

**HARVARD PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 30, 2020
APPROVED: MARCH 29, 2021**

Chair Justin Brown called the meeting to order at 7:00pm virtually in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, under M.G.L. Chapter 40A and Code of the Town of Harvard Chapter 125

Members Present: Justin Brown, Stacia Donahue, Jane Biering, Gwen Leonard and Becca Kelley (Associate Member)

Others Present: Christopher Ryan (Director of Community and Economic Development), Beth Williams and Matthew Flokos (Harvard Press)

Chapter 125-57 Senior Residential Development Bylaw

❖ **Review Schedule:**

- Reflection and visioning exercises have been completed; Ryan had shared the raw data with the Board; Leonard & Biering will give summary
- Requested special meeting on 12/14/2020; Brown will review with staff
- Board members need to be in contact with their emails and respond quickly to move the process forward

❖ **Reflection Exercise Highlights:**

- Everyone agreed that the Board has worked well together
- The Board felt they needed more time on the 'what we didn't do well' section
- All suggestions were actionable and can be incorporated going forward. For example: always put a date on the draft so everyone knows which draft is most current
- There were concerns about lacking knowledge of the existing bylaws
- Do we need to solicit input before we draft? Leonard and Biering, along with Beth Williams, from the Council on Aging (COA), say yes, especially the COA; Ryan and Donahue disagreed as they thought starting with something based on guidance from the Master Plan documentation, then move forward with a first draft before going public outreach.

❖ **Senior Survey Status:**

- 130 completed surveys
- Subcommittee will have an executive summary for us soon
- Many people gave thoughtful, long responses to the survey questions, which is great. However, it might take a bit to get the results distilled
- Respondents were varied in age, gender, and length of time in Town
- Focus groups seem to have a good mix of people and opinion
- Hoping to issue the general public survey by December 8th; this is to help determine how the whole Town would feel about the building types

❖ **Existing Bylaws that Address Senior Housing:**

- **125-18.1 – Accessory Apartment**
 - Part of the Protective Bylaw for years, but is very infrequently used
 - Ryan is not sure why; people either don't know about it, or don't want to use it
 - The survey noted that people didn't want to rent
 - It is restricted on size and look, but not by family connection
 - Completely administered by the Zoning Board of Appeals

- Payout is likely so high that you would probably not make your money back as a rental
 - These apartments don't lend themselves well to age friendly design; they are often upstairs/downstairs, and don't have the accessibility needed for most seniors
- **125-18.2 – Affordable Accessory Apartment**
 - Part of the Protective Bylaw for years, but has never been used
 - The paperwork might hold people back from use
- **125-52I Ayer Road Village – Special Permit (ARV-SP): Assisted Living Facility**
 - Ryan has been approached a few times on this provision, but nothing serious so far
 - As a whole the ARV-SP has only been issued once; only allows for a 0.2 floor area ratio, which is very small; should this be removed from ARV-SP? Or should the Board try to expand it in this location?
 - Developer of Bower's Brook Apartments has stated the amount of open space that is required to be set aside made the project just break even.
 - Having another developer in town that is willing to take a loss to provide a nice development like Bower's Brook is highly unlikely
- **Chapter 133 Planning Board Procedural Rules and Regulation**
 - Ryan suggested developing design guidelines to go along with the Senior Residential Development bylaw; this would provide the public with visuals for these types of developments.
- **Chapter 125-35 Open Space and Conservation – Planned Residential Development**
 - Similar to ARV-SP this provision is so restrictive that it is not economically viable
- **Chapter 130 Subdivision Control.**
 - 1983 was the last time Harvard had a conventional subdivision
 - If cluster housing is included in the Senior Residential Development this Chapter will need to be reviewed for any potential conflicts
- **Multifamily Residential District (MR)**
 - Mapping this district would help this with the Senior Residential Development bylaw
 - Mapping this district outside the Commercial district might help the Commercial district become residential.

❖ **Next Steps**

- Survey – The community-wide survey will be sent to the member soon for feedback.
- Visual Preference Survey – Ryan has about 95 images for feedback from Leonard, Biering and Kelley.
- Focus Groups – Leonard has selected two senior focus groups of five with two alternates each. The focus groups will target items in the survey to find out a better understanding of why and how their vision is seen in this bylaw. Leonard is hoping to get one focus group done before the holidays. Leonard will need the Board's feedback on the moderator guidelines. The second focus group will meet after the holidays. Leonard is planning more focus groups after the community-wide survey since that is a broader group of people.

Adjournment

Biering made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:18pm. Donahue seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by a roll call, Donahue, aye; Biering, aye; Leonard, aye; Brown, aye.

Signed: _____ Liz Allard, Clerk

EXHIBITS & OTHER DOCUMENTS

- Planning Board Agenda November 30, 2020
- PB "Reflection" Exercise Highlights
- Harvard Existing Bylaws w/ Applicability to Senior Housing