

**STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2018
CENTER OFFICE BUILDING**

Mr. Blanchard called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:30 PM.

Present: Charles Blanchard
Christopher Bouchard
Russell Chamberland
Michael Chisholm
Heather Hart

Also Present: Jean Bubon, Town Planner
Rebekah DeCoursey, Administrative Assistant
Dan Gonya

Absent: Susan Waters
James Cunniff

Mr. Blanchard opened the meeting and read the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Made by Ms. Hart to approve the draft minutes of October 10, 2018.
2nd: Mr. Chisholm
Discussion: None
Vote: 4 – 0 – 1 (Mr. Bouchard)

**INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH DAN GONYA REGARDING PARKING
OPTIONS AT 420 MAIN STREET**

Dan Gonya requested this meeting with the Board to discuss options for expanding parking at 420 Main Street. Mr. Gonya runs Table 3 Restaurant Group and Porchlight Investments. Roughly four years ago the company purchased 420 Main Street and made aggressive renovations to the property, including landscaping. The current parking lot accommodates businesses at 420 Main Street including Cedar Street Cafe, the Barn at Wight Farm, as well as shared parking with Cedar Street Grille and the Sturbridge Veterinary Hospital. Now with the Alpheus Wight function room there are times when the employees are forced to scatter their own parking throughout town to make parking room for events.

When the property was purchased, it included “Parcel B” as noted on the site plan behind the main parcel at 420 Main Street. It is currently zoned Suburban Residential and Mr. Gonya would like input from the Board on their opinion regarding a zoning change to Commercial Tourist, as 420 Main Street is currently zoned. When this idea first began, Table 3 explored building a few condominiums to promote housing walkable to downtown areas. Parcel B only has 100’ of frontage on Cedar Street. There have been positive discussions with the neighbors at 15 Cedar Street about purchasing their property in the near future,

which would give Parcel B additional frontage on Cedar Street. However, building costs for the townhouse style housing they were proposing turned out not to be financially feasible. Most recent conversations, by Table 3, also considered proposing a small 10-12 room Inn on Parcel B to accommodate wedding parties. No matter what the proposal for Parcel B, Table 3 needs additional parking at their location and would prefer to establish a parking lot on the wooded Parcel B behind the property, but also could explore the option of putting parking in the front lawn area. Their preference is not to do this; the open lawn is a nice feature in the Commercial Tourist District and is often filled with kids playing on the weekends.

Ms. Bubon stated she and Mr. Gonya have had several meeting to discuss the options for 420 Main Street. She noted the benefit of infill development as a planning technique to protect sprawl in a town, and the benefit of helping a small business to thrive in our town.

The Board has the following questions, comments, or concerns:

- Parcel B would be all parking? The preference would be to keep a 75' - 100' buffer of vegetation and use appropriate lighting to not disturb the abutters.
- There are roughly 120 parking spaces currently, and the proposal would add 100-125 more spaces to accommodate the larger weddings and events held at the facility.
- The lot looks to be pretty flat – is there a possibility of building a field there for the Town? No, rules and regulations of government processes don't make that feasible.
- The parking lot will be asphalt. Mr. Gonya said that as much as a pervious stone dust lot is appealing, the maintenance is quite extensive.
- A rezoning for the parcel would need to go to Town Meeting. While the Board felt this rezoning request from Suburban Residential to Commercial Tourist is reasonable, they would also like to hear from the abutters at the public hearing.
- Would the project rezone the entire lot? Or just a portion? Mr. Gonya stated that he would be open to exploring just rezoning the parking lot portion of the site to establish the vegetative buffer between it and the abutting residents for the long term. Ms. Bubon stated that the meets and bounds would just need to be laid out in the rezoning submission for that portion of Parcel B.

Mr. Gonya thanked the Board for their time and feedback.

TOWN PLANNER UPDATE

- Next meeting dates: November 13, November 27, and December 11.
- Special Town Meeting will be October 29.
- Complete Streets Update: the kick off meeting will be next week.
- Application for Green Communities is being submitted by the October 26 deadline.

OLD BUSINESS

- With the designation of Green Communities, a number of grants were just issued. Ms. Bubon clarified that we will receive a sum of money initially and then after will apply for additional grants.
- Tree work at McDonalds – are they removing trees or just pruning?

NEW BUSINESS

None.

On a motion made by Mr. Chamberland and seconded by Mr. Bouchard, and voted 5 - 0, the meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.