

Montague Planning Board

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August 25, 2015 7:00 PM

Town Hall – Upstairs Meeting Room

One Avenue A

Turners Falls, MA 01376

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ron Sicard – Chair, Fred Bowman, Bob Obear (late 7:08 PM) and George Cooke.

Members Absent: Bruce Young

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

Ron Sicard opened the meeting at 7:03 PM.

Approval of Minutes: Tabled

PUBLIC HEARING Zoning Map Amendment #2015-01 The Board will consider a landowner initiated petition to amend the Montague Zoning Map. The proposal would redistrict Assessors Map 29 Lot 122 (5-7 Church Street) in the village of Millers Falls from Public-Semi Public to Neighborhood Business. The 0.7 acre parcel is entirely surrounded by the Neighborhood Business District.

Guests: Richard Widmer (petitioner), Jeanne Golrick, Peter Golrick, David Jensen – Building Inspector

Robert Obear abstained because he is an abutter.

Richard Widmer would like to create an artists' residency project, community gathering space and cultural activity center in the former church building. Richard has set up both an LLC and a website to promote his idea of an art space (www.millersfallsartsbridge.org). Currently the 0.7 parcel is "spot" zoned Public – Semi Public which could allow this type of development as it falls under educational but would hinder and complicate the use of the property in the future. The request is to re-zone the parcel to Neighborhood Business thus conforming to the rest of the neighborhood.

David Jensen added that the Town has been phasing out the Public – Semi Public designation since the addition of Neighborhood Business in 1999. He believes this is an opportunity to re-zone this parcel to help further develop the property.

Public Comments:

Peter Golrick (abutter):

- Is this spot zoned due to the fact that it didn't fit the neighborhood previously? David Jensen replied saying that there is a place for spot zoning. However, since this is not an active Church it would not fall into this category if it were done today.
- Does the parking lot that is attached need to the parcel need a special permit? David Jensen replied saying since the use of the building is allowed and if the parking lot is needed for the allowed use then no. If in the future the use of the building changes then a special permit may be needed.
- Raised concern about the ringing of church bells. Both the regular and period use of the bells could be an annoyance. The concern was noted by the Board.

Jeanne Golrick (abutter):

- Why is the adjacent parking lot not part of the zone change? Planner confirmed that this is because this parcel is already zoned NB.
- Has the Church Diocese (a former owner) given permission to Richard to do what he is planning with the property? The question is in reference to sellers covenants on the deed. Richard has reached out on several occasions and got the response that the Diocese has no resistance to the plan. Walter added that the Town nor Planning Board enforce covenants it is between the seller and buyer.
- Can we get something in writing from the Church Diocese giving permission for the project? David Jensen responded that we can acknowledge covenants but not enforce them.
- The traffic and noise in Millers Falls is steadily increasing and this affects the Golrick's residence. David Jensen responded that increase traffic, businesses which brings noise can be seen as beneficial to the public and the community revitalization.

Richard Widmer thanked the neighbors for their input and being at the public hearing.

Planner Report: Walter Ramsey feels that issues of traffic and noise would be protected through the neighborhood business zoning. Most uses at this location would need a special permit and there would be the opportunity to comment and review these projects as they developed. The Planner recommends the change to Neighborhood Business.

Ron Sicard closed the Public Hearing at 7:25 PM

***Motion** by Fred Bowman for the Montague Planning Board to recommend the following amendment to the official Montague Zoning Map to redistrict approximately 0.7 acres of land in Millers Falls located on 5-7 Church Street identified as Assessors Map 29 Lot 122 from Public-Semi Public to Neighborhood Business. Seconded by George Cooke.*

Ron Sicard – aye, Fred Bowman – aye, George Cooke – aye, Bob Obear – abstains

MOTION PASSED

Planner was directed to submit the zone change recommendation to the Selectmen for the next Town Meeting warrant.

Bob Obear –rejoined the meeting at 7:28 PM

Subdivision Approval Not Required Endorsement (ANR) #2015-06 filed by Denise Pinardi of 131 West Chestnut Hill Road Montague, MA 01351. Applicant seeks endorsement that the division of Assessors Map 51 Lot 31 located at 131 West Chestnut Hill Road into two lots is not a subdivision because every lot shown on the proposed plan has sufficient frontage and access as is presently required in the Montague Zoning Bylaws.

Guest: Denise Pinardi

Planner: The lot is currently zoned AF-4 (Agricultural Forestry 4 Acre) District. The lot that is created will be 4.9 acres with the remaining piece being 6 acres. There is adequate frontage for both lots which requires at least 250 feet. Both lots also have adequate accessibility. Walter Ramsey has been to the site and recommends endorsing the ANR as presented.

Denise Pinardi added that this ANR plan will enable her to continue her forest management plan.

Motion by Bob Obear to endorse ANR #2015-06 filed by Denise Pinardi of 131 West Chestnut Hill Road. Seconded by George Cooke. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Next meeting: September 22, 2015 at 7:00 PM

Motion by George Cooke at 7:38 PM to adjourn the August 25, 2015 Planning Board meeting. Seconded by Bob Obear. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Approved by: _____ Date: _____