

LEVERETT PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Date: 12/4/2023

In attendance at the Town Hall: Tom Ewing, Van Stoddard, Molly Daniell, Steve Freedman, Tim Shores, and Richard Nathhorst

In attendance by zoom: N/A

Not in Attendance: Swan Keyes

Meeting opens at 7:30 pm ET

Minutes taken by Molly Daniell

Review agenda

- No comments

Review and accept minutes of last meeting

- One comment: Swan was absent at the last minute, Tim to update
- Minutes are approved

Discussion of Chapter 40B and how it may relate to the proposed Juggler Meadow Rd Development

Purpose of this meeting is to plan for the meeting on 12/13.

One issue that has come up in discussion around this project relates to Chapter 40B and potential implications for affordable housing. If 20% of housing is marked as affordable then the developer can bypass

Project description: This is a high-density project, multi-story all connecting up to the Amherst sewer and water system.

Ken Kahn shares reflections on Chapter 40B: Planning Board has very little authority on 40B and the planning board is not the permanent granting authority. It is the zoning board of appeals. They get to decide whether it should be granted, granted with conditions, or denied. Cherry Hill was the previous example of this in Ken's 35 year tenure on the planning board.

Idea from Marjorie: The developer can cover costs of hiring an expert technical consultant if needed. There is a mechanism for doing this. The hiring of the technical expert is at the discretion of the board. It is also in our zoning subdivision regulations.

This project can follow two options:

- Chapter 40B - developer can bypass our zoning
- Leverett can redo our zoning. In this way, there is an opportunity to update future zoning to be more inclusive of projects like this", or something like that.

Tom is interested in having this project yield benefits to the town.

Report on meeting with Amherst officials about proposed Juggler Meadow Rd Development

Tom Ewing, Tom Hankinson, and Marjorie met with a team of Amherst officials including the town manager.

This project would cut across Amherst and Leverett and the purpose of this meeting would be to open up

First discussion related to utilities: (1) sewer is good because the system was decided to be regional (2) water is a separate question that is unknown. We'd like to coordinate between the two towns and have established rules/regulations.

Other questions:

- Police & fire
- Possible bus line

Similar to the water line project on East Leverett road, Amherst is very interested in working with its neighbor Leverett whenever possible. Amherst doesn't have a dog in this race and wants to support Leverett's position. The Director of Planning did note that this is not consistent with the town's master plan. This would, for example, change the fundamental character of Leverett Road. Likely, Juggler Meadow Road would need serious infrastructure improvement and budget for that is not known.

The one thing that Amherst fears is that development like this would turn into a student housing complex.

For next week:

- Willingness of the developer to contribute to costs
 - Consultant, road maintenance, utilities
 -

Discussion of the possibility of hiring a consultant to assist with technical review of proposed Juggler Meadow Rd development

We need someone who has expertise for this kind of project. Tom has been receiving recommendations for a consultant.

Tom will pursue the RFP process. Molly to get add'l expertise with the Government Performance Lab (GPL).

Decision: Tom to draft an RFP for a consultant and will share back draft with the planning board after 12/13.

Discussion of format and procedures for December 13 Planning Board meeting

We, as planning board members, need to address the community thoughtfully, with open minds, and that we await facts.

Format for next week will be two hours (1 hour for presentation, 1 hour of Q&A)

We can do multiple walk-throughs of the Kitteridge proposal.

The planning board is the ultimate research body to inform decision-making of the town.

Comments from the town members

Steven Dido, Juggler Meadow road: This would take place in front of my porch. We had a hard time finding out any information about this project. Please publicize everything.

Carol Heim: I appreciate that you held off on the discussion with the developer

Steve Nagy, Teawaddle Hill Road: How will the property be subdivided? Will the developer be coordinating with Amherst and Leverett regulations. I want to know how the proposal has been developed? There are wetlands, etc.

Ken Kahn: People are expecting an introduction of everything. A walkthrough before the planning board meeting would seem pre-emptive and not provide equal access to information.

Decision: Walk-through is postponed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm