

**HARVARD PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 7, 2022
APPROVED: MARCH 21, 2022**

Chair Justin Brown called the meeting to order at 7:02pm virtually, pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency and signed into law on June 16, 2021, and under M.G.L. Chapter 40A and Code of the Town of Harvard Chapter 125

Members Present: Justin Brown, Richard Cabelus, Brian Cook, Doug Thornton and Jefferson Burson (Associate Member)

Others Present: Liz Allard (Land Use Administrator) and Kelene Blumstein

Public Comment

There were no comments from the public this evening

Harvard Climate Initiative Committee (HCIC) Goals & Action Plans

Burson stated the Town resolution in October 2021 created the Harvard Climate Initiative Committee (HCIC), that included the responsibility of creating a Climate Action Plan (CAP). The HCIC is working in collaboration with relative boards/commissions/committees and departments to create the CAP and its goals. The primary purpose for this evening is to focus on the proposed goal and action items within the Natural Resource section of the CAP as it pertains to the Planning Board. The Natural Resource section includes biodiversity, water and air pollution, sustainability development, along with other aspects.

The CAP has six target areas: Buildings, Energy, Transportation, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Preparedness. Each target area is divided into two sections: Municipal or Residential, each with their own goals. The focus for the Planning Board is to establish Town policies and bylaws that shall facilities sustainable land use and development. Burson stated the Planning Board is able to comment on any part of the CAP, however the HCIC would appreciate feedback on this particular goal. Cabelus asked about recyclables and the ability track where they go. Burson thought that may be a subcategory around waste management under the Building target area; but it will be addressed in some manner. Brown mentioned the preservation of open space and the transportation of goods, especially the increase in home delivery of those good, and the affects it has on the climate. Thornton stated under Priority Action #5 that a Park and Ride location to the commuter rail would help fulfill that item, as well as providing for walking districts. Cabelus stated any bylaw brought before the Town should have a sustainable factor that should be considered. Allard stated the language in priority action #3 should be re-worded as the Planning Board does not acquire open space through the Open Space Residential Development Bylaw, but instead ensures permanent protection of open space.

Cabelus warned making certain requirements could create a barrier entry into the Town for some, and should be avoided. Allard suggested changing the word “shall” within the goal to “encourage”. Thornton asked how Harvard compares to other Towns in the climate change process. Burson stated Harvard is a bit behind such communities as Concord, Wayland and Sudbury. The members agreed to review the documentation and provide additional feedback to Liz Allard for collation to be further discussion by the Board at the next meeting.

Ayer Road Project Outreach Planning

Brown, Cabelus and Ryan met with Howard Kohn from The Chesapeake Group (TCG) shortly after the last Planning Board meeting, which resulted in TCG termination from the contract. Brown stated there has been a struggle with getting direct information on the survey results and comparison information. The plan moving forward is to engage the other consultant that had previously been interviewed. As for

funding, the Capital Planning and Investment Committee request for Phase 2 and 3 can moved to the fall town meeting.

Cook supports the decision and could sense the frustration during the presentation. Cook asked if any of the results are salvageable or will the new consultant have to start from scratch. Brown stated he does not see the Board relying on the survey results going forward. Burson stated it sounds like to accomplish Phase 1 the Board needs to disregard the deliverables from TCG and rely on another approach.

Some of the existing funds will be used to pay TCG and then determine what the remainder is to work from, with the second part of Phase 1 being the financial analysis. Thornton asked if the data from the interviews that had been conducted by TCG can be obtained. Brown stated that information will be obtained by TCG; the contract allows for the termination with the deliverable of any information generated to date.

Brown stated he has spoken with SusanMary Reddinger, chair of the School Committee, on how to get Town residents involved. Reddinger suggests a public meeting that includes as many other boards to share their prospective on the development within the district. For example, Board of Health as it pertains to the lack of water and sewer in the district. It was suggested that water and sewer should be established before creating new zoning for the district, though this would likely lead to rapid growth of the district under the current zoning before the new zoning could be put in place; while this public meeting could have a high impact, Brown was reluctant as it would be a lot of work and requires that consideration. Circling back to public outreach, Brown asked if there is any interest in being at the transfer station on a Saturday to get the word out. Cabelus was willing to do that. Allard suggested outreach at Town Meeting either through booth or handout. Additionally, those within the community who support this project should be asked to express that support publicly.

Discuss the State's Multi-Family District Requirements

At the recent Select Board the comment letter regarding the regulations, due on March 31st, was discussed with a suggestion of requiring an affordable housing component. Since the Legislation did not allow for an affordable component in the Economic Bond Bill the regulations cannot require an affordable component. However, the Town could have a requirement within its own bylaw.

The Board discussed the options on moving forward with the Multi-Family Bylaw as provided by Ryan in his report, including whether or not doing nothing is an option. Brown explained not doing anything could result in a loss of State funding under such grants like, MassWorks. Plus, we want to assist in addressing the housing crisis in Massachusetts. Cabelus stated it would be up to the Select Board to make the decision to accept a warrant article for Town Meeting, at which point they could scrap this whole thing. After further discussing the options, the Board tasked Ryan with the following:

- Once finalized, circulate the comment letter to other MBTA communities
- Expand on Option C as to how it would "buy time" for the Board/Town
- Board agreed that a blended approach of the options presented in the Director's Update is most practical

Board Member Reports

- Representatives & Liaisons Updates
 - *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)* – The District Local Technical Assistance application to update the Open Space Plan was approved. Allard will inform the Open Space Committee as well as be the staff contact for this grant.
 - *Harvard Climate Initiative Committee (HCIC)* – Burson stated the HCIC is working the Climate Action Plan with six focus areas. The HCIC is meeting with principal committees and is also making progress on grant applications for stormwater improvements as suggested by the Apple Country report. Outreach committee working on an Earth Day event.

- Community Matters - None

Director's Report

This item was passed over this evening.

Approve Minutes

Cabelus made a motion to approve the minutes of February 28, 2022 as amended. Cook seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by roll call, Cabelus, aye; Cook, aye; Thornton, aye; and Brown; aye.

Chapter 125 Bylaw Amendment – 125-35 Open Space Residential Development (OSRD)

•Review 125-35D Development Density & 125-35F Dimensional & Design Requirements

Cabelus stated his review of other communities does not seem to contain the level of detail in 125-35F(2)(b). Brown continues to struggle with how to facilitate the progress of this bylaw. Burson asked if there any value with comparing this bylaw with other towns that have recently approved this type of bylaw. Cook and Burson suggested opportunities to visit local developments in order to review setback and dimensional requirements in a 3D environment rather than in a bylaw table. Brown likes that idea; Ryan has that information and perhaps he can share that information. Without Ryan in attendance this evening the Board agreed to discuss further at a future meeting.

Adjournment

Cook made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05pm. Thornton seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by roll call, Cabelus, aye; Cook, aye; Thornton, aye; and Brown; aye.

Signed: _____ Liz Allard, Clerk

EXHIBITS & OTHER DOCUMENTS

- Planning Board Agenda March 7, 2022
- Director of Community and Economic Development UPDATE, March 7, 2022
- Collaboration Document for CAP Focus Area: Natural Resources