

**HARVARD PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
October 16th, 2023
APPROVED APRIL 1, 2024**

Chair Richard Cabelus called the open meeting to order remotely at 7:00pm, pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2023, which has suspended the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings at publicly accessible locations and allowing all public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting.

Members Present: Richard Cabelus, John McCormack, Doug Thornton, Stacia Donahue, Arielle Jennings

Others Present:

Frank O'Connor (Town Planner), Jaimie (RE Architecture), Jacob Turner, Taskina Tareen, Matthew Littell, Kevin Chong, Marc Sevigny, Bill Scanlon, Kara McGuire Minar, Steve Moeser

Public Hearings:

8:15pm Continuation of a Public Hearing: Proposed amendments to §125-35 Open Space Preservation – Planned Residential Development (OSP – PRD)

See full details on Page 3 through 4

New Business:

7PM: discussion with UTILE Consultants update on Ayer Road Vision Plan (Phases 2 & 3)

Taskina Tareen, Matthew Littell, Kevin Chong of the UTILE Consultants introduced themselves to the Board and shared their screen to give a brief presentation of their plans and what is expected to be completed within each phase. The group also proposed multiple sites that could potentially be used, what they might look like, and from a range of small to medium to large in size. Included in the presentation, the group showed some examples of what has been completed in the Town of Littleton and how they can move toward what Harvard's vision of the plan might be. The UTILE group presented the idea that the properties would be used for mixed use in order to create more desirable use to the commercial plans for Harvard and the potential businesses.

Questions/Comments/Concerns

Arielle Jennings asked if there was any room for adjusting towards the Town's bylaws. Matthew Littell clarified that their goal is to do exactly this while also finding ways to meet in the middle so both sides can be satisfied with the end results. Richard Cabelus voiced his concern with the examples presented and the potential plans that would move Harvard into a more suburban town rather than its current rural identity. He cited past plans and the negative reception the Town has previously had in these instances and wanted to clarify this to the UTILE group early in the case that this issue arises in the future for these plans.

The UTILE group plans to meet again at the November 6th 2023 Planning Board meeting and to continue moving forward with these potential plans.

Application for Erosion Control Minor Permit – 4 Pond Road, Section 125-58E requesting approval of a Special Permit at Pavilion at Harvard Library

Jaimie from RE Architecture gave a brief overview of the plans made for the property. John McCormack asks if anyone has been in touch with the conservation agent. Frank O'Connor clarified that the conservation agent knew of the project and had no comment on the plans. To alleviate the concerns of the Board, Jaimie shared her screen to show that the conservation review has taken place.

Motion: John McCormack made the motion to approve the Erosion Control Minor Permit for 4 Pond Road.

Seconded by Doug Thornton

Voted yes by: John McCormack, Stacia Donahue, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus
Passed unanimously

Standard Business:

Community Matters

Starting November 6th 2023, the MART Services will start for the public transportation connecting to Littleton. Stacia Donahue will provide the flyer containing its information when it is received.

Arielle Jennings asks from updates on the future of the Bromfield House in the Historical District. Erin McBee reported that the lease was extended until the end of June 2024. The plans for what happens next are still undetermined, but are being worked on.

Stacia Donahue informed the Board that there will be a new division at the state level to represent the small communities and rural towns and that the MRPC group is excited about this new division.

Minutes:

Motion: Stacia Donahue made the motion to approve the minutes for July 31st 2023, September 11th 2023, and September 18th 2023 as amended.

Seconded by Doug Thornton

Voted yes by: John McCormack, Stacia Donahue, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus
Passed unanimously

Adjournment:

Motion: Stacia Donahue made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:48pm

Seconded by Doug Thornton

Voted yes by: John McCormack, Stacia Donahue, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus
Passed unanimously

Harvard Planning Board

Special Public Hearing Minutes

October 16th 2023: Meeting called to order at 8:15pm

Continuation of a Public Hearing: Proposed amendments to §125-35 Open Space Preservation - Planned Residential Development (OSP – PRD)

The Board started the Special Hearing to clarify that they would all be in attendance for the public town meeting to officially introduce the revisions to the open space bylaw that they have been working on.

- From here Marc Sevigny addressed the Board about a minor change in the current plan. His suggestion is to change the phrase of “Links to adjacent open space areas” “to maximize contiguous natural areas, including adjacent unprotected parcels” in order to take adjacent abutting parcels into consideration and avoid isolated pockets of open space.
- Marc Sevigny also suggested taking out the word “active” under active recreation in order to create an opportunity to use recreational areas as open space areas. John McCormack clarified that a change would not be needed for this area.
- Marc Sevigny also had a question about the accessibility guidelines pertaining to trails that cross into abutting parcels and if this is something the Board would have to clarify on. The Board voiced their opinion that they believe that these guidelines are adequate and any issues that arise would be under the purview of another Board for these types of circumstances

The Board discussed the possibility of adding amendments to the official document now that the bylaw has been finished and made ready for the public town meeting. Bill Scanlon then informed the Board of the procedure that would take place during the public town meeting in order to pass any possible amendments.

Bill Scanlon shared his screen from here to show some visuals and a handout he believes would be helpful to use during the public town meeting. On Bill Scanlon’s shared screen, it showed what the Craftsman Village could look like using other configurations permissible under the revised bylaw. Mr. Scanlon also quickly went through the handout to highlight some of the important parts. Arielle Jennings suggested adding a small preamble in order to put language in that explains the Planning Board’s overall goals with this bylaw.

Questions/Comments/Concerns

- Steve Moeser addressed the Board to ask if there was anything other than providing better protection and diversity of housing in regards to the purpose of the revision of the original Town bylaw. Richard Cabelus answered that this bylaw was made to update the older 2003 bylaw and clarified this revised bylaw was made to improve the overall practicality of the bylaw. Steve Moeser is also concerned with the unforeseen stress on the local traffic and public services that would occur if too many young families move into the new potential developments.
- Kara McGuire Minar gave her opinion that many homeowners may feel uncomfortable with the potential changes of the Town if multiple developments take place and change the overall makeup of the town.

- Doug Thornton made the comment that the Board should put some extra effort into expressing to the public that the environmental aspect was very important to the Board while crafting this revised bylaw.
- John McCormack made the suggestion that there should be a limit to the number of permits that can be active at any given time and the possibly of reducing the incentives if necessary.
Motion: Stacia Donahue made the motion to continue the hearing on Saturday on October 21st 2023 at 11:30am at a location to be determined.
Seconded by Doug Thornton
Voted yes by: John McCormack, Stacia Donahue, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus
Passed unanimously