

Montague Planning Board

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May 22, 2018 7:00 PM

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

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present, Ron Sicard, Fred Bowman, George Cooke, Bob Obear, and Elizabeth Irving (associate)

Members Absent: Bruce Young

Staff Present: Walter Ramsey-Town Planner

Meeting was opened by Ron Sicard at 7:00 PM

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Bob Obear to approve the March 27, 2018 minutes as presented. Seconded by Fred Bowman. **All approved.**

Motion by Bob Obear to approve the April 24, 2018 minutes as presented. Seconded by Fred Bowman. **All approved.**

Approval Not Required Endorsement (ANR) #2018-05 filed by Catherine L. Wirth to subdivide existing lot located at 34 South Street, Montague, MA known as assessors Map 49 Lot 11 into two lots.

This property is zoned Rural Business and the parcel is located at the corner of South Street and Federal Street in Montague, MA. It is also partially within the Water Supply Protection District.

There are some points that are worth mentioning regarding this property:

- The frontage requirements in the Rural Business District for a single-family are 200 square feet. The proposed lot has 90 feet and 107 feet of frontage on the respective streets and thus does not meet frontage requirements to allow a single family home.
- Rural Business allows certain commercial business uses by right and these have no frontage requirements.
- Planner had the surveyor add two notations to the plan: “endorsement of this ANR plan does not certify that the lots shown on the plan qualify as building lots under the Town of Montague Zoning Bylaw” and a statement that the zoning district is marked along with it being located in a water supply district.

Motion by George Cooke to endorse the ANR #2018-05 filed by Catherine L. Wirth. with a notation for the record that endorsement of this ANR plan does not certify that the lots shown on the plan qualify as building lots under the Town of Montague Zoning Bylaw. Seconded by Bob Obear. **All approved.**

Zoning Workshop: Consideration of Zoning Bylaws Changes proposed by the Planning Department primarily relating to Dimensional and Use Changes.

- Increase minimum lot size for Agriculture-Forestry-1 district from ½ acre to 1 acre

The Agriculture Forestry-1 district encompasses the majority of prime farmland in Montague. Much of Montague's farmland is flat and is thus easily developable for housing. While minimum zoning allows a ½ acre lot. We have learned that a lot with septic and well on ½ acre is not typically feasible and thus does not reflect current or future land use. The ability under current zoning to develop more small lots on prime farmland incentivizes expansion of water and sewer infrastructure into farmland areas. Frontage requirements (150 feet) will not change.

Intended effect: Increasing the minimum lot size from ½ acre to 1 acre will limit the number of Subdivision Approval Not Required Lots on prime farmland and incentivize the use of Open Space Residential Development for development that clusters and preserves farmland rather than chopping it up into sprawling lots along road frontage.

- Add a dimensional requirements table for user clarity

Intended effect: A dimensional requirement table will allow for a concise reference to minimum size, frontage and setback requirements for any given district. Most communities have dimensional table and Montague does not currently have one.

- Amend special dimensional requirements for two family and multi-family dwelling units

Currently two family and multifamily uses require higher minimum lot sizes and more than single family homes in the districts where they are allowed. The Board is proposing to have a new rule that requires an additional 10,000 square feet per dwelling unit beyond the first.

Current: two family= 45,000 square feet, multi-family= 45,000 square feet plus 22,500 per unit in excess of two

Proposed: two family=underlying zoning + 10,000 square feet, multifamily = underlying zoning+ 10,000 square feet per unit in excess of two.

Intended Effect: To enable new two-family and multifamily units to be designed to fit within the scale and character of existing residential and mixed use neighborhoods in Montague.

- Establish minimum lot frontage and area requirement for non-residential uses

Currently only residential uses have minimum lot frontage and area requirements. The bylaws are silent on minimums for non-residential districts. The Board proposes minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet and 25 feet of frontage in most commercial districts. A 2 acre minimum is required in the Industrial District to encourage development of employment centers that can accommodate drainage and parking on-site. No minimum lot area is proposed in the central business district (where the majority of parcels are less than 10,000 square feet)

Intended effect: maintain flexibility in commercial districts, but remove ambiguity surrounding frontage and minimum area requirements for commercial land uses.

