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**Town of North Reading**  
*Massachusetts*

*Community Planning*

**MINUTES**

**Tuesday, January 24, 2023**

Mr. Christopher B. Hayden, Chairperson called the Tuesday, January 24, 2023 meeting of the Community Planning Commission to order at 7:37p.m. in Room 14 of the North Reading Town Hall, 235 North Street, North Reading, MA.

**MEMBERS**

**PRESENT:** Christopher B. Hayden, Chairperson  
David Rudloff, Vice Chairperson  
Warren Pearce  
Jeremiah Johnston

**STAFF**

**PRESENT:** Danielle McKnight, AICP  
Town Planner/Community Planning Administrator  
Debra Savarese, Administrative Assistant

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

### Minutes

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

that the Community Planning Commission vote to accept the minutes dated January 4, 2023 as written.

### Planning Administrator Updates

#### Town of Hopkinton Fire Department driveway access Policy

Mrs. McKnight stated that she added this for discussion because it's kind of in the context of the Anthony Road subdivision, that's why it came in, but it's not about that project specifically. She knows in the past that Deputy Galvin of the North Reading Fire Department has expressed concern that the fire code doesn't really enable him to do as much as he would like as far as driveway widths, and she has suggested to him that this might be something that he would want to attend a CPC meeting in the future to talk through it together, but she did tell him that this was something that she would pass along. It's a policy that Hopkinton uses, but it's not so much a bylaw as it is a policy that their fire department has in place to request certain driveway widths with clear shoulder space which she thinks they did in the last subdivision at this request and he was asking for something similar to be done for the Anthony Road subdivision, and in general to be part of the subdivision regulations. She doesn't know if the CPC wants to address that as part of subdivision regulations, but it's something they can look at and maybe discuss with Deputy Galvin if he wants come in for a meeting at some point.

Mr. Pearce stated that the big difference is that they do require 2' on each side and that's really good because that means you have snow storage, so the 12' roadway can be maintained. The fire code actually says 18', but that's more roadways than driveways, but it doesn't say that. The fire department came in a few years ago and they wanted 18' for driveways and we told them that they can't do that.

Mr. Hayden that's a lot of asphalt for a driveway.

Mr. Pearce stated that he thinks if they were to adopt or emulate that that to some extent you get 2' on each side which gives it a snow storage place and guarantees the 12' to the fire department and it's a safety mechanism.

Mr. Rudloff asked if they have a standard in the zoning bylaw and is it as comprehensive as the Hopkinton policy.

Mrs. McKnight stated that there is no minimum or maximum driveway width in the subdivision regulations. So, as they look at the subdivision regulations, if they want to put one in she thinks that's something they could talk about. She also want to mention that they did start to look at the subdivision regulations a long time ago and they did the first part of the review with the consultant, but they didn't have a town engineer and now they do (Dan O'Donnell) and she will be meeting with him and because she didn't think there was much of a point to change the subdivision regulations without the input of the town engineer and then have someone come in and say that really doesn't work for them. So, she thinks now that Dan is here we can start working on this. She thinks this is one of those things that they should talk about as part of the regulations.

Mr. Pearce stated that a lot of the houses that are close to the street have two driveways wide, right to the street. He read through the Hopkinton policy and liked it, and thinks they should also do it.

Mr. Rudloff stated that he liked the Permeable drivable surfaces that meet loading requirements of the emergency vehicles. This is something that's come up on a few of his projects.

#### Mass Works

The application round is now open, so what exactly the project is and how it gets asked for hasn't been decided yet, but she's assuming she'll be asked to help with an application with something related to sewer. There's a March 17<sup>th</sup> deadline for a statement of interest, and then a June 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline for a full application. So, she'll expect to be working on that a bit as it evolves.

#### Housing Choice

There is an application round open right now for the Housing Choice designation. This is different from the MBTA communities, but it's kind of part of the same legislation. This is something that it's voluntary and communities qualify for it by having issued a certain number of building permits in the last five years and we have not in the past qualified for it, but this year we do actually qualify and we don't really have to do much except submit the application with the building permit information and we become eligible for a pretty good range of grants. So, it's good to be a Housing Choice community designated because you do get higher points on things like Mass Works, other grant programs and get better borrowing rates for certain kinds of bonds. It does a lot for the town and the deadline is March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Municipal Wastewater presentation / discussion

They are continuing to work on the MBTA communities' project and she has met with the GIS Coordinator, Mike Bazegian and we're going to be running the compliance model together, and that's the set of instructions that the State provides to help them analyze whether the areas they've chosen really do work. She has started the earliest steps in that and she can already see it may be an issue. They've been targeting the 104 and 100 Lowell Road properties and the one thing that may complicate the plan is that they are in the Aquifer Protection District which limits development to less than 15% impervious, or more with a special permit. Those properties are already developed with much more than that because they're already built out, so she's trying to find a way that we can slightly revise that bylaw, or maybe we can make some type of exception for those two properties because otherwise it might be difficult for us to make the case that we can use those as our eligible zoning districts for the MBTA communities.

