

**HARVARD PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
November 20th, 2023
APPROVED APRIL 22, 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, Arielle Jennings

Others Present:

Frank O'Connor (Town Planner), Richard Abt, Frank McPartlan, Bruce Ringwall, Grant (from Chestnut Tree & Landscape)

Public Hearings:

Continuation of a Public Hearing for 320 Ayer Road, Chestnut Tree & Landscape request for a Special Permit under §125-13T: to operate a Medium-scale commercial use, Landscaping Services involving equipment parking as allowed by special permit pursuant to the "Code of the Town of Harvard" as amended, and Site Plan approval under §125-38A(4) as well as the Protective Bylaw Chapter §125-23B and §125-46

See details on Page 4

Old Business:

UTILE Ayer Road Workshop update

Doug Thornton, John McCormick, and Frank O'Connor attended the November 2nd 2023 meeting and updated the Board on these events. John McCormack noted that while there were some people that did not want any development in this area, but he saw a majority of those in attendance supporting the idea for mixed use developments. Frank O'Connor noted that the UTILE group was very well prepared for questions and the potential plans for the area. Doug Thornton mentioned one of the biggest concerns came from the traffic concerns that would come with this development.

Preliminary plans for the proposal for 184 Ayer Road

Frank O'Connor updated the Board about the proposal for 184 Ayer Road and his thoughts to bring in a landscaping company to expand the parking area for equipment behind the building. Frank O'Connor's one concern comes from the possibility that the plan meets the storm water management requirements. O'Connor suggests that the Planning Board conducts a peer review of the storm water management during the preliminary stages. Frank O'Connor has reached out to four different peer review companies and has heard back from Beels & Thomas about filling this role. Frank McPartlan noted that there was currently no objection with having a peer review for the proposed plans. Richard Cabelus suggested that the Board revisits this in the December 4th 2023 meeting.

Proposed Town Center Overlay District and Town Center Action Plan

Richard Cabelus started the topic asking what would be the best way to move along with the Overlay Plan and if the Board has any thoughts or comments on how they would like to approach this. John McCormack believes a good goal to have is to get everything accounted for and addresses all of the different types of parcels in this area. McCormack also would like to be able to have a guide for the Board to use when a landowner wants to construct a subordinate structure, specifically one plan that is already awaiting approval. Frank O'Connor is going to reach out to Mr. Bragan to see if a proposed Harvard Center Overlay District for subordinate structures would be workable for the spring town meeting. Doug Thornton also wants to work on this in the spring in order to receive some early feedback.

Planning Board comments to ZBA related to proposed 40-B at Old Mill & Ayer roads

The Board had no further comments for the Zoning Board of Appeals.

New Business:

MBTA site designation survey

The Board hopes to get the survey out to the public within the next 30 days. Frank O'Connor would like to find a way to create a survey that would show all three of the proposed lots and have ranked voting from the public in order to get a clear idea of how the Town feels about these plans. Arielle Jennings suggested adding open ended responses for the public so they can express why/how they feel when voting for specific parcels.

The Board took the time to wordsmith the information page for the public. The Board struck out the large three paragraphs at the start of the document in order to have much more readable version for the public to view. The Board also made minor edits in the document in order to help clarify the intent of the potential MBTA plans. Along with the ranked choices, the Board also added how strongly the individual taking the survey favors or does not favor each choice.

Establish date for commencement of MBTA-3A Public Hearing

The Planning Board decided that the best course of action is to hold the Public Hearing for December 18th 2023 to coincide with the release of the MBTA survey. The hearing will take place at 8:15pm.

Ayer Road Phase III: authority to proceed on Form Based Code

Frank O'Connor informed the Planning Board that the UTILE group will be working on Phase III, but the Planning Board does not need to make any decisions or take a vote on any pressing concerns until January when the UTILE group has completed its scheduled public outreach timeline.

Standard Business:

Master Planning for 2026

The Planning Board will populate the Master Planning before the start of the December 4th 2023 meeting. The Board will also take time to talk about who will be on the official committee. John McCormack mentioned that there will be a workshop on how to set up a Master Plan on November 29th 2023. Frank O'Connor will make sure the Board receives the links to this workshop along with the recording.

Minutes:

Motion: John McCormack made the motion to approve the minutes for October 16th 2023.

Seconded by Doug Thornton

Voted yes by: John McCormack, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus

Passed unanimously

Invoice:

Motion: John McCormack made the motion to approve the UTILE invoice #10071 for \$21,115.00.

Seconded by Doug Thornton

Voted yes by: John McCormack, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus

Passed unanimously

Adjournment:

Motion: Doug Thornton made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:13pm.

Seconded by John McCormack

Voted yes by: John McCormack, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus

Passed unanimously

Harvard Planning Board

Special Public Hearing Minutes

November 20th 2023: Meeting called to order at 7:31pm

Chestnut Tree & Landscape: 320 Ayer Road

Continuation of a Public Hearing request for a Special Permit under §125-13T: to operate a Medium-scale commercial use, Landscaping Services involving equipment parking as allowed by special permit pursuant to the “Code of the Town of Harvard” as amended, and Site Plan approval under §125-38A(4) as well as the Protective Bylaw Chapter §125-23B and §125-46

Bruce Ringwall started the public hearing by updating the Board on a few matters that had taken place since the last meeting. Mr. Ringwall had submitted a memo that addresses the Board’s concern for a more detail narrative in the application. Chestnut Tree & Landscape decided to remove themselves and their materials from the site. Mr. Ringwall also attached the original 2020 site plan in order to have this compared to the current plan that has been requested in the Special Permit.

In these plan, both gravel and woodchips will be moved back away from the wetland lines while also setting up warning signs so there is a clear line that will not be crossed. Now that the concerns from the previous meeting have been addressed, Bruce Ringwall is hoping that the Board will approve the special permit. Frank O’Connor also believes this to be the case.

Motion: John McCormack made the motion to close the hearing.

Seconded by Doug Thornton

Voted yes by: John McCormack, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus,

Passed unanimously

Motion: John McCormack made the motion to approve the Special Permit for 320 Ayer Road.

Seconded by Doug Thornton

Voted yes by: John McCormack, Richard Abt, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus

Passed unanimously

Motion: John McCormack made the motion to approve the site plan for 320 Ayer Road.

Seconded by Doug Thornton

Voted yes by: John McCormack, Richard Abt, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus

Passed unanimously