

**HARVARD PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 1, 2021
APPROVED: MAY 26, 2021**

Chair Justin Brown called the meeting to order at 7:04pm virtually in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, under M.G.L. Chapter 40A and Code of the Town of Harvard Chapter 125

Members Present: Justin Brown, Fran Nickerson, Stacia Donahue, Jane Biering and Rebecca Kelley (Associate Member)

Others Present: Christopher Ryan (Director of Community and Economic Development), Liz Allard (Land Use Administrator), Mark Peirmarini, Beth Williams (Council on Aging), Matt Flokos (Harvard Press), Christopher Swiniarski (McLane Middleton, Attorney for Verizon Wireless), David Tivnan (SAI Group, LLC), Barbara & Gregory Romero, Roseanne Saalfeld and Maureen Reitman

Approve New Driveway Inspector – Mark Piermarini

Mark Piermarini introduced himself to the Board; he is currently working as the Assistant Department of Public Works Director in Leominster. Mr. Piermarini worked for almost 20-years for Fred Hamwey, and filled-in in Harvard for him a few times over the years. Allard stated all of his references had nothing but good things to say. Allard explained a new online form is being developed for reporting inspection to the Board.

Donahue made a motion to approve Mark Piermarini as the new Planning Board Driveway Inspector for the Town of Harvard. Nickerson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by a roll call, Donahue, aye; Nickerson, aye; Biering, Aye; and Brown, aye.

District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Grant

Ryan stated the deadline for the DLTA grants is tomorrow for round 1 of the grant process. Ryan explained the migration of the current role of the Land Use Administrator/Conservation Agent to a full-time Conservation Agent would result in a need to find a way to facilitate the administrative responsibilities of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. Ryan recommended applying for a DLTA grant to provide ideas on how to fund and structure and perhaps provide job descriptions. After a brief discussion, Donahue made a motion authorizing Ryan to apply for a DLTA grant for an assessment of the needs of the Land Use Staff, including the creation of a full-time conservation agent. Nickerson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by a roll call, Donahue, aye; Nickerson, aye; Biering, Aye; and Brown, aye.

Communities Matters

Brown shared a letter he received from Loaves and Fishes thanking the Board for their donation this past holiday season. The letter included a story of just one of the many individuals who have benefited from this donation during these extremely difficult times.

Chapter 125-57 Senior Residential Development Bylaw

- **Review Schedule**
- **Bylaw Strategy for Annual Town Meeting**
 - Redefine the Senior Residential Development Bylaw into the framework for spring town meeting; develop the additional phases from there
 - Amend Chapter 125-18.1 Accessory apartment
 - Amend Chapter 125-2 definitions
- **Updates:**
 - **General Survey Results**
 - Subgroup will be sending the raw data and full info in a few days.

- Highlighted 5 items: who responded, perceptions of Harvard, thoughts on future housing development in Harvard, their thoughts on senior housing in Harvard, their thoughts on building residential bylaws, thoughts on moving forward.
 - In general, there is an appetite for diversification and different housing types. Nobody wanted to change the overall feel of the Town by any changes. Vast majority think that housing can be added in a way that does not destroy the Town feel.
 - Overall, this survey did align with previous senior housing surveys.
 - People noted a lack of diversity and a lack of housing options; moderate support was shown for diversity of housing when question posed in general (that is without specifics). Much stronger support when question posed re specific types, particularly active senior villages, workforce housing, and senior housing for people with special needs (assisted living).
 - Strong support for small houses in clusters and groups; the cluster housing with large amount of open space were strongly supported.
 - Preference open space, high quality architectural design and standard, and high-quality landscaping.
 - The small village like clusters of housing kept coming up again and again in the survey results.
- **Focus Groups**
 - There's no consensus on what they would like, but they know it when they see it. However, there is consensus that it can be done.
 - People seem to be looking to gain a level of comfort with what they're going to get.
 - Suggested taking an incremental approach. Be strict, but not too strict and a few lobbied for a special permit so there is proper design review.
 - **Visual Preference Survey**
 - Ryan will provide the print out of the survey responses showing the clustering trends of where people were focused.
 - Single-family residences scored the highest. Two families were surprisingly not well liked. Multifamily did not rank well
 - Townhouses also scored lower than expected, as did apartment houses.
 - Apartments above store front scored higher than expected.
 - Well designed accessory apartments also scored very well.
 - Town center mixed use scored well.