- Reduced rear yard setbacks in NB and CB and HI, from 30 to 15 feet

Amend to better reflect existing character of these areas

- Increased height limits in General Business, Industrial and Historic Industrial District

Increase height limit from 28 feet to 36 feet in General Business to accommodate possibility of mixed use development and multi-story office space. Increase height limit from 36 feet to 50 feet in Industrial

and Historic-Industrial to reflect existing land use patterns and accommodate modern building needs. (At least two buildings in the Industrial park and three buildings in the Canal District exceed 50 feet).

- Relaxes setback regulations for accessory shed structures.

Sheds less than 120 square feet in area may have a minimum 3 foot side and rear yard setbacks.

Intended effect: Will allow shed to be placed up to 3 feet from a side or rear property line without the need for a special permit. These have history of being frequently granted and rarely denied.

- 50' buffer from residential uses for new uses in the General Business and Industrial Districts

Additional protective measure where residential uses abut new business and industrial uses.

- Allows rear yard and building height relief by special permit (currently by variance)

Relief by special permit, rather than variance would be consistent with other sections of the bylaws.

USE CHANGES

- Provide a “purpose/description” for each zoning district

Some districts currently have detailed descriptions, while some districts do not have a description.

Having a written purpose for each district that reflects the community’s goals will provide clear guidance to the Special Permit Granting Authority, Building Inspector, and applicant.

- Allow Planned Unit Developments in ID, HI, GB by Special Permit

This would allow master planned developments with mixed uses and variety of building types and open space, subject to the uses being allowed in the underlying zoning district. A PUD will be a useful for mill and industrial park development as it encourages master planned development rather than through piecemeal special permits over time.

- Allow Open Space Residential Development by special permit from Planning Board in AF-4, AF-2, AF, RS and RB

This would allow clustered (reduced frontage and area) subdivisions by special permit as an alternative to traditional subdivisions when a certain amount of land is set aside as open space. This allows for flexibility when designing subdivisions.

- Redefine “business or professional office” to “business, professional, or medical office”

Remove ambiguity as to what land use category a medical service provider falls under.

- Campgrounds are no longer expressly forbidden, and are considered an “open recreational enterprise”

Campgrounds have been forbidden since zoning was adopted in 1974. This land use is better categorized into the open recreational enterprise land use category. (golf courses, ski facilities, picnic areas, etc.)

- Agriculture-Forestry Districts: allow cemeteries by special permit
- Residential district: allow two family dwellings by right. Allow multifamily up to 4 units and cemetery by special permit.

Multi family is currently not permitted in the RS district. The residential districts are typically connected to water and sewer and are walkable neighborhoods. The proposed change would reflect current land use realities in the Residential District by enabling housing dwellings with up to four units by Special Permit. The intent is to allow a diversity of housing types in the residential district that reflect current land use patterns.

- Rural Business: allow two family, agriculture or forestry products processing up to 5000 square feet by right, allow cemetery by special permit
- Neighborhood Business: allow hotel, inn, lodging house by special permit. Farming and forestry on less than 5 acres of land by special permit
- General Business: allow farming and forestry less than 5 acres with retail component by right. Allow craft workshop or light assemble shop, manufacturing, processing, and research by special permit. Solar energy facility no longer allowed.
- Industrial: Allow agriculture or forestry produces processing, *Allow retail sales and services as accessory to a permitted use.*
- Historic Industrial: permitted uses are allowed in existing building. New buildings require a special permit. Multifamily (not to exceed 75% of floor area), open recreational enterprise, and farming and forestry on less than 5 acres is allowed by special permit. Special Permit no longer required for demolition.

These topics were presented by the Planner and individually discussed. The Board agreed with these changes. The rest of the use changes are to be discussed at the June meeting.

Planner’s Report

- Winter Parking Walter suggested that the town consider an on street parking pilot program during the winter on certain streets (DPW, Police and Town to come to agreement on this) and the possibility of issuing parking permits to park on the street. The Board agree that this this should be investigated further
- Walter announced that a grant came through regarding Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness focusing on climate change. The grant will address planning and design to address flooding on Montague City Road.

Motion by Fred Bowman to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 pm. Seconded by Bob Obear. **All approved.**

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Documents: Zoning Bylaw Changes – Dimensional & Use, Zoning Map