26, 2013 minutes. Seconded by, Bruce Young.
Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of April 23, 2013 Minutes:

Motion was made by, George Cooke to accept the April 23, 2013 minutes. Seconded by, Bruce Young.
Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUATION: Definitive Subdivision Plan DS# 2013-01 filed by Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity.

The Planning Board will continue the discussion to consider a Definitive Subdivision Plan filed by Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity for a one lot subdivision on a proposed 90 foot extension of the Warner Street right-of-way- in a Neighborhood Business District. The affected land is a portion of the property identified as assessors Map 13 Lot 1.

Guest: Elizabeth Bridgewater – Executive Director for Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity

Elizabeth Bridgewater attended the Planning Board meeting after being newly hired to the position of Executive Director for Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity. Elizabeth came in to the Town offices and met with Walter Ramsey and David Jensen to be brought up to speed on the Warner Street subdivision project. With the information obtained and analyzed from that meeting Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity has decided to withdraw their definitive subdivision plan DS#2013-01 for Warner Street as it is not financially feasible for them to build a road to the town standards to accommodate another building lot. So, the house that is there will remain and will now have a 3 acre parcel of land that the homeowner can start “making their own” with landscaping etc. Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity hopes to work with the Town of Montague on future projects.

Motion was made by Bruce Young to formally accept Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity’s withdrawal of definitive subdivision plan DS #2013-01 without prejudice. Seconded by, Bob Obear.
Motion passed unanimously.

ANR #2013-04 filed by HBM Properties of 608 Long Plain Road Leverett, MA. The relocation of a 2-3 season “camp”, the 72’ x 88’ parcel of land (lot 85) now known as lot 151.

Guest: Carolyn Manley – representing all parties involved

The owners of the camp went before the ZBA in March 2013 and were granted a special permit to allow relocation for a non conforming use and structure. With the move of the camp it will allow Andrew

Starkweather to better develop his land at a later date. It also allows the camp to be moved to a secluded area into the woods out of the view of the public. The easement going into the property is the same with a widening at the road to allow for utility access. The utility line is only electric and goes underground and the easement is in process. Other than those few changes everything with the camp will remain the same.

Points brought up for discussion regarding HBM Properties are:

- Walter R. spoke to David J. regarding setbacks within the postage stamp lot. There is no issue as far as David J. is concerned.
- Right of Way at the road is 15 feet. The deed can be written to 20 feet but that seems to be going against the ZBA wanting everything the same as before.
- The endorsement is not a determination that it is a building lot.
- The old Right of Way will cease to exist (in deed form).
- The original postage stamp lot will be deeded to the Starkweather Family. Then the Starkweather Family will deed the new location to the owners of the camp.
- Gary Gruber is the Attorney that will be doing the new deeds for both owners.
- There will be public records to refer to if the land splits (Andrew Starkweather) again there will be a paper trail of what has happened.
- When the deeds are transferred the Planning and Conservation Department will have a copy for their records.

Motion** was made by Bruce Young to approve the ANR #2013-04 filed by HBM Properties of 608 Long Plain Road Leverett, MA as shown. Seconded by, George Cooke. **Motion passed unanimously.

ANR #2013-03 filed by Timothy DeChristopher of 134 Second Street, Montague, MA.

To convey a portion of Map 4 Lot 100 to Timothy DeChristopher. This new parcel will have 95 feet of frontage on Second Street in the Town of Montague, MA.

This ANR came through on a “rush” Ron Sicard signed the plans per Walter R. The property is located between 2nd and 3rd Street near Chick’s garage. He is selling Chick’s garage and a portion of the lot to Richard Becker who invests in properties and owns a 2nd home in town. The proposed use for the space and lot is so Richard can use the space as an artist incubator and flea market space. The property is located in a neighborhood business district zone and the house lot is already conforming and will have an additional frontage and area added to it. Walter R. wants the board to ratify the ANR #2013-03 by signing the plans. All members present signed.

Workshop:

- **Annual Town Meeting 5/4/13 recap:** Article 25, Article 26 and Article 27 (Two Zoning Amendments and Mullen Rule)

All the zone changes went through at Town Meeting with thanks to Fred Bowman as spokesperson for the changes. Robin Sherman spoke to the minimum square footage zone change and gave her support.

Both zone changes will be reviewed by the Attorney General along with the Mullen Rule.

- **Subdivision Regulations**

- Goal of update: -tweak any regulatory or best management changes since 1989
- revisit roadway and design standards
- streamline process for subdivisions of less than 8 lots

- **Section 3**

- Clarify ANR process
- Does the Board want to give authority to Secretary to authorize ANR?

