



Town of North Reading
Massachusetts

Community Planning

MINUTES

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

Mr. Warren Pearce, Chairperson called the Tuesday, January 23, 2024 meeting of the Community Planning Commission to order at 7:35p.m. in Room 14 of the North Reading Town Hall, 235 North Street, North Reading, MA and via Virtual Meeting (Zoom participants may call 1-301-715-8592, meeting code 9854300926, or visit <http://us02web.zoom.us/j/9854300926>).

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Warren Pearce, Chairperson
David Rudloff, Vice Chairperson
Ryan Carroll, Clerk
Jeff Griffin

STAFF

PRESENT: Danielle McKnight, AICP
Town Planner/Community Planning Administrator

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NORTH READING, MASS.

Mr. Pearce informed all present that the meeting is being recorded.

Minutes

Mr. Carroll moved, seconded by Mr. Rudloff and voted 4-0: (Mr. Johnston absent)

that the Community Planning Commission vote to accept the minutes dated December 19, 2023 as written.

Thomson / The Greens – parking discussion

Mr. Pearce stated that they are being asked to make a decision on a plan that they don't have and situation that they have not seen. So, the best way to handle this particular point is for them to present to the board a plan that has these bump-out areas on it and to have a public hearing so that everyone in the situation have their say. It's a bit convoluted, but it's the only way for them to properly allow everybody to have their say on it and for the board to actually see where these bump-outs are and to actually see where they're being used. He would also make sure that whoever is going to provide this plan realizes that any parking areas would theoretically have to adhere to the parking requirements of North Reading. So, they have to be 10x20 spaces and it occurs to him that there may be some areas where they couldn't use 10x20 spaces without impacting the adjacent roadway. As soon as it's presented to the board, they would not be able to do that. So, that's what he would like to see happen before any presentations are made and let the presentation be made by either side at the time of the presentation of the plan, because then they will have an actual plan of what's actually on there. He asked the rest of the board members if they are in agreement.

Mr. Rudloff stated that he appreciates the 112 page document submitted. It gives a lot of information and even the three photographs are helpful, in that they provide what the bump-out looks like. He thought it was just a little turnout to let a person pass or something, but the photograph shows a stall that would hold 4 or 5 parking spaces. It is helpful to see this, but it would be helpful to actually see it on a site drawing. Secondly, what he sees implied in the photographs is a marking or striking and if this is something that they want to do then it needs to work and would require an engineer to do those. So, it might be a good time to get the document updated because they're actually looking for an amended special permit. He thinks what they're proposing seems reasonable, but at the same rate he wants to hear everybody's comments in the development. There is also an issue about not parking at the mailbox because the US postal truck has difficulty bringing the mail to these boxes. How does that relate to these turnouts?

Mr. Pearce stated that they should wait to have these discussions so, they can make a decision based on the actual plan.

The consensus of the CPC is to require an actual plan showing the changes before making a decision.

Greenbriar – sewage plant discussion

Mr. Pearce stated that they did have this as a discussion at the last meeting, but only glossed over it.

Mrs. McKnight stated that the error was, that only the first page of the plan was shown in the ShareFile, but there were three pages with a little more information about what's actually being looked at.

Mr. Pearce stated that the structure actually fills in that whole background.

Mr. John Bedell stated that there is an exposed water treatment plant. They were issued a permit to rebuild it, and their rebuilding clause was to enclose it. He brought in an architect and proposed to them a 50x50, knock the wall down in the front and use the building wall as an advertisement, or keep it for prosperity because it's been there for approximately 50 to 60 years. So he superimposed the building in the photos of what it would look like. They kept it simple and plain, just a box, to let the CPC decide what color it should be. His proposal is to keep it simple by putting trim boards and asphalt shingles to keep it from looking like a boxed commercial building. The fence and everything will be on the back, alongside, on the street. If the CPC wants them to paint windows, or put windows in, put in a garage door they will do that.

Mr. Pearce stated that the CPC does not usually get involved with designing, but he would like to see more of detail on it, to break up the big barn side of it.

Mr. Rudloff asked if the building is pre-engineered metal building because it looks like it is. Is there a brand name? He doesn't think that the south side of the building is going to do well with painted steel. He asked if there would only be a door to enter and exit the building.

Mr. Bedell stated that it is packaged steel and the colors will be whatever is decided with the CPC. The panels that he has in stock are white and are insulated metal panels. There will be two entries and one garage door. They are going to put the garage door on the front of the building, facing Main Street.

Mr. Pearce stated that rendering needs to show everything that is being proposed, such as the doors, windows and garage door. He would also suggest that this building be painted with a color more similar to the existing buildings on the site.

Mr. Griffin stated that the peak of the building is 26'. What is the height of the walls and hedges?

Mr. Rudloff stated that he measured it out and the walls are 8' and the building is 10+.

Mr. Carroll stated that he would be more in favor of putting in greenery/plantings instead of the windows.

7 Saint Theresa Street – RFP - discussion

Mrs. McKnight stated that she has prepared a draft RFP for the disposition of 7 Saint Theresa Street, for the CPC to review. The draft has been reviewed by Town Counsel and MIAA. If the draft is acceptable to the CPC, the next step would be that the Select Board will review the RFP. It's her understanding that the CPC's intention is to choose someone to give it to as a donation.

