

Planning Board Minutes

Wednesday June 8, 2022 - 7:30 PM to 8:50 PM

Attendance: Ken Kahn, Richard Nathhorst, Steve Freedman, Van Stoddard, Tom Ewing, Tim Shores (and at the very last, Swan Keyes)

Minutes taken by Tim Shores

1. May 11 minutes approved unanimously
2. Call-in business
 1. Will Stamell called Ken about a lot in N. Leverett in the aquifer zone. Ken found that it was partially in the aquifer zone, a single-family home on that parcel would be compliant with zoning.
 2. Gene Stamell called Ken about whether he could build a tiny house on his property as an accessory unit, Ken replied that this is not permitted by zoning.
3. Ken led a review of the Community One Stop for Growth grant application to understand some of the language used. He also introduced the Board to the concept of "Seller's Puff", which Tim had never heard before, but it turns out it describes Tim's way of life.
4. Ken led a discussion about the 40B project pursued by the Affordable Housing Trust, which is making progress on a potential agreement with Cinda Jones on a parcel between Montague Rd and the Leverett Pond.
 1. It's likely that this would be a portion of parcel 76. This would be around 20 acres of housing development with around 20 houses and some mix of affordable housing. There is a lot more contractual work and site planning to do to make the site buildable.
 2. Tom asked related questions about zoning changes that we could plan to support housing density. For example, MA state law allows shared septic systems, but Leverett zoning does not, so that is worth exploring. Another example is that LEED building requirements could be implemented in the zoning to mitigate environmental impact. The 40B project could become a proof of concept of these development ideas.
 3. Ken clarified that Chapter 40B exempts a project like this from zoning, although it would still need to be compliant with health codes to do with septic.
 4. Richard explained that treating the 40B project as a pilot project for housing density proof of concept for the town could help support scalable municipal water and sewer utilities.
 5. Ken replied that the co-housing project near the Amherst golf course was going to be a Leverett project first, but the soil percolation test didn't permit the kind of septic needed for the project.
5. The whole Board discussed the Comprehensive Planning process. Van asked for feedback about the value of Phase 1, in terms of the quality of service delivered by Emily. Generally, Tim, Tom and Richard agreed that we got a

good service from Emily, and we're happy with the outcomes of Phase 1 -- it's going to help us get to Phase 2, it has started the process of building community on this topic and getting people included in the process, which is one of the most important goals in this, and it sets us up with the first report that will give us a tangible work product to support outreach and town discussion.

6. Everyone also reviewed the planned Phase 2 process, and discussed how consultants can develop scenario planning and fiscal impact studies to help community members choose from among options and tradeoffs and see different possibilities, such as how to estimate where and when the cost of additional town services (primarily education) will exceed the revenue benefit of building additional properties, and the constraints of Leverett terrain, conservation, septic requirements, and the slow time to impact of zoning and development changes.
7. Tim will follow up with Margie to make sure there are no tasks required to the state after the Phase 1 grant ends, and with Emily Innes to find out if she needs any deliverable or sign-off from the Planning Board by a specific date.
8. Considering the need to continue deliberating about Emily's final Working Group report (due June 30), the Steering Group recruitment process, and planning an RFP for the next Comprehensive Planning consultant, the Planning Board will meet again on July 13.

Meeting adjourned, unanimously, even with Swan Keyes who telecommunicated in for a quick refresher on our valiant works as the final seconds tumbled over.