

**Sturbridge Planning Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 26, 2024  
Center Office Building**



**Present:**

Charlie Blanchard  
Wally Hersee (Virtual)  
David Bourbeau  
Taylor Stedman  
Sue Waters  
Jean Bubon, Town Planner  
Jeneé Lacy, Administrative Assistant

**Absent:**

Brad Goodwin  
Dane LaBonte

**Also Present:**

Josh Roy, Tsantinis, LLC  
Rona T. Roy, Tsantinis, LLC  
Terry Masterson, Economic Development

C. Blanchard called the meeting to order at 6:30pm and read the agenda.

**Approval of Minutes**

March 12, 2024

**Motion: To approve the minutes of March 12, 2024 as written.**

**By: D. Bourbeau**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: T. Stedman**

**Roll Call Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

- W. Hersee - Yes
- D. Bourbeau - Yes
- T. Stedman - Yes
- S. Waters - Yes
- C. Blanchard - Yes

**Town Planner Update**

J. Bubon discussed the following:

- Master Plan – Open Space Survey results
  - 11% response rate
  - Met with the Open Space Committee

- Will analysis data and update the Board
- New tenant – Frisbie Ice Cream is being replaced with Yo Boca Taco at the Noble Energy site – 195 Charlton Road. Seating will remain the same and ice cream will still be served but not under the Frisbie name. New sign renderings to be provided to the DRC at the 4/1 meeting.
- Next Meeting Dates:
  - Town Elections – April 8<sup>th</sup>
  - April 9<sup>th</sup> – Expecting an application from LaQuinta to change the canopy. DRC has recently approved new tiled for the façade and new signage.
  - May 14<sup>th</sup> – May shift to May 21<sup>st</sup>.

*Documents Reviewed:*

- *Town Planner Report 3-26-24;*
- *A document entitled: “Town of Sturbridge Town Wide Survey Results For Partial Master Plan Update and Open Space and Recreation Plan Update” prepared by Jean M. Bubon, AICP, Town Planner and Jeneé Lacy, Planning Department, dated March 6, 2024;*

**Public Hearing – Site Plan Review – 5 Snell Street – Tsantinis, LLC**

S. Waters read the legal notice that was posted in the Southbridge Evening News.

J. Roy and R. Tsantinis-Roy came before the Board.

J. Bubon stated that the applicant is requesting Site Plan Approval to convert the downstairs apartment back into a retail space and add a handicap ramp, parking lot striping and new planters. She stated that the applicant has entered into a shared parking agreement to use three (3) spaces at 428 Main Street. The project has been approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals and once the sign designs are complete, the applicant will go before Design Review for approval.

J. Roy discussed the move of the pottery business to the location at 5 Snell Street, how they were making the lot more conforming, and the location of the building and free-standing signage.

D. Bourbeau asked if the pottery business would be retail only and R. Tsantinis-Roy stated that it would only be for retail.

**Motion: To close the public hearing.**

**By: S. Waters**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Bourbeau**

**Roll Call Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

- **W. Hersee – Yes**
- **D. Bourbeau – Yes**
- **T. Stedman – Yes**
- **S. Waters – Yes**
- **C. Blanchard – Yes**

J. Bubon stated that she recommends approval of the Site Plan Review and read the conditions of approval as follows:

1. All construction and site improvements shall be in conformance with the plans and specifications submitted and approved by the Planning Board.
2. All State and Local Zoning Bylaws, Building Codes and other Regulations must be adhered to.
3. All other necessary permits and approvals must be obtained prior to the start construction.
4. The site shall be kept in a neat and orderly condition throughout the construction process.
5. Exterior construction shall only occur during the hours of 7:00 am to 7:00 pm Monday through Friday and 8:00 am to Noon on Saturday. No exterior construction shall occur on Sundays or the following holidays – New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.
6. An emergency contact phone list with at least two names and numbers on it be supplied to the Sturbridge Police Dept. and Planning Department to be used by the dispatchers, in case of an off hour emergency, prior to the start of the project. The list must be updated whenever necessary for the duration of the project.
7. The applicant shall notify the Planning Department office forty-eight hours prior to the start of construction.
8. In the event that a shared parking agreement is terminated, the applicant shall notify the Planning Board within 14 days and do one of the following:
  - a. Provide at least 50% of the required parking within 60 days and provide the remaining required parking within six months following termination of the shared use agreement; or
  - b. Demonstrate to the Planning Board, using a study deemed reliable by the Board, that the available parking is sufficient to accommodate the use’s peak parking demand.

