

Montague Planning Board

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October 24, 2017 7:00 PM

Town Hall – Second Floor Meeting Room
One Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ron Sicard – Chair, Fred Bowman, George Cooke, Bruce Young and Elizabeth Irving

Members Absent: Bob Obear

Staff Present: Walter Ramsey-Town Planner, David Jensen-Building Inspector, Kaitlin Young – Planning Intern

Ron Sicard opened the meeting at 7:00 PM. and stated that the meeting was being recorded.

Approval of Minutes:

Fred Bowman made a motion to accept the September 26, 2017 minutes. Seconded by Bruce Young, motion approved unanimously.

Planning Workshop:

- **Review Kearsarge Solar LLC's landscaping plan for file SP#2017-02 – Sandy Lane Solar Project**
Guest: Kevin Magayah – Conti Solar

Planner: There is a condition in the Special Permit issued to Kearsarge that required the applicant to submit a planting plan as described here:

4. *Vegetative Screening: Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant must submit to the Planning Board for their approval a revised landscaping plan for vegetative screening for the entire length of the northern fence line of the west array. The landscaping plan should include a diversity of species and multiple tiers with the tallest planting being at least 6 to 8 feet tall. The applicant will conduct annual inspection of vegetative screening and provide a report to the Planning Board and replace dead plantings as necessary in accordance with the approved Operation and Maintenance Plan.*

In accordance with this condition, Kearsarge submitted a planting plan as part of their final construction drawings. Planner reviewed the plan for compliance with the condition and recommends that the board approves the submittal. The operation and maintenance plan was previously submitted to the board and is on-file.

Kevin from Conti (Kearsarge's construction contractor) described the three tiered planting plan as required by the board. He indicated that the fence will be installed this December, but the plantings likely won't be done until Spring 2018 growing season. Land clearing is nearly complete at this point, but building of the facility has not yet begun.

The Board reviewed the plan and were satisfied.

Bruce Young made a ***motion*** to accept the landscaping and planting plan for SP #2017-02 for the Sandy Lane Project as presented. Seconded by George Cooke, ***motion approved unanimously***.

Planner will notify the Building Inspector so that a building permit may be issued.

- **Review Complete Streets Policy**

A copy of the policy was shared by the Planner at the last meeting. The draft has not changed. The Board requested time to review the policy in September.

George inquired about the impacts of the policy to private subdivision roads. Walter clarified that a new subdivision road would have to adhere to the policy to the extent it is practical. Walter Ramsey and Highway Superintendent Tom Bergeron have met and he has approved the complete streets policy as presented. David Jensen asked if Mass DOT will have to conform to the town complete street policies. Walter responded in the affirmative.

George Cooke made a ***motion*** to endorse the Complete Streets policy and to recommend that Board of Selectmen vote to adopt the Policy as presented. Seconded by Fred Bowman, ***motion approved unanimously***.

- **Review Recreational Marijuana Moratorium Petition and set a public hearing date**

Planner distributed the proposed moratorium language. The Board took time to read and consider the language of the moratorium so as to be informed for the upcoming public hearing. There was a discussion about how recreational marijuana would be classified under zoning without a moratorium in place. Planner indicated that recreational marijuana would be classified as a “retail sales and service” use which is allowed by right in the following districts: General Business, Central Business, and Neighborhood Business up to 1,000 square feet, and by Special Permit in Rural Business and Industrial.

The chairman set the hearing date for November 28, 2017 at 7:00 PM during the regularly scheduled Planning Board monthly meeting located in the upstairs meeting room.

- **Review Telecommunication Facilities Bylaw**

Building Inspector/ Zoning Enforcement Officer: Verizon is proposing to install “repeaters” similar to small Wi-Fi units on poles in heavy call traffic areas. Under the definition of telecommunication facilities in the current zoning bylaws - a special permit would be required to install these antennas on utility poles.

David requested direction for the Board on their interpretation of the bylaw.

Walter: When the bylaw was written in 1997 it was anticipated that cellular/wireless antennas were large, visually obtrusive facilities that warranted detailed review by the Town. Small wireless facilities in the existing right of way were not anticipated.

David: one advantage to having these units permitted is that it would be ‘captured’ by the assessor for tax value. Ultimately it would make sense if there were no zoning permits, no building permits (trackable through zoning) would be needed for these situations but instead an electrical permit would be applied for and granted.

Walter added that in most communities special permits are not required. In fact, most places right of ways are not enforced by zoning.

David feels that a minor clarification needs to be done for the definition of Telecommunication Facilities and that he wanted to share these thoughts as it relates to zoning.

The Board concurred that these facilities were not anticipated under the current zoning and that Special Permit should not be required. The Board directed the planner to draft a revised definition and bring it to the Board at the next meeting.

• **Review Draft Zoning Dimensional Tables**

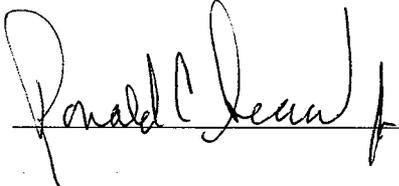
Walter reworked the dimensional tables to simplify and reflect the changes of looking at all the districts. The proposal presents the following:

- Consolidation of minimum lot sizes for single family, multi family and two families and place them all under one single lot size.
- Regulation of building heights by stories instead of feet. There are pros and cons to the approach to consider further.
- No regulation of minimum floor area for non- single family homes.
- No lot coverage requirements as previously proposed.
- Propose to change minimum lot size of AF from ½ acre to 1 acre.
Planner was directed to research impacts of this minim lot size change for AF as it relates to water/sewer availability.

• **Items not anticipated**

Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) maintenance facility permitting process – David got an email from FRTA as it appears they will need to go to the zoning board for permitting the facility to be located in the Sandy Lane industrial area. It is an Industrial Park item so it had been anticipated that it should come to the Planning Board regarding permitting but it is not the case. David feels it is a “similar to the above” use under ZBA Special Permit jurisdiction. Walter suggested that is a “governmental use” (allowed by right). However even if the former is true the ZBA is the special permit granting Authority. The Board expressed frustration in not being the permit granting authority for this project in an industrial area. This is an issue to address in the comprehensive zoning rewrite.

Fred Bowman made a motion at 8:25 PM to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by George Cooke. Motion passed.

Approved by:  Date: 11/28/17