

**HARVARD PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
October 2nd, 2023
APPROVED NOVEMBER 6, 2023**

Chair Richard Cabelus called the open meeting to order remotely at 7:18pm, pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2023, which has suspended the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings at publicly accessible locations and allowing all public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting.

Members Present: Richard Cabelus, John McCormack, Doug Thornton, Stacia Donahue, Arielle Jennings,

Others Present:

Frank O'Connor (Town Planner), Bill Scanlon, Erin McBee

Public Hearings:

Continuation of a Public Hearing for Section 125-35: Open Space Conservation – Planned Residential Development (OSC-PRD)

See details on Page 4

Old Business:

320 Ayer Road and Chestnut Tree & Landscape (not a public hearing)

Frank O'Connor updates the Board that he has received documentation from the applicant for the Special Permit and they have put out an advertisement in the local paper informing of the hearing that will take place on November 6th 2023. The packet and narrative has been received, but Richard Cabelus pointed out that there is still a need for the authorization letter to be submitted by the property owner. Frank O'Connor confirmed this, and he believes that this will be received by the Town by the end of the week.

UTILE: Ayer Road phases II & III

Richard Cabelus will be meeting during this week's focus group. Frank O'Connor updated that the Utile group will be in Wednesday to look at specific parts of Ayer Road to the Ayer town line. The Utile group will also receive information in Town Hall about the wastewater and water supply questions that they still have. The Utile group will be giving their presentation at the October 16th 2023 Planning Board Meeting.

Proposed Town Center Overlay District for Subordinate Structures

Richard Cabelus plans to have the Board dedicate more time to this issue after the Fall Town Meeting takes place, but noted that within the plans, he expects the following actions to take place in order to properly prepare for this project: Have surveys completed on the Town's Center to keep track of what is within each parcel and the dimensions of each various parcel, look into other neighboring towns that have historic town centers to work on the language and the issues they have encountered, and to start the preliminary language needed as this project progresses.

Standard Business:

Review Metrics

John McCormack shared his screen to show the financial metrics and give the Board a better understanding of how the Town's funds are managed. John McCormack offered to update this budget regularly in order to help the Board stay updated on the amount of money the Board can use throughout the year in the various pools of funding. The Board discussed the possibility of posting this on the Town's website to make it more easily accessible to the public.

Community Matters

John McCormack advised the board about a Warrant article at the upcoming (November) Shirley Town meeting regarding a land swap at Devens in order to complete the planned senior housing development at Devens.

Prospective MBTA Multi-family zoned overlay district bylaw

Frank O'Connor updated that there have been no updates on the letters that had been previously sent out. Richard Cabelus noted that William Ference reached out to him to discuss this. Richard Cabelus will send the information to Frank O'Connor.

Master Planning for 2026

The Board had concerns about a story that had been published in the local newspaper about a \$250,000 budget request for a Master Plan. This information was taken from a meeting that took place at a Capital Planning Board Meeting and the Planning Board is concerned because both the amount of money needed for a Master plan and the finalized decision to take action on the topic has only been talked about. The Planning Board has not requested anything other than information about past Master Plans and the information needed in order to have an understanding of the requirements needed in creating a new Master Plan for 2026. John McCormack would like a retraction of the information from the newspaper article. Stacia Donahue suggested sending a letter to the editor of the newspaper to clarify that this is an inaccurate statement.

Motion: John McCormack made the motion that the Chairman send a letter to CPIC and the Town Administrator voicing the Board's concern over the proposal made at last week's meeting.

Seconded by Stacia Donahue

Voted yes by: John McCormack, Stacia Donahue, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus
Passed unanimously

Public Comment

Erin McBee added that and the Select Board was aware of the development in Cisco and wanted to know if the Planning Board would like any help or information on the development. John McCormack added that he has been following this development and the potential traffic concerns that this would cause. He believes that they are currently undercounting the amount of cars that drive throughout a specific light and believes that, with the potential amount of units that will be on these parcels, the new additional traffic that is expected will be too much for this section of the Town.

Adjournment:

Motion: John McCormack made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:29pm

Seconded by Stacia Donahue

Voted yes by: John McCormack, Stacia Donahue, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus
Passed unanimously

Harvard Planning Board

Special Public Hearing Minutes

October 2nd 2023: Meeting called to order at 7:36pm

Continuation of a Public Hearing for Section 125-35: Open Space Conservation

Planned Residential Development (OSC-PRD)

The Public Hearing started on the topic of public outreach. John McCormack noted that Stacia Donahue's final advertisement that was published to the Town was very well written and informative, but is worried due to the lack of feedback and public action taken since its publication. Stacia Donahue added that the lunch meeting with the Council on Aging (with Bill Scanlon and Ellen Sachs Leicher) went well, but she had noticed that there were some concerns from the group that this new bylaw can take in the ANR district of Harvard. Richard Cabelus and John McCormack added that this should be spun as a more positive change that shouldn't have too many concerns due to the good that this new bylaw could have for those within this group. Stacia Donahue has only received feedback via email from two other Town Boards and that these were received positively for being well thought out. Bill Scanlon pointed out that this bylaw would allow for more opportunities of affordable housing for many of those living in Harvard that are in need of downsizing to these new units.

Stacia Donahue noted that there are two things left that can be done with the MVP Grant the Town has received. The first is to work on an advertisement with a member of the Climate Initiative Committee and to add some graphics to make this visually appealing and engaging for the reader. The other involves working with Bill Scanlon in order to show graphics that compare and contrast the difference a perspective lot would turn into if they used the new bylaw vs the old bylaw's requirements.

The Board plans to work on creating visuals and finding positive ways to present all the information to the Town Meeting attendees to show the positives of the new changes and avoid any unforeseen negative reactions that might occur if the new bylaw is misinterpreted outside of its originally intended purpose. The members of the Board will continue to work on their own in ways to pitch the new bylaw and will discuss their presentation internally throughout the next week and attempt to finalize this in the next meeting.

Motion: Stacia Donahue made the motion at 8:23pm to continue the hearing on October 16th 2023 at 8:15pm.

Seconded by John McCormack

Voted yes by: John McCormack, Stacia Donahue, Doug Thornton, Arielle Jennings, Richard Cabelus

Passed unanimously