

**HARVARD PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 7, 2022
APPROVED: FEBRUARY 28, 2022**

Chair Justin Brown called the meeting to order at 7:03pm virtually, pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency and signed into law on June 16, 2021, under M.G.L. Chapter 40A and Code of the Town of Harvard Chapter 125

Members Present: Justin Brown, Stacia Donahue, Richard Cabelus, Brian Cook, Doug Thornton and Jefferson Burson (Associate Member)

Others Present: Christopher Ryan (Director of Community & Economic Development), Liz Allard (Land Use Administrator) and Valerie Hurley (Harvard Press)

Public Comment

There were no comments from the public this evening

Election of Vice Chair

Donahue made a motion to elect Richard Cabelus as the Vice Chair of the Planning Board. Cook seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by roll call, Donahue, aye; Cabelus, aye; Cook, aye; Thornton, aye; and Brown, aye.

Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Grant

Ryan stated Conservation was interested in submitting an application for the current round of funding. With the ability of each community within the MRPC region to obtain only one DLTA grant this year Donahue wanted to make certain the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) would not be seeking an additional phase of their report. Ryan stated TAC didn't expect to see a major change, but rather an update of information and additions; TAC was not eager to take on another DLTA grant.

Donahue asked about the soon to expire Housing Production Plan (HPP), and could that be updated under a DLTA grant? Ryan stated yes, but similar to TAC report we may not get a robust report. Ryan noted the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT) may be willing to pay out of their own funds for the HPP update. Donahue thinks having a back up is good idea in the off-chance funding is available for a second round. Ryan has suggested alternative funding for the multi-family district bylaw.

Allard explained a DLTA grant proposal is for the update to the Open Space & Recreation Plan that will expire in 2023. The lead on this proposal, per their charge, will be the Open Space Committee and not the Conservation Commission, as previously stated. It was agreed the OSC should apply for the DLTA grant, with hopes MAHT come through with funding.

Board Member Reports

- Representatives & Liaisons Updates
 - **Montachusett Regional Planning Commission** – Donahue stated at the recent monthly meeting the 2021 – 2022 budget was reviewed, MRPC recognizes its inefficiency due to staffing shortages, which MRPC is hoping to correct.
 - **Harvard Climate Initiative Committee** –Burson stated the Committee has officially convened after transitioning from the Community Resiliency Working Group. The Committee is working on Climate Action Plan development and will start reaching out to other boards and committees to execute actions within that Plan.
 - **Transportation Advisory Committee** –An outreach meeting with the residents of Old Mill and Blanchard Roads has been scheduled for Feb 16th at 7pm to discuss a potential pedestrian and

bicycle trail from Old Mill Road into Devens. Representatives from the State's Transportation Improvement Program will be available to discuss the 25% plan for the Ayer Road corridor, from the Ayer Town line to the Route 2 overpass, on March 30th at 7pm.

- **Community Matters**

- Brown gave a shout out to Ryan on his Consider This piece, which provided a well thought out expression of the Ayer Road Visioning Plan process. Brown was happy to see the suggestion to attend Planning Board meetings to express opinions rather than social media or Town meeting. Brown, however was disappointed the author of the "Letter to Editor" pertaining to the market survey, made no effort to reach out to the Board for information. Ryan stated the author did reach out to him, and had tried to direct him to the white paper that has everything anyone would want to know about the process.

Director's Report

Ryan stated the *Hazard Mitigation Plan* has had a change in the choice of consultant since his report was written. With the State fully funding the Plan the selection of the consultant is conducted by the State, therefore Horsley Witten will not be developing the Plan for Harvard. Ryan will have more information at an upcoming meeting.

Regarding the *Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness* grants, Ryan is waiting for directive from the Expression of Interest (EOI) for culvert replacement design project. In addition, Ryan had also submitted an EOI for environmental zoning bylaw amendments including flood zone, electric vehicle chargers, open space, buffers, landscaping and low impact development among many others.

Approve Minutes

Donahue made a motion to approve the minutes of January 24, 2022 as amended. Cabelus seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by roll call, Donahue, aye; Cabelus, aye; Cook, aye; Thornton, aye; and Brown; aye.

Bi-annual Review of Planning Board Goals from Strategic Planning Session

Ryan requested the Re-codifying Zoning Bylaw be removed from the priority list to allow him to focus on other items on the list. He would recommend dropping Rural Life and Town Center as well. Cook likes it stripping it down to the three things the Planning Board needs to focus on. Cabelus would recommend leaving Rural Life as a fourth on the list. Donahue would like to drop it to the top three. Cabelus thinks people are going to see the list of three as develop, develop, develop; perception wise it would help to keep Rural Life and Town Center as it gives good contrast to what the Board is working on. Thornton would support dropping Town Center and Re-codify the Zoning Bylaw. Donahue motion to reorganize the priority list to be:

- Ayer Road Commercial District, economic development
- Multifamily re-writing zoning and mapping
- Open Space Residential Development & Senior Housing
- Rural Life/Ag Tourism

Cabelus seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by roll call, Donahue, aye; Cabelus, aye; Cook, aye; Thornton, aye; and Brown; aye.

Update on the Ayer Road Visioning Plan

Ryan has been assisting Howard Kohn, of the Chesapeake Group, to set-up interviews from both point-of-views (pro and anti-development). Kohn will provide an update on Wednesday to Ryan and Brown. Ryan has not seen the data from the survey as of yet, which had just over 500 responses. Brown wondered how to respond to those who expressed concern with sending the survey out to other communities. Donahue though Ryan's "Consider This" piece explained it well. Ryan's response to a recent "Letter to the Editor" will expand on that as well.

Discuss the State's Multi-Family District Requirements

• Review Schedule

- February 15 Brown & Ryan to attend Select Board to debrief them on the process.
- Comments due to the State by March 31st

• Draft Comments

- Suggest establishing a threshold as a percent, or 10%, of existing housing stock, as opposed to a flat 750 housing unit minimum, especially considering Harvard's lack of developable area.
- Could these units be phased as opposed to having 750 units developed at once?
- Suggest the State providing funding to communities that go over their ability to educate children.
- Can impact fees be applied not only related to education, but all the things additional housing might affect?

Chapter 125 Bylaw Amendment – §125-35 Open Space Residential Development (OSRD)

➤ Review schedule – The schedule was not reviewed

➤ Comments on Proposed Draft

- The reorganized format makes for a cleaner version
- §125-35A(6) seems out of place as it is a restriction and not a purpose or intent and would be appropriate elsewhere, along with the last line of §125-35A(5)
- Need to define what open space is in a way that does not require looking at §125-2 for that definition.
- Take out the term “traditional New England” and replace with “the character of Harvard”
- Can the affordable section be shortened? Not without removing important information
- Permitted uses – clarify accessory residential/recreational uses; clubhouse or community buildings including green infrastructure

Adjournment

Cabelus made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:44pm. Donahue seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion by roll call, Donahue, aye; Cabelus, aye; Cook, aye; Thornton, aye; and Brown; aye.

Signed: _____ Liz Allard, Clerk

EXHIBITS & OTHER DOCUMENTS

- Planning Board Agenda February 7, 2022
- Director of Community and Economic Development UPDATE, February 7, 2022
- Harvard Draft Open Space Residential Design (OSRD) Development December 28, 2021 – 3rd Draft