

## Planning Board minutes October 12, 2022

7:30-9pm

In attendance: Ken Kahn, Steve Freedman, Van Stoddard, Richard Nathhorst, Tom Ewing, Swan Keyes, Tim Shores

Minutes taken by Tim Shores

1. Review and accept minutes of last meeting: Ken Kahn abstained; all others voted in favor of Richard's movement to approve as written.
2. Discussion of whether the Planning Board should return to open meetings in Town Hall:
  1. Richard would decline, given that COVID-19 cases among University staff is higher than in previous peaks, and town hall is not well ventilated.
  2. Ken observed that we can have hybrid meetings.
  3. Steve feels that the remote Zoom meeting format does not support a complete and thorough discussion. He would prefer meeting in person.
  4. Swan prefers in-person meetings, but would prefer to respect the wishes of group members who would not feel safe to meet in person.
  5. Van agrees that there is a rise in COVID numbers lately, and he would prefer to play it safe.
  6. Tom thinks we could manage a hybrid meeting to accommodate those who prefer to meet from home. He also wonders if the benefit outweighs the risk, even when the risk is very minimal given that this is a conscientious group of people.
  7. Tim agrees that the benefit may not outweigh the risk. He tends to play it safe, and he has to host his mother-in-law for a few weeks while she recuperates from health problems and surgery. He'll have to be more conservative in his risk profile for her sake.
  8. The Board agreed to remain in a remote meeting format, and revisit this topic at a later date.
3. Continued discussion regarding the Steering Group recruitment process and status of planning an RFP for the next Comprehensive Planning Consultant
  1. Tim summarized the revisions that he and Tom completed.
  2. Tom reviewed the plan to issue an informal RFP with an explanation that we will issue the formal RFP once we receive news of the grant award. Given that we're midway through October, Ken thinks we may as well wait to get the news of the award. Richard and Swan cautioned against informally issuing an RFP. This may not be in compliance with Massachusetts procurement law.
  3. Board agreed on this plan: Tim and Tom will complete revision of the RFP by late October and circulate to the Planning Board. People are welcome to send written comments to the subcommittee of Tim, Tom, and Swan, but they will not be in a shared Google document, in compliance with Open Meeting Law. We will plan to meet November 9th and dedicate that meeting to hammering out a final RFP. Tim and Tom's revisions to include:

1. Keep RFP open until January 15; Move timeline ahead. Steve suggested eliminating the dates in the RFP -- this will support more flexibility.
2. Add community meetings during Visioning, and perhaps at the beginning and end of the project.
3. Consider adding a survey to get feedback on existing conditions, economic scenarios, fiscal impacts, and values.
4. Add language that gives flexibility to community visioning meeting facilitation structure
4. Comp Plan outreach achievements:
  1. Van discussed a meeting he organized at his home with others in Leverett to have an open discussion about the Comprehensive Plan.
  2. Steve spoke with someone from the Working Group who was supportive of the planning process.
4. Call in business
  1. Ken reviewed the issue raised earlier this year about scenic roads bylaw.
  2. Ken reviewed an inquiry from a resident on Amherst Road about hoop houses set up near a parcel boundary line. They are used as storage units, but they are not on fixed foundations. Therefore, they are not considered structures under the bylaw. We may need to revisit whether hoop houses count as structures if not on foundations.
  3. Tom reviewed the FRCOG webinar that he and Ken attended virtually on Tuesday, October 11: "Diversifying Rural Housing Opportunities". The webinar made a strong case that towns need to do more to improve availability of housing. Ken pointed out that the webinar also pointed out that this only works well when housing is built near transportation centers.
  4. Emily Innes sent an email (see below) suggesting that Leverett's Comprehensive Plan would be a good candidate for the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association's annual award in December. No material awards, just an industry accolade. No strong objections, we'll give Emily permission.

Meeting adjourned unanimously.