

Stockbridge Zoning Review Committee

Approved by SZRC
4/19/18

Minutes

April 12, 2018, 5:00 p.m.

Committee Attendees: Kate Fletcher (co-chair, Planning Board); Ruth Pearce (co-chair, Planning Board); Jim Murray (Zoning Board of Appeals), Carl Sprague (Historic Preservation Commission); Tom LaBelle (Alternate, Conservation Commission); Bob Jones (Alternate, Zoning Board of Appeals)
Absent: John Hart (Conservation Commission)

Kate Fletcher asked that anyone using a recording device disclose this; there were no disclosures.

A motion was made by Kate Fletcher to approve the minutes; Carl Sprague seconded the motion and the vote was:

Jim Murray – Yes
Carl Sprague – Yes
Ruth Pearce - Abstain
Tom LaBelle – Yes
Bob Jones – Yes
Kate Fletcher - Yes

Kate Fletcher made a motion to submit the previously circulated report on the in-depth read and discussion of the CEE from the Planning Board meeting on March 21 to the Select Board as a summary of the discussion. Carl Sprague seconded the motion and the vote was:

Jim Murray – Yes
Carl Sprague – Yes
Ruth Pearce – Yes
Tom LaBelle – Yes
Bob Jones – Yes
Kate Fletcher - Yes

Next, the committee heard updates from subcommittees.

1) Rewrite of the CEE: Bob Jones provided a history of the CEE and suggested that using the services of a planner, the town make use of historic overlay districts to address these properties. If this was successfully implemented, the CEE could then be rescinded. Comments from the committee included that the CEE had no teeth with regard to preservation however Stockbridge had voted down an historic district three times, perhaps have an educational initiative - the landscape of the cottage era is receding. Consider an "historic capture," the state may require multi-family housing.

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2) New Open Space Residential Development bylaw: Kate Fletcher listed five goals that she and Jim Murray had set out as a first step in looking into a new bylaw. Jim stressed that an important part of the process for developing such a bylaw would be to identify important resource areas and use a process of elimination to identify areas not suitable for development.

3) Definitions: Tom LaBelle distributed three documents in which he had organized the definitions that he reviewed along with Ruth Pearce. Ruth explained the three documents and the system they were using to categorize bylaws as they worked through them. The idea is to better organize the information; Tom's recommendation is to split the definitions into two sections. The first, section 2.2 would be for definitions relating to general zoning. The second, section 4.10, would immediately precede the Table of Uses and would only define specific uses.

Comments and questions from the audience and committee were:

- The Stockbridge Democratic Committee had asked that the SZRC hold a forum on the CEE. Kate Fletcher responded that she did not believe another discussion characterized by polarization would be productive.
- Ruth Pearce asked why the subcommittee looking at a new open space residential development bylaw restricted its scope to residential use only. Kate Fletcher answered that it is intended for residential zones.
- A suggestion was made that the subcommittee looking into a new residential development bylaw use the Hingham and Concord zoning bylaws as a reference.
- A question was asked about definitions in the CEE bylaw? Tom LaBelle answered that he thought they should be in the Table of Use, "studio," "resort" are not in the Table of Use.
- With regard to general rules of drafting, definitions are not meant to be substantive; Stu Hirshfield expressed his preference that if a definition is only referenced once, it not be in the Table of Uses.
- Ruth Pearce looked at the overlay with the building inspector and would like to revisit this as something that may create unnecessary overhead.

A date for the first public forum was set for after the annual town meeting as there was consensus that there was not enough time to prepare for a forum in the first half of May. The date was set for Thursday, June 7, 6-8:00 p.m. After discussion of the format of the forum, it was agreed that for the next meeting, committee members would write three brief paragraphs with their thoughts on:

- 1) Object of having a forum
- 2) Structure
- 3) Questions for participants

Suggestions and questions from the committee and audience included:

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- Have 5 – 10 things that are priorities for the town, have people respond as to whether they believe these are priorities, were any missed.
- Do something broader in order to stay away from specifics of zoning review; it would be counterproductive to focus once again on DeSisto.
- What came first, the CEE or R4 and R2? (Answer: zoning districts predate the CEE)
- Define quickly where we are at and open it up to public input.
- Start with an educational component.
- The forum should be useful to the SZRC, 85% of the town is residential, there is nothing about preserving residential character and this is the essence of the origins of the divisiveness.
- The Stockbridge Democratic Town Committee had requested a forum on the CEE.
- Climate change will have a major impact over the next 10-15 years, will need to take radical steps in building design – this represents an issue that needs to be looked into.

Nina Ryan brought up climate planning. Kate asked her if she would look into that and Nina agreed to investigate climate issues as they impact planning.

To do list:

- 4) Kate will submit the report on the meeting devoted to review of the CEE to the Select Board.
- 5) Kate will let the Select Board know that Nina has offered to research climate planning.
- 6) Kate will look at population numbers from the town clerk and assessors office.
- 7) Kate agreed to look into using a planner versus having a diagnostic.
- 8) Ruth to provide feedback on the building inspector's input on the bylaws.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Fletcher
Co-chair, Stockbridge Zoning Review Committee