Mr. Pearce stated that the RFP does cover all the bases. However, there are going to be a couple of different scenarios that he would like to go over because if a developer comes in and says he's going to build a duplex, or two single families and is going to reduce the value and give the town the money for the land. Then Habitat says that they are going to build the same two houses, but the town doesn't get any money.

Mrs. McKnight stated that is something that could happen because it has to be an open RFP. They will have to see what each proposal would offer to the town. There's no obligation in the RFP for the town to take the highest bidder. Its evaluated criteria and the best overall benefit to the community and in meeting the goals. Ultimately, it would be the Select Boards decision whether and how to dispose of the property.

Mr. Pearce stated that they have to put a limit that this property cannot be sold at market value.

Mrs. McKnight stated that it would definitely be restricted.

Mr. Rudloff stated that he likes the openness of the approach because they might get different proposals.

Mrs. McKnight stated that if the CPC is okay with the draft RFP she will let the Select Board know are ready to discuss this with them.

Mr. Carroll asked if there are restrictions on the size of home(s) that can be built.

Mrs. McKnight stated that there are restrictions because of the zoning, but the overlay allows for a little more density.

Mr. Carroll stated that aside from the monetary aspect of it, what's going to be the deciding factor.

Mr. Pearce stated that the Select Board will make that decision.

Mr. Carroll asked if there was a height restriction.

Mrs. McKnight stated the North Reading Zoning Bylaw height is 35' and she believes that it is the same.

Budget – discussion

Mrs. McKnight stated that she submitted the budget and had a meeting with Michael Gilleberto, Town Administrator, and the Finance Director. They didn't object to anything or suggest any changes, except that the Mr. Gilleberto wanted to point out just to get them thinking about there being an Economic Development position in the town. She knows they've talked a lot about that being potentially tied to whether or not there was a sewer project. The suggestion was made to her that possibly it wouldn't necessarily matter whether they had a sewer system or not and that person could potentially develop relationships with businesses and deal with some of the licensing for meeting issues that may come about. She can't tell the CPC that she is prepared right now to be able to instruct a new person and everything that they would be doing in that job. She would still struggle with that, because she doesn't know how well developed it is. However, Mr. Gilleberto did point out that with the budget process they are always encouraged to think in multiple future years rather than just this year. If they're not ready to hire somebody, this year, maybe it's still something that they wanted to consider for a future year in and making plans for what they want for the department.

Mr. Pearce stated that they don't have enough tools to be given to the board. One of the tools would be the sewer system, so if they had that that would be huge because that would be a jumping off point for them to start trying to find people who come here now that they have that as opposed to people who will never come here because they don't have that.

Mrs. McKnight stated that she agrees with Mr. Pearce, though the businesses they currently have also have needs. But, she still feels that she would struggle to give them enough work.

Mr. Rudloff stated that they don't want an Economic Development person that has nothing to do. The CPC agreed a position like this could be considered for a future year, but at this time they do not recommend it.

Town Meeting Warrant Article

The Select Board has called for a Special Town Meeting to take place on Tuesday, January 30, 2024. The principal reason for the meeting is to seek authorization and an appropriation of funds to acquire property located at 1 Central Street.

The following Articles:

Article 1 Acquisition and Appropriation – 1 Central Street

Article 2 Amend FY 2024 Operating Budget

Article 3 Amend FY 2024 Capital Budget

Zoning Board of Appeals

9 Bigham Road – On the petition of Eric Romeo for a special permit to raise chickens.

- The CPC does not object to the proposal as long as neighbors are considered and no roosters are allowed.

10 Stewart Road – On the petition of Franck Auciello for a home occupation special permit to run his broker business office out of his home.

- The CPC does not object to the proposal as long as the Home Occupation regulations in the Zoning Bylaw are adhered to (Section 200-42).

Transportation – discussion

Mr. Pearce updated the CPC about the activities of the Transportation Committee. He stated that there are two vehicles one is a 2008 and the other is a 2015. They are chair lifting cars. The 2004 is used as a backup, but is in need of constant repair. They are supposedly getting \$50,000.00 from the State if they sign the contract. But there were some questions about whether the Governor would cut that in half and only give \$25,000.00. But they do have about \$30,000.00 that is available to them. What they want to do is buy a brand new Toyota Sienna that will carry five people, and it's got a good headroom. They would only use the chair trucks when they need a second truck. The State has promised two brand new chair cars. One is supposed to be in the fall of this year, but there's no real schedule and the other one will be sometime in the future. They're trying to figure out the best way to handle this whole situation and its problematic trying to take care of all these people.

Mr. Rudloff asked if it was a State spec chair van that the State is waiting for delivery and will let North Reading know when they have one available.

Mr. Pearce stated that he's unsure how it's handled. They are able to rent a van from North Reading Transportation, but the cost is \$375.00 a day.

Mr. Griffin asked if anyone has asked if North Reading Transportation would donate one of their vehicles.

Mr. Pearce stated that they only way they're going to get one is to buy one. There is also a list of State requirements that the vehicle must have in order to be considered acceptable for the town. A new vehicle with these requirements will cost approximately \$70,000 to \$80,000.

Adjournment at 9:15PM

Respectfully submitted,
Ryan Carroll, Clerk

