

**STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2016**

Ms. Gibson-Quigley called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:30 PM.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley noted the members present.

Present: Charles Blanchard
Russell Chamberland
James Cuniff
Penny Dumas
Heather Hart
Sandra Gibson-Quigley, Chair
Susan Waters, Clerk

Also Present: Jean M. Bubon, Town Planner
Diane M. Trapasso, Administrative Assistant

Ms. Gibson-Quigley opened the meeting and read the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Made by Ms. Waters to approve the draft minutes of September 13, 2016.
2nd: Mr. Cuniff
Discussion: None
Vote: 7 – 0

INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH MICHAEL JACOBS REGARDING 21 NEW BOSTON ROAD AND CURRENT ZONING.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley stated that Mr. Patel and Mr. Jacobs have requested to have an informal discussion about the possibility of changing the Village Gateway Zoning Bylaw to allow a drive thru window for a “casual restaurant” at 21 New Boston Road. A restaurant is a permitted use but a drive thru is explicitly prohibited. They wanted the ability to speak to the Board directly.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley stated the owner of the property on the corner of New Boston Road and Route 20 approached the Board to request that they consider supporting the rezoning of the entire parcel from Commercial and Suburban Residential to all Commercial.

A Sub-Committee was selected from the Planning Board members to review this issue. The Sub-Committee was comprised of Mr. Cuniff, Ms. Hart and Ms. Dumas. The Town Planner provided assistance to the group for this task. The Village Gateway District was established and the parcel was rezoned for that District. A Site Plan including a hotel, bank with a drive-thru, and restaurant was approved.

Mr. Jacobs of Glickman Kovago and Mr. Doherty of MidPoint Engineering spoke on behalf of Mr. Patel, who was unable to attend. Mr. Jacobs stated that there is interest from Panera Bread to do a 4200 sq.ft. restaurant with a drive thru on the front pad of the site (a change to the existing site plan).

Ms. Gibson-Quigley noted repeatedly that the Board would not discuss the issue in relation to any specific tenant: and that changing the Bylaw would mean that any restaurant with a drive-thru window would be allowed in this Zone.

Mr. Jacobs stated that they have reached out to all the national restaurants who have passed on the site. They consider Sturbridge a rural market and if there is no anchor of a big box, the restaurants don't think it would be feasible to be there. Therefore, he and his client are requesting the Bylaw change. He also discussed the differences between fast food restaurants and fast casual. Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Doherty both noted that they would be open to allowing a drive-thru by Special permit with very specific criteria (smaller sq. footage, amount of seating, etc.) to reflect the fast casual type of restaurant.

Mr. Jacobs stated the drive-thru will be less than 25% if the business and mainly be coffee in the mornings.

Mr. Doherty stated that Panera Bread requires outdoor seating in their design and proposes a new site plan.

The Board had the following concerns, questions and comments:

- No drive thru was established in the Village Gateway District because of the concern about traffic flow and pedestrian foot flow from the hotel
- Safety is a major concern
- Fast food is not allowed
- The loss of parking spaces and the parcel is tight on parking, now
- Worked very hard to get this bylaw and the appearance of the site that both parties (Mr. Patel and the Board) worked on to make it work
- The big concern is traffic within the site and New Boston Road
- Panera prepares all their meals to order - how will a drive-thru work – customers will be waiting for a long time – the line of cars will be long
- The Westboro Panera Bread has long lines at lunch time
- Wouldn't be better to have designated parking for call ahead orders and have pick-up
- Have drive-thru by special permit – that way can make very specific conditions
- Ms. Dumas is very disheartened – worked very hard to get the Village Gateway District passed and voted for it – and now the same proponents want something else - would never vote for a drive-thru – worry about a special permit cannot deny
- Some Board members feel that the residents should be given the opportunity to decide to change the Bylaw allowing for drive-thru at a Town Meeting

Mr. Rosenbloom of 5 Old Brook Circle stated that he would like to see a family style sit down restaurant. Longhorn or Outback would be great.

Ms. Gimas of 38 Farquhar Road stated that the Board maybe should revisit the idea of a Special Permit for drive-thru.

The Board feels that it may be time to revisit the issue of fast food restaurants and defining them by drive-thru windows. Times have changed since that was written in the bylaw. This is a particular problem in the CT District where fast food restaurant are not allowed.

Motion: Made by Mr. Blanchard to consider allowing Drive-thru window in the Gateway Village District by Special Permit with criteria to align with the goals of the Village Gateway District.[The Board asks Ms. Bubon to develop this proposal for the Board's consideration]

2nd: Ms. Waters

Discussion: Ms. Dumas stated that even though we will look at the possibility of a Special Permit for a drive-thru window in this district this doesn't mean the Board will ultimately support such a change,

Vote: 4 – 3 (Ms. Dumas, Ms. Hart & Mr. Cunniff)

TOWN PLANNER UPDATE

Bentley Pub site – fence is up

Pre-construction meeting for the OSV solar project – scheduled for October 4, 2016

Mr. Filchak has collected nearly 300 surveys related to the Trolley Service feasibility study (MDI Grant)

Dr. Restrepo is working with an engineer to prepare plans to see if the Conservation Commission will approve the paving of the lot as discussed at the Planning Board meeting this past spring

Staff met with Heal Inc. to discuss plans and filing requirements for the Medical Marijuana Dispensary proposed for 600 Main Street. – DRC – October 19th – Planning in November

LID Bylaw originally scheduled for September 20th was rescheduled to September 26th – amending rules & regs – instead of a new bylaw

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Hobbs Brook – BlueWave – solar panels delivered – delay by Mass. National Commission – looking at old grist mill

NEXT MEETING

October 11, 2016

On a motion made by Mr. Blanchard, and seconded by Mr. Chamberland, and voted 7– 0, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.