Mr. Pearce asked what percentage they cover right now.

Mrs. McKnight stated that Pulte is permitted for about 29% and while she doesn't know the exact number, it's more than 15%. Both they and Edgewood would have received that permit in the past, so she's just trying to figure out if there's some way for those two properties to be able to bypass another special permit because if they need another special permit they're not going to be able to qualify as our eligible districts.

Mr. Pearce stated that the problem is that the Aquifer Protection bylaw says 15% and they have already exceeded that, so they're already doing what they want them to do, so the bylaw is going to hold them back, not the actual building. Instead of putting a blanket exception, could they target this exception to the MBTA, because if they do that it shows intent and it doesn't open the door for things randomly coming in?

Mrs. McKnight stated that they could probably target the MBTA district and they don't want it to apply to other properties because these two are already built.

Abacus Architects

Mrs. McKnight stated that Abacus Architects has submitted their final report, in the Sharefile. If there are any questions or concerns please let her know.

Transportation Committee – appoint member

Mrs. Liane Gonzalez of the Select Board stated that at the last CPC meeting they discussed choosing a liaison for the Transportation Committee and she didn't have a lot of information, but she has gathered more information since then. They will soon be advertising for this committee and there is going to be a liaison from the Select Board and CPC who will be

non-voting members. The job of the liaison would be to bring the information back to the boards. It will be made up of seven voting members who will be appointed by the Select Board and the Town Administrator. There will be two members with three year terms, two members with two year terms and one member with a one year term. The Select Board wants to be sure that there is someone representing the veterans and elder services. There is a non-transportation issue in North Reading, so the committee will focus on the current means of transportation available to North Reading residents, optimizing the availability and awareness of current programs since it appears that education is part of the problem. Moving forward they'll study the best practices and programs from other towns and make recommendations that may better serve the community.

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

that the Community Planning Commission vote to appoint Mr. Pearce to the Transportation Committee.

#### **Accessory Dwelling Units.**

Mrs. McKnight stated that the last time they met, they discussed a number of changes and edits. She made the changes and discussed them with Gerry Noel, Building Inspector, and he was in agreement with those changes. She put the new draft, both corrected and track changes copy and a clean copy in the Sharefile. She wanted to know if this corrected draft was enough to take it to the next step which may be a workshop, or scheduling a public hearing.

Mr. Hayden asked if they needed to bring this to the Select Board before they schedule a public hearing.

Mrs. McKnight stated that while they don't have to bring it to the Select Board, but it may be a good idea to see how they feel about it.

Mr. Pearce asked if the building inspector had any concerns about how much this bylaw overlapped with the existing laws.

Mrs. McKnight stated that she doesn't think he has concerns; they have discussed the draft.

Mr. Pearce stated that there are also a couple of places in this bylaw that brings up annual renewal for somebody who does this to sign off, to say that the owners are living at the property and the ADU is a family member. What is the method by which that would be accomplished?

Mr. Rudloff stated that they could find out how other towns fared with it because he's seen it in other towns.

Mrs. McKnight stated that this part of the language that was taken from other town bylaws. She doesn't know if it necessarily requires the town to send a letter out, but it requires the owner on that property to send a letter every year, if that's a provision that they want to keep in the bylaw. She thinks that there was concern about there being absentee landlords and asking someone to send a notarized letter every year as a condition of maintaining their legal unit was one way to ensure that people were really living there. Is it perfect, no, but the enforcement action can be pulling the special permit and not allowing the unit anymore.

Mr. Rudloff stated that it shows a lack of wanting to comply and gives the building inspector one more tool, should there be issues with the property, instead of having no rules, and then how do they enforce anything.

Mr. Pearce stated that he understands the intent of it, but somebody's got to run that program and then some level of enforcement.