A Doodle poll will be sent out to the members for an additional meeting focused on this subject matter.

Continuation of a Site Plan Approval – Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless, 12 Woodchuck Hill Road

The Planning Board conducted a site walk on Saturday at the site and the adjoining site at the Romero's to view the site from their back yard. Attorney Swiniarski noted the site walk was valuable for determining the tree removal that is being requested. It was noted that many of the trees tagged for removal were in poor health and not as big as originally thought. It was agreed that screening needs to be reviewed and added. In addition, there is a preference to move the access gate from the side of the enclosure to the front or back. Biering said she didn't feel that moving the gate entrance was critical as there was plenty of natural screening already from Romero's to the enclosure. Brown noted that JC Ferguson, the Tree Warden was comfortable with the trees being removed. Brown also noted the Planning Board (PB) should ask for a thoughtful landscaping plan and select the proper vegetation. Ferguson had also noted that the proper screening vegetation will take time to develop as it grows slowly. Brown noted the PB is going to want to see a formal landscape plan that will be in consultation with the Tree Warden.

Ryan noted that the waivers the applicant has requested all seemed to be justified and understandable. Ryan noted that a landscape plan is required as part of Chapter 125-39. Ryan stated the standard and special conditions should be reviewed as written in his director's report by the PB and if there are no objections they will be included in the final approval. The biggest discussion was item #10 about adding a 'bionic tower' camouflaging feature. Biering was in favor of it, but not strongly so; Donahue and Nickerson

were indifferent. Brown noted that the human eye does pick up on anomalies and is worried we are going to create a bigger eye sore than we are intending. Attorney Swiniarski is against a bionic tower due to added bulk to the tower and the additional load then makes the base larger; as well as being ten times more expensive. Attorney Swiniarski stated the biggest complaint he receives are in regards to the mono-pines as opposed to the standard monopole. Attorney Swiniarski feels this is an excessive request from the PB and was not amenable to it. The PB reviewed the special conditions and noted #14 details noise and should include allowing the generator to be exercised once per week between 9am and 5pm Monday – Friday. Attorney Swiniarski will work to get a landscape plan based on Ryan and the Tree Warden comments. Attorney Swiniarski questioned whether or not the landscape plan really needed to be stamped by a landscape architect. Ryan stated it was in the Bylaw.

Greg Romero, the direct abutter, requested leaving the need for registered landscape architect in place if possible; questioned location of potential shielding and asked for clarification; was worried the plantings would be put on the adjacent lot and then be lost when/if the parcel was ever sold; and would prefer the gate to be on the Maiore rental property side instead of the side facing his parcel.

Roseanne Saalfield, an abutter, requested moving the gate and wanted to reemphasize the need for a registered landscape architect to prepare the landscape plans.

This Site Plan Review will continue at the February 22, 2021 meeting.

Board Member Reports

- **Representatives & Liaison Reports**

Harvard-Devens Jurisdiction Committee - Biering noted that Ayer and Shirley had not been meeting, but Harvard has continued on with Devens alone. The list of options a consultant (not yet hired) will review has been narrowed from seven down to the handful that were originally the charge of the committee.

Climate Resiliency Working Group – an update on manpower needs and outreach efforts was provided.

Hazel property meeting – Representatives from the Planning Board (PB) met with the Hazel's directly to review how they can move forward. The Hazel's were informed the PB does not have the bandwidth to move this bylaw forward. Outreach needs to be conducted by the Hazel's. The PB and Town Counsel suggested the special permit option, however the Hazel's were resistant to going that route. Those representing the Hazel's needed to discuss matters with other family members involved. PB is going to write up their suggestion for a special permit and give the Hazel's a marked-up version of the old Rural Life Bylaw as a starting point.

Director's Update

Covered under Continuation of a Site Plan Approval – Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless, 12 Woodchuck Hill Road

Approve Minutes – September 28, 2020

Donahue made a motion to accept the minutes of September 28, 2020 as amended. Nickerson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by a roll call, Donahue, aye; Nickerson, aye; Biering, Aye; and Brown, aye.

Adjournment

Donahue made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:01pm. Nickerson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by a roll call, Donahue, aye; Nickerson, aye; Biering, Aye; and Brown, aye.

Signed: _____

Liz Allard, Clerk

EXHIBITS & OTHER DOCUMENTS

- Planning Board Agenda February 1, 2021
- Director of Community and Economic Development Update, February 1, 2021