

**STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES OF  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2019  
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  
James Cunniff  
Heather Hart

**Absent:** Susan Waters

**Also Present:** Jean Bubon, Town Planner  
Rebekah DeCoursey, Administrative Assistant  
Bruce Fitzback, Bertin Engineering  
Meghan Jaquith, Applicant

Mr. Blanchard opened the meeting and read the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** Made by Mr. Cunniff to approve the draft minutes of January 8, 2019.  
**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Mr. Chisholm  
**Discussion:** None  
**Vote:** 5 – 0 – 1 (C. Bouchard)

**ANR – 250 BROOKFIELD ROAD – ROBERT CHANCELLOR**

Bruce Fitzback presented the ANR to the Board. Ms. Bubon initially was concerned with the steepness of the land in regards to adequate access from Brookfield Road. Bertin Engineering has done preliminary driveway plans for the lots. Using retaining walls and switchbacks, the driveways will be costly, but they are buildable. Each lot will tie-in to town sewer, so there will be no concerns with placing septic systems.

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

- Mr. Fitzback clarified that each lot will have its own driveway onto Brookfield Road/Route 148.
- Brookfield Road was just repaved last year, are there restrictions on digging up the road so soon to tie-in to the town sewer? Mr. Fitzback stated that former DPW director, Greg Morse, had told him it was seven years and come time, all the sewer tie-ins will be done at once; that entire section of road will be dug up and replaced, rather than five separate trenches dug for each tie-in.

**Motion:** Made by Mr. Chamberland for the Board to endorse the plan.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Mr. Cunniff  
**Discussion:** None  
**Vote:** 6 – 0

The Board members signed the plan.

#### **WAIVER OF SITE PLAN REVIEW – 179 MAIN STREET – DAVID JAQUITH.**

Mr. Fitzback was present to represent the property owner of 179 Main Street, and support the applicants David and Meghan Jaquith. Applicants are proposing an escape room business, Escape the Pike, at 179 Main Street. The business will be located on the lower level in the back of the building, under Teddy G's Restaurant. The applicants are requesting a Waiver of the Site Plan Review; no activities will be taking place outside of the building. The Town Planner has gone over parking requirements for the business and determined there is ample parking on site.

**Motion:** Made by Mr. Chamberland to approve the Waiver of Site Plan Review.  
**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Mr. Chisholm  
**Discussion:** None  
**Vote:** 6 – 0

#### **COMPLETE STREETS**

The Board was provided with final draft copies of the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. Estimated costs have been added into the matrix. The Board will not rank projects by priority at this time; Ms. Bubon stated that it can be done on an annual basis as projects are completed. The Town may find it is more cost effective to group some projects together into section improvements, rather than address each project individually.

**Motion:** Made by Mr. Cunniff to approve the Complete Street Prioritization Plan to be submitted to MassDOT.  
**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Mr. Chisholm  
**Discussion:** None  
**Vote:** 6 – 0

#### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

None.

#### **TOWN PLANNER UPDATE**

- Next meeting dates:
  - February 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Ms. Bubon is actively working on the Green Communities Grant. We have \$143K to use on various projects. The grant will allow the switch to LED lights in the Library, DPW, Center Office Building, and other buildings in town. The Police Department has agreed to IdelRight devices being installed in two cruisers; this idle reduction system is designed to allow emergency vehicles to be parked with warning lights flashing continuously while minimizing engine idle time and decreasing fuel consumption. Replacement of street lights to LED will also be completed.

- Ms. Hart asked if there are committees in Town that will help support the Green Communities Grant. The former Town Administrator had begun to form a Sustainability Committee, but it has not taken foot now that Mr. Gaumond has left that position. There was some discussion of this potential.

**Motion:** Made by Ms. Hart to recess and reconvene at the Town Hall for a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen.

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Mr. Cunniff

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** 6 – 0

### **JOINT MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

The Planning Board reconvened at 7:10 PM in the Town Hall Meeting Room with Board of Selectmen members: Mary Blanchard, Mary Dowling, Michael Suprenant, and Priscilla Gimas. Jean Bubon, Town Planner, and Kevin Filchak, Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator, also joined the discussion.

Ms. Bubon began the discussion. The Route 15 corridor has been the focus of various studies including the 2011 Master Plan and two DLTA projects completed by CMRPC. The consensus is that current zoning (Special Use District and Planned Unit Business Development) combined with a lack of town sewer and water infrastructure has limited development in this area. The most recent DLTA Market Analysis Study presented several options: tourism/recreation-related, healthcare/medical uses, or manufacturing/distribution. Ms. Bubon wanted to bring the two Boards together to discuss which direction they feel the Town should go to help guide her in drafting proposed zoning changes in the Route 15 Corridor.

The Board members had the following questions, comments, or concerns:

- There are two large projects on the Route 15 corridor that have been started in the last year. The former Yogi Bear Campground – now Pine Lake RV Resort – is undergoing a complete transformation. The former Hebert's Candy building will now be Paw Plaza, a dog day care and training facility. The idea of bringing additional similar businesses based around recreation and entertainment would be conducive to this area.
- There is a definite a need for a change. With the major changes and investments to this area currently going on, a focus on indoor/outdoor recreation and would be great.
- The Planned Unit Business Development (PUBD) looked great with it was drafted on paper, but due to limitations of land availability, wetlands resources, and lack of town infrastructure there haven't been any developments using these standards. It should probably be drastically rewritten, if not removed entirely.
- Thinking of manufacturing and delivering, the Route 15/Route 131 intersection is lacking the capacity of tractor trailer trucks making the right turn off of Route 131. The traffic light has been taken out multiple times by trucks.

- There has been discussion of the congestion from increased traffic throughout town. Bringing in a large recreation or entertainment facility would also bring additional traffic.
- The lack of infrastructure is a major factor that limits development down Route 15. Tighe & Bond did a study in 2010 involving cost estimates for this infrastructure, and it was very expensive. There would need to be enough new development to create revenue that would offset some of these infrastructure costs. Since the study was done, we have an updated Waste Water Treatment Facility that would be able to handle the increase of flow with the extension of the system.
- Eco-tourism would support what we have in Sturbridge already, with Old Sturbridge Village. We get a lot of day trippers in town, and we have always looked for a way to keep them another day or two. Indoor or outdoor recreation would cater to those looking for another activity such as rock climbing, bush craft, or outdoor expositions.
- A sports complex was proposed in 2012 and had a lot of community support. Though it never came to fruition, sports and related fields are something the community seems to acknowledge there is a need for in Town.
- The corridor has changed with time; for example, there is a large solar array now. The wooded vistas will always be a valuable asset to the Town. The campground renovations will bring people to the area for easily a weekend or week at a time. We need to give them things to do outside OSV.
- Entertainment & Recreation is a good option for this area. Water and sewer will be an issue. Warehousing and manufacturing pre-packing of goods might be a good revenue source, with limited infrastructure needs and easy access to the interstate.
- If we are thinking sports complex, perhaps we could think large entertainment venue like Tanglewood. The concerts on the common can be very popular.
- Something that can be used year round – a cultural spot for multiple uses and a variety of weather.
- The area needs a comprehensive rewrite of the Special Use District and PUBD.
- There are currently no Priority Development Sites on Route 15.

Both the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen have similar views of which direction they would like to see development move in the Route 15 Corridor. Ms. Bubon will take these comments and ideas and come back to the board with drafted zoning bylaw proposals.

The joint meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.