Mr. Rudloff stated that there are towns around us that have unfettered rules and as they're embarking on this and he would rather start carefully and be wrong then just let them go and do whatever they want and then they can't put it back in the box. His big thing is the adjacencies to property lines because he doesn't want the ADU to bother the abutter. He's trying to be super strict on these housing units and if they can comply with all of the rules, then great.

Mr. Johnston asked if the owner occupied requirement furthered those goals.

Mr. Rudloff stated no, but this mirrors neighboring towns and it's not that far off road from the State standards that they began with a year ago. So, they've tried to reign it in a little bit for their first test in the waters. These things could fall to the wayside if they find a different way.

Mr. Johnston stated that the practicality is how is the town going to manage and owner-occupied annual certification process. Does the town have the resources? Do they want to do that? It may become more trouble than it's worth, but if it is worth the trouble, can they do things like piggyback on the town's annual census (its existing paperwork). Can they put a check box in the census and if someone does have an ADU they hereby sign it, saying that they live there.

Mr. Hayden stated that is a good idea because it doesn't really add too much to the bylaw and there's no extra mailings.

Mr. Pearce stated that if the census is done annually that may be a way that they can do it, but anyone in the house could just check off the box.

Mrs. McKnight stated that she will find out if it can be added to the census.

Mr. Hayden stated that Mrs. McKnight should send the draft to the Mike Gilleberto, Town Administrator and he will be able to give it to the Select board for them to review.

Mr. Rudloff would like to have this on the agenda again before taking the next step.

**146-150 Park Street – Senior Housing Overlay District – cont. P.H. 8:30PM**

Attorney Brad Latham stated that they received the peer review report and there has been constructive discussion between the project engineer and the peer reviewer. Hayes is working on the plan and a response. They're hoping to wrap this up and close the public hearing at the next CPC meeting.

Mr. Peter Ogren of Hayes Engineering stated that they received the GM2 peer report on January 12<sup>th</sup>, and they provided a response to them on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Since that time they have had the opportunity to meet with them and discuss open issues. He is confident that they've come to terms on everything that they needed to do and they had some good suggestions relative to the plan. The biggest one was that they pointed out the difficulty of constructing a wall by the police station and they've decided to increase that height and move it back, so it doesn't create any issues. There were some additions to the plans and they actually asked them to rerun the hydraulics with the new storm intensities that are now being used. This request was completed and the results were sent to GM2, for their review. They know that the board cannot close the public hearing until they receive a report, so rather than discuss in detail any of these issues they thought that it was better to give the board an update. They also had field visit with the Conservation Commission on January 21<sup>st</sup>, and he believes that they were fairly satisfied with what they saw and he hopes Mrs. McKnight could touch base with the Conservation Agent, Leah Basbanes and see how those issues might be brought to a close.

Mr. Lawrence Reeves of Reeves Design Associates – Architects stated that nothing major is happening, but they wanted to put on record some minor changes with materials.

Mr. Rudloff noted the elevation drawings are substantially different from what was first present.

Mr. Reeves will send the updated elevations to Mrs. McKnight so the CPC can view them side by side.

Mr. Rudloff asked Mr. Ogren if the DPW did the flow test for them, or did they do it themselves and what hydrant was used for the testing.

Mr. Ogren stated that the DPW did the flow test a few years ago, but he did speak to Mark Clark of the water department and was told that nothing has changed in that area and the hydrant is located in front of the police station. The water line starts at a 10" and then changes to an 8" and they would split the 8" to a 6' fire and 2" domestic with separate gates.

Mr. Rudloff asked if someone from GM2 will need to speak to any of the departments regarding changes.

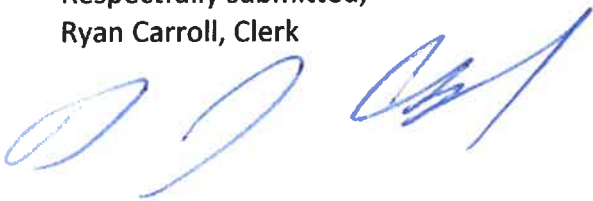
Mrs. McKnight stated that GM2 will submit a final letter assuming there are no outstanding issues. If there are issues she will follow up with those departments listed.

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

that the Community Planning Commission vote to continue the public hearing for 146-150 Park Street until Tuesday, February 28, 2023 @ 8:00PM

Adjournment at 9:35PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Ryan Carroll, Clerk

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Ryan Carroll', is written over the typed name.