- Clarify that a public meeting is required in preliminary subdivision process
 - Board has 45 days- not 60 to take action
 - Recommend a pre-application meeting with planner prior to submitting def plan.
 - Added some items to be included in the filing
 - Do we want more than 7 copies?
 - 3.4.5 Development Impact Statement
 - Update criteria of impact statement via form in appendix
 - **Section 4 Design Guidelines**
 - Added some guidelines in 4.1.3
 - New street design standards: Principle, Secondary, Rural Lane
 - New section about pedestrian ways
 - Edited language on easements
 - Street trees should be deciduous shade trees
 - New section on street lighting
 - **Section 5.3 Roadway material Requirements**
 - Add reference to Mass Highway Standard Specs
 - 5.4.1 Roadway Classification changes
 - 5.4.2 Required Roadway Structure (need editing w/ DPW)
 - 5.6- substantial changes to sidewalks specs
 - 5.13 Drainage- tie into Planning Board Stormwater Policy/BMPs
 - **New SECTION: Optional Minor Residential Subdivision**
 - Goal is to ease process and design requirements for subdivisions of less than 8 lots where the Town will not own the road (private way)
 - **Section 6- Administration**
 - New section- Clarify + consolidate waiver of rules and regs
 - New Section- completion w/in 8 years
 - 6.6 Fees- overhauled. Fees reduced to incentivize subdivisions
 - Clarify ability of board to hire outside staff
 - Forms in appendix are being updated and overhauled
- **Downtown Turners Falls Livability Plan-** was funded by HUD – Housing and Urban Development. Three towns in the region were awarded \$40,000. Turners Falls used the money to do the Livability Plan. There were 120 attendees at the Public Hearings with 40 people attending all 3 working groups. There were outreach workshops held with ESL residents and high school students which are sections of the population normally not consulted on their view points. The vision statement highlights that we have public services within walking distance which include: a grocery store, dentist, hardware store, and banks. This along with recreational venues including the parks, bike paths and river supported the vision. The vision plan also included goals and action plans to implement the vision statement. An economic consultant has been hired to help market and design how to attract businesses to the town and what industries would thrive in this region. Some of the main points were 1) the need for an organized entity to form a downtown partnership which would oversee the revitalization efforts. Riverculture is currently an arts focused entity. 2) Montague Business Association (town-wide focus).
 - Some main goals and strategies of the plan:
 - Enhance connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists at the downtown gateways coming into town from the mills on 5th street–funding with CDBG money
 - Improve connectivity to both the historical and industrial
 - Improve handicap accessibility for downtown buildings
 - Enhance connections to the bike paths and downtown sector.

- Improve appearance and functionality of Avenue A and 3rd Street for pedestrian safety and handicap access
 - Reduce the number of curb cuts on Avenue A for a “pedestrian friendly way” in the future
 - Renovate alleyways to upgrade both aesthetics and pathways by rising up and meeting the sidewalks
 - More regular maintenance of the planters in downtown
 - Update the lighting (1/3 of them are currently out, fixtures and bulbs are not available anymore)
 - Do lighting fixtures that match the new bridge lights along with outdoor seating
 - Create a plaza – gathering spaces rather than a linear corridor on Avenue A. The Shea Theater would be a good place to start in the future
 - At the Cumberland Farms old site bring the building closer to the road
 - Behind the Town Hall has redevelopment potential – Senior Center
 - Food City lot improvements
 - Design guidelines for the downtown
 - Expand the farmers market in terms of hours and days of operation
 - Expanding of cultural venues
 - Plan for the Great Falls Native Cultural Park
 - Shea Theater
 - Trash removal
 - Security/patrol officer in the downtown area
 - Outside dining opportunities
 - Mix of housing demographics
- Some discussion among the members brought up issues of:
 - Marketing and promotion of the downtown sector
 - Parking areas for residents and visitors in the downtown sector
 - How to drive tourism to Turners Falls
 - Transportation – regular and or shuttles are needed as 15% of the downtown population is Hispanic and have little to no access to private cars
 - Initiate a collaborate effort with Greenfield in the areas of transportation and Senior Center plans
 - In order to embrace change the habits of individuals need to change so that they utilize the services and take part in activities.

Motion was made by Ron Sicard that the Planning Board endorse the Turners Falls Livability Plan. Seconded by, Fred Bowman. ***Motion passed unanimously.***

- **Discuss regulation of Registered Marijuana Dispensaries** per Chapter 369 of the Acts of 2012, which became effective January 1, 2013. Section 9(C) of the law requires that at least one Medical Marijuana Dispensary be located within each County of the Commonwealth.
 - There are 45 pages of guidelines for dispensaries.
 - Does the Planning Board want to do a moratorium on marijuana dispensaries? Doing a moratorium is one way to control where one could be located if the town cannot get bylaws written by September 2013.
 - Legal under state laws illegal under federal laws – Fred Bowman will be attending an upcoming meeting on this subject.
 - In order to enter the dispensary site you will have to obtain a certificate from the state, a prescription from your Doctor, some states have special state id tags to enter as well.
 - It is recommended to have a series of public hearings to obtain input from the residents.

Motion made by, George Cooke to adjourn the May 28, 2013 Planning Board meeting. Seconded by, Fred Bowman Meeting adjourned at 7:57 PM.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____