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Town of North Reading
Massachusetts

Community Planning

MINUTES

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

Mr. Warren Pearce, Chairperson called the Tuesday, October 20, 2020 meeting of the Community Planning Commission to order at 7:30p.m. via Virtual Meeting (Zoom, participants may call 1-301-715-8592, meeting code 9854300926.

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Warren Pearce, Chairperson
Ryan Carroll, Clerk
Christopher Hayden
David Rudloff

STAFF

PRESENT: Danielle McKnight, AICP
Town Planner/Community Planning Administrator

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

Mr. Hayden read the Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the North Reading Community Planning Commission IS BEING CONDUCTED VIA REMOTE PARTICIPATION. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to listen to this meeting while in progress may do so by calling in 1-301-715-8592 and meeting code 9854300926.

Wren Circle/Goldcrest Drive – Bond Release

Mr. Carroll moved, seconded by Mr. Hayden and voted 3-0: (Mr. Rudloff & Bellavance absent)

that the Community Planning Commission vote to release the remaining bond in the amount of \$14,395.00 for the Wren Circle subdivision.

Minutes

Mr. Carroll moved, seconded by Mr. Hayden and voted 3-0: (Mr. Rudloff & Mr. Bellavance absent)

that the Community Planning Commission vote to approve the minutes of September 15, 2020, as written

Mr. Carroll moved, seconded by Mr. Hayden and voted 3-0: (Mr. Rudloff & Mr. Bellavance absent)

that the Community Planning Commission vote to approve the minutes of October 1, 2020, as amended.

Mr. Rudloff joined the meeting at 7:40PM.

Planning Administrator updates

226 Main Street/Horseshoe Restaurant

The building inspector told Mrs. McKnight that the owner of the restaurant has recently submitted an application to put a mini-split heater in the 3-season room. The State is requiring that the building inspector give a temporary permit, but the owner would prefer that it be a

permanent permit. The building inspector wanted to know if a Site Plan Review would be required.

Mr. Pearce stated that he doesn't believe that the proper protocols were followed in the building of that space. But, looking at other towns who are bending over backwards to help these businesses survive would be too difficult of a juncture to make a big deal out of that. Whether, or not the building inspector allows him to put the heater in, it should be subject to the inspections from the fire department, building department and any other departments that would have regulations over this. He does not believe that this would require a Site Plan Review.

Mr. Carroll asked if a Site Plan Review as ever done for this space.

Mr. Hayden stated that he received a building permit, but was not told to come for a Site Plan Review which he should have.

Mr. Rudloff stated that he is curious why he is going for a split ductless because it is usually open in the summertime.

Mr. Pearce stated that some of the new heat pumps are incredibly sufficient and it's probably the minimal operation cost that drew him into it.

The consensus of the CPC is that no site plan review is needed for the heater.

5G Wireless

RMLD has asked for a meeting to be sure that whatever we're doing matches what they require. They anticipate that whatever facilities are requested to be placed in North Reading are likely to be on their poles, so they want us to be ready and working together. They shared with us, that towns have been passing aesthetic policies which has been able to be used as long as it's done in the appropriate way. We can't regulate everything, but can definitely regulate certain things, such as, not putting new poles, no double poles and not placing on historic light poles.

Carpenter Drive

We have ECR Enterprises as a housing consultant and Design Consultants under contract to do soil testing and concept plans for what type of project could go there. At some point we will want to put out an RFP drafted by the housing consultant and we should think about a working group to evaluate the RFP to decide what goes into and help shape the project. The consultant suggests that the group be made up of people from the various town boards. The CPC should consider which member would like to take part in that.

Mr. Hayden asked if it's worth taking a look at putting the sewerage over to the high school for Carpenter Drive, because at some point the police, fire and library departments are going to have to connect to it.

Mr. Pearce stated that it might be worth a look. We could ask Design Consultants to give an estimate of what it would cost to go from point A to point B.

Mrs. McKnight stated that she can tell Design Consultants to take a look at it. Is there a limitation on who can tie into that system?

Mr. Pearce stated that they would need a report telling them what the capacity is and then look at the possibility of tying in the police, fire and library and Damon Tavern.

Microenterprise Grant program

Mrs. McKnight stated that round one was opened and closed and a second round was opened. North Reading has \$210,000.00 allocated to give to the smaller businesses if the owners meet income eligibility criteria. The program has not been taken advantage of, as much as they hoped, but it's not just North Reading, there are other towns too, participating. The income eligibility requirements are hard to meet. So, fortunately they were able to give out three awards, to three of the local businesses. There is more interest in round two, they have made it easier for businesses to qualify. The first round only allowed the businesses to use their 2019 income, but the second one allows them to use the 2020 income.

Mr. Pearce stated that the application is very hard to fill out and feels that it was over regulated.

Central Street sidewalk

Mrs. McKnight stated that it requires a MEPA review because of the removal of shade trees. They had a virtual site visit on Monday that she hosted. They were able to notify all of the abutters from Park Street to Spruce Street which would be the full scope of phase I, although the design is for that full area, but were only seeking funding for half of that, up to Quimby Road because the Complete Streets reward would only cover that and we could not get funding from the town and she will be submitting an application in November for the funding.

Grant for ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition plan

Mrs. McKnight stated that she submitted an application for a grant. This is something that the Commission of Disabilities has brought up to her because we have been out of compliance with ADA for quite a while because we don't have a plan and there is a grant program that the State offers.

Open Public Hearing during emergency – discussion

Mr. Pearce stated that we don't know how many people we're going to get for these public hearings and we usually get at least ten. We could probably social distance, but he's not comfortable with the fact that there is not an air filtration system that would protect everyone with, or without a mask.

Mrs. McKnight stated that we can't use room 14 for meetings yet..

Mr. Pearce asked where they would meet.

Mrs. McKnight stated that it would be over Zoom. During this emergency we are allowed to halt our hearings, but if we did have public hearings it would continue to be this way.

Mr. Pearce stated that the problem with Zoom is that we really do exclude a number of people. We do have a lot of older people that would come to a public meeting, but are less likely to be technologically able to attend the meeting. So, his concern is that they go through one of these meetings and approve a plan and then there are complaints or appeals filed to our decision because they could say that they were unable to comment or give any input.

Mr. Hayden stated that they do get a lot of information and history from abutters because they have seen it for a number of years.

Mr. Rudloff and Mr. Carroll stated that they agree.

Mrs. McKnight stated that 239 North Street – Site Plan Review applied and are the only ones that have an active application right now. Mr. Halchak (Amber Road) is working with the State and was told that he has to take some of the property out of Article 97 protection and that will take some time. Once the emergency is lifted the board will only have 45 days to act on everything. If we start to get a huge back-log she will let the board know that this discussion should be re-evaluated.

Mr. Pearce stated that the other side of the coin is if they are disfranchising the applicant. If they have something that's time sensitive, can they pick and choose? If they do have to have a public hearing, can the high school auditorium be used, and will there be a cost associated with the use of the building. This is something that should be looked at, so that we are more prepared.

Mrs. McKnight stated that she will find out what the options are.

Mr. Hayden asked if they could look at the 239 North Street, or will that set precedent.

Mr. Pearce stated that that is one that will impact a neighborhood, so there are going to be abutters that will want to attend the meeting. We could send out a meeting notice and encourage the applicant to send out information to the abutters.

Mr. Hayden stated that we could ask the abutters to join in a Zoom meeting to see if that works before actually having the public hearing.

The next CPC meeting will be on November 17, 2020.

Adjournment at 8:30PM

Respectfully submitted,
Ryan Carroll, Clerk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Carroll', is written below the typed name.