**Motion: To grant the Site Plan Approval to allow the change in use of the existing structure to a mixed-use pottery retail shop and residential use and to continue use of the pre-existing non-conforming parking lot at the property located at 5 Snell Street in accordance with the plans and materials with the conditions noted.**

**By: S. Waters**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Bourbeau**

**Roll Call Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

**- W. Hersee – Yes**

- D. Bourbeau – Yes
- T. Stedman – Yes
- S. Waters – Yes
- C. Blanchard – Yes

*Documents Reviewed:*

- *An application for Site Plan Review;*
- *Filing fee;*
- *A certified list of abutters;*
- *A plan entitled: "Proposed Plot Plan of Map 2435, Lot 5 – Prepared for Josh Roy & Rona Tsantinis-Roy – 5 Snell Street, Town of Sturbridge, Worcester County Commonwealth of Massachusetts", prepared by Levesque Geomatics, Inc. (43 Glendale Road, Sturbridge, MA 01566), dated 2/20/24 revised through 3/8/24 (sheets 1 of 1);*
- *A plan entitled "Existing Conditions Plot Plan of Map 2435, Lot 5 – prepared for Josh Roy & Rona Tsantinis-Roy – 5 Snell Street, Town of Sturbridge, Worcester County Commonwealth of Massachusetts", prepared by Levesque Geomatics, Inc. (43 Glendale Road, Sturbridge, MA 01566), dated 2/20/24 revised through 3/8/24, (sheets 1 of 1);*
- *Three sheets – undated showing existing conditions, proposed wall changes and proposed shop floor layout;*
- *A document entitled "Parking Lot Use Agreement" which represents a by-right Shared Parking Agreement for three parking spaces with Village Primitives located at 428 Main Street.*
- *Town Planner Report dated March 21, 2024;*
- *Staff comments.*

**Terry Masterson – Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator – Year End 2023**  
**Economic Review**

T. Masterson came before the Board and presented a Powerpoint presentation that covered the following topics:

- One Stop Business policy for business assistance;
- Inventory of retail and tourism related businesses;
- Consumer spending: meals and hotel revenue;
- Retail activity and movements;
- Attendance and visitorship data;
- New construction: recently completed projects;
- Emerging projects;
- Marketing Sturbridge in the digital age.

S. Waters brought up the following:

- Does the Host Hotel still have weddings and function and do they have plans to update and renovate?

- T. Masterson stated that they are slowly updating the hotel and discussed events that the Host has been having and that the STA has been working with the host to acquire grants.
- The crossroads at Rt. 148/20 – Field of Dreams sign.
  - J. Bubon discussed that she has spoken to the owner of the mill in the past and she has suggested applying for grants or receive assistance but the Town can't force the owner to move forward. She stated that the owner has an agreement with the renter whose plan is to turn the area into the "field of dreams".
- Cinemagic – empty theater, Walgreens and Everybody's Fitness Center – empty storefronts.
  - J. Bubon stated that originally Walgreens moved out of the location but didn't release their lease. T. Masterson stated that the owner of the former JCPenny plaza has done a great job filling the empty locations.
- Does T. Masterson try to find businesses to fill empty locations?
  - T. Masterson stated that he assists location owners who are looking for help filling spaces. He discussed the former Friendly's location and his work with the current owners and that the owners of Hobb's Brook Plaza have been working very hard to find a new tenant for the theater space.
  - J. Bubon stated that she is aware that there is a theater company that is interested in the space but that the space has had some water damage and will need to be stripped.
- Stated that towns in the area have received grants to assist with businesses and infrastructure. Is Sturbridge applying for these grants?
  - T. Masterson discussed the types of grants that are available from an Economic Development standpoint.
  - J. Bubon discussed types of grants that other towns in the area have received, that many are very competitive, and Sturbridge doesn't qualify for many of them as well. She stated that she would be happy to look more into the grants if S. Waters could get her specifics.
  - S. Waters brought up lead issues in the water at Tantasqua and asked if there are grants that could help with that issue. J. Bubon stated that she wasn't aware there was a lead problem. The issue was discussed by the Board and J. Bubon stated she would look into it more and let the Board know what she finds.

T. Stedman stated that he thought the video is great and asked if he was a business how would he get promoted by the Town.

T. Masterson discussed the process including giving businesses a space on the website and boosts for events.

D. Bourbeau brought up the following:

- Is there was a way to promote new businesses in Town?
  - T. Masterson stated that they promote new businesses on the Experience Sturbridge Facebook page.
- Inquired about meal tax and if the stats are adjusted for the dollar.
  - T. Masterson discussed the meals tax.

*Documents Reviewed:*

- *A Powerpoint presentation entitled: "Report PB – Sturbridge Eco Update March 2024"*
- *A document entitled: "Sturbridge Tourist Association 2023 Final Report" prepared by Break the Ice Media*

**Old/New Business**

None

**Adjournment**

**Motion: To adjourn meeting.**

**By: S. Waters**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Bourbeau**

**Roll Call Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

- **W. Hersee – Yes**
- **D. Bourbeau – Yes**
- **T. Stedman – Yes**
- **S. Waters – Yes**
- **C. Blanchard – Yes**

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM

Minutes prepared by: Jeneé Lacy