

**STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2018
CENTER OFFICE BUILDING**

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

Present: Charles Blanchard
Russell Chamberland
Michael Chisholm
James Cunniff
Susan Waters

Absent: Christopher Bouchard
Heather Hart

Also Present: Jean Bubon, Town Planner
Rebekah DeCoursey, Administrative Assistant
Mary Blanchard, Board of Selectmen
Priscilla Gimás, Board of Selectmen
Michael Suprenant, Board of Selectmen

Mr. Blanchard opened the meeting and read the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Made by Mr. Chamberland to approve the draft minutes of November 27, 2018 as amended.

2nd: Mr. Chisholm

Discussion: None

Vote: 5 – 0

COMPLETE STREETS

CMRPC was on the agenda to present the draft Prioritization Plan for public comment. It will be postponed until a January meeting.

TOWN PLANNER UPDATE

- Next meeting dates:
 - January 8th: the Open Space Committee will be at the meeting to present the 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan to the Planning Board. The plan has officially been accepted by the state and will be good seven years.
 - January 22nd: will be a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen to discuss options for rezoning the Route 15 corridor, using the suggestions from the Route 15 Corridor Study as a starting point.
- In lieu of the Complete Streets presentation: Ms. Bubon gave an outline of the process of Complete Streets thus far: in fall 2017, the draft policy was approved. In

spring 2018, the policy was approved by the state and a grant application was prepared to create a Prioritization Plan for Sturbridge. Using this \$15,000 grant the Town hired CMRPC to create the Plan. At the kick off meeting, staff members discussed what areas of Town are suitable for the Prioritization Plan that are not state highway (state roads aren't involved in Complete Streets). However, state highways will still be discussed in the plan with the hope that the state will make these improvements.

- Next steps: receive public comment from the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen and fine tune the plan to adopt by the end of February. Delay of this meeting may move this timeframe.

OLD BUSINESS

- Route 15 Corridor Study. The current zoning is not attractive to businesses, and there isn't quite enough land for the current zoning to be utilized.
- Mr. Blanchard attended the ribbon cutting at Paw Plaza. The project is running a little behind the anticipated schedule, but is coming along nicely. The open house was well attended by both human and canines.
- The Publick House has a ribbon cutting for the new building and is now open to the public.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Bubon discussed an "Escape Room" business looking to locate in town. They have been corresponding with the Planning Department about the permitting process.

- Mike Suprenant, Board of Selectmen, provided an update from his work with the M.P.O – they are working on updating the transportation plan which is done every four years. The Bicycle plan is on the CMRPC website for public comments and has been up for a while. The Pedestrian plan is also up on the webpage now. Mr. Suprenant encouraged the Planning Board to take a look at it and comment if they have ideas or suggestions.
- Mr. Blanchard brought up that an east-west high speed rail study is underway. The rail would run from Worcester to Springfield. A million dollars has been allocated to hire consultants over the next 12-18 months to study the project. There is an Advisory Committee of over thirty people that has been formed to help with the planning of the project. There is a stop in Palmer that is proposed.

On a motion made by Ms. Waters and seconded by Mr. Chamberland, and voted 5 - 0, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.