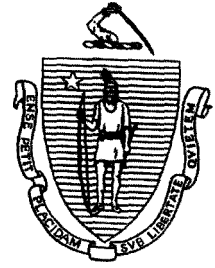




Town of Southwick

Planning Board

MINUTES



Tuesday, July 20, 2021

6:00 PM (recorded)

“Hybrid” meeting at the Southwick Regional School & via Zoom

Written Minutes

(Not verbatim - comments can be heard on recordings available at www.southwick.org)

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Michael Doherty, Chair
Marcus Phelps, Vice Chair
David Sutton
David Spina
Richard Utzinger
Jessica Thornton, Associate

ABSENT: Jon Goddard, Town Planner

Also attending the meeting were 319 members of the public as signed-in and several hundred in attendance via *Zoom*.

The “hybrid” meeting of the Planning Board was scheduled via Zoom and in-person to take place at the Southwick Regional School and was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mr. Doherty. He stated that the meeting was being recorded, if anyone else was recording the meeting; Peter Currier stated that he was recording the meeting.

INTERIM TOWN PLANNER’S REPORT: 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Doherty noted that Mr. Goddard, the Town Planner, was absent on vacation this evening but provided a brief summary of activity since the last meeting. Mr. Goddard’s correspondence stated:

1. I met with Chief Landis, Building Inspector Kyle Scott, and Dick Grannells from DPW to provide and review facts related to the marina/parking matter at 101 Point Grove Road.
2. I met with Building Inspector Kyle Scott and subsequently the abutter to the Rail Trail Ale House to provide context and follow-up clarification about the use/boundary matter that was raised at the July 13th meeting in my report.

funding for the Master Plan revision had been approved and that the public should expect to see posts related to assembling the Master Plan Committee.

- Ed Roberts of 72 Vining Hill Road submitted a document to the Planning Board pertaining to the effects of groundwater contamination for the aquifer as related to the Carvana project.
- Kalman Kagan, 12 Garden Terrace, via Zoom, thanked the Board for their diligence and his neighbors for their work. He noted that the Zoom chat had previously been enabled and used to share technical Zoom notes and asked if it was deliberately disabled. Mr. Doherty noted that the format for Zoom participation was something that the Board was continuing to work through and that the chat was disabled after considering the likely size of this meeting and reading through the chat logs from previous meetings. Mr. Doherty noted that it was determined to be infeasible to monitor the chat element and manage the in-person meeting simultaneously. Mr. Doherty noted that the Board remains open to input regarding how to best manage Zoom participation for future hybrid meetings.
- Sage Fury of 91 Granville Road asked if there was a way to put a fund together to get a better audio system for the Town and its future Zoom meetings. Mr. Doherty shared that Mr. Fury would likely be appreciative of the time and effort that had been put into the current meeting, and that the Town was preparing to outfit the Land Use Hearing Room at Town Hall for better audio & visual capability.
- Lindsey Kelso of 28 George Loomis Road noted that it was very difficult to hear on Zoom. Mr. Doherty adjusted his use of the portable microphone accordingly.

APPOINTMENTS:

6:10 p.m. 686 Clg. Hwy., 34 Feeding Hills Rd., & 0 Feeding Hills Rd.
Proposed Automobile Processing Facility ("Carvana")
Special Permit, Site Plan Review, Wellhead Protection District Special Permit, Earth
Excavation Special Permit, & Stormwater Management Permit Application
Continued Public Hearing

Robert Levesque from R Levesque Associates, Inc. was in attendance to represent the application alongside Jen Roldan and Aaron Mraz from Carvana. Mr. Levesque indicated that the project applicant has requested to withdraw the application without prejudice. He stated that he wanted to share with those who had expressed concern over the project a few steps and tools that are used in the field of land consulting. Mr. Levesque noted that the process starts with an applicant looking at the zoning for a municipality and many of the permitted sites in Town were permitted through the Special Permit process, for better or worse. He continued by noting that the Carvana group had identified a flat, developable site in town where a project could be designed with an environmentally sensitive approach, acknowledging that the project would have a lot of impact. Mr. Levesque shared that the Southwick Planning Board, in his opinion, was one of the best in Western Massachusetts and that the members of the Planning Board, regardless of how they may have voted, would have responsibly carried out their duty as elected members of the Board. Mr. Levesque continued by noting that the Select Board, despite the kind of scrutiny they have seen in recent history has the Town's best intentions in mind.

Jim Maslowski of 10 Laurel Ridge observed that the applicant was not Carvana, it was a construction company. He stated his opinion that if an applicant was going to apply, they should be here. Mr. Doherty noted that the applicant's representative, Mr. Levesque, was in attendance and that it was appropriate for them to do so. Mr. Levesque observed that the representatives from Carvana were in attendance and that the representative from Brinkman Constructors, the applicant and general contractor for the project, understood that Carvana representatives would be representing the company and request to withdraw the application, and that the decision was made to be home in the Midwest tending to a new baby. Mr. Maslowski then asked why a project like this does not identify "who it is coming from."

Ronald Kumiega of 36 Daniel Ridge, Westfield asked as a point of information to clarify how the request to withdraw the application affected the potential for future actions; Mr. Doherty stated that an approved withdrawal would end the hearing process and that the applicant could re-apply immediately if they so choose to do. Mr. Kumiega noted that the applicant was keeping their options open. He then shared his observation that the Board had to work with a very loose set of zoning requirements and asked if the Master Plan review was going to change the rules by which the Board would work with. Mr. Doherty noted that this should have been brought up during the public comment portion of the meeting and was not appropriate as a point of information.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Phelps and **SECONDED** by Mr. Utzinger to accept the request by the applicant to withdraw the application without prejudice. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjournment

Being no further business to be brought before the board, a **MOTION** was made by Mr. Sutton and **SECONDED** by Mr. Utzinger to close the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The Next Scheduled Meeting is August 10, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Goddard
Town Planner

Michael Doherty, Chair

Richard Utzinger

David Spina

Marcus Phelps, Vice Chair

David Sutton

Jessica Thornton, Associate