

**HAMILTON PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
Via Zoom 880 1213 1998  
Passcode: 908010  
One tap mobile – 1 929 205 6099 (New York)  
May 4, 2021  
7:00 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Rick Mitchell, Marnie Crouch, Richard Boroff, Corey Beaulieu, Bill Wheaton, Emil Dahlquist (Associate Member) and Brian Stein, Chair.

**Planning Director:** Patrick Reffett

**Others Present:** Don Preston of Habitat for Humanity, Andrew Defranza of Harbor Light Community Partners, Jack Lawrence, Pat Norton, Casey Ryder, G. Shephard-Bingham, Esq., Paul Smiley, Lidia Szdlowski, Leonard and Julia Rubin, Holly Zagorski

The meeting was called to order by Brian Stein at 7:00 p.m. with a quorum established via Zoom.

**Others Present:**

1. **CONCEPTUAL REVIEW & DISCUSSION OF 40B PROPOSAL FROM ESSEX COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY AT 434-438 ASBURY STREET** - The Board will review again a conceptual 40B project proposal presentation and prepare a recommendation to be submitted to the Hamilton Zoning Board of Appeals for their formal review. The project proposes 10 units. The property is also known as Assessors Map 37, Lots 44 and 43.

Brian Stein explained that because there were technical difficulties at the last Planning Board meeting, members would revisit the Habitat for Humanity presentation with Don Preston at this meeting to allow public participation.

Patrick Reffett commented that the Planning Board reviews 40B project designs before the Zoning Board of Appeals does its formal review which would begin at its June 2, 2021 meeting. Mr. Stein added that input from the Board and the public should be limited to site plan issues which is the purview of the Planning Board.

Mr. Preston thanked the Affordable Housing Trust for its support in moving this project forward. Mr. Preston explained that Habitat has been negotiating for a year with the seller of the 4.75 acres at this address. In 2014 the property was subdivided into 3 lots and in 2015 a cell tower was placed on Lot 2. The house on Lot 1 would be preserved and the house in Lot 2 would be taken down. Less than 10 percent of the 4.75 acres would be used for the 10 units of proposed affordable housing. The 10 units would consist of two 1-bedroom units, four 2-bedroom units and two duplexes which would have 3 bedrooms each. All units would be located in a semi-circle with the existing driveway next to Asbury Grove. The driveway would be used as an access point with a cul-de-sac at the end and a spinoff driveway between lots 2 and 3 that would go to the cell tower.

Engineers from The Morin-Cameron Group, LLC would be producing a full set of draft plans and engineered drainage plans which would be presented first to the Fire Department and then to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). The site would have two gravity-fed septic systems and catch basins for the water runoff. There would be very little impact to the wetlands as only a corner of one septic system might encroach slightly. The design and possible encroachment would be reviewed by the Conservation Commission.

All lighting on the property would be controlled to minimize light pollution and be dark sky compliant. Once the roadway is approved by the Fire Department, the trash disposal plan will be decided. The site itself is lower than the road level and will be screened with trees. A slight increase in density zoning will need to be requested.

These homes will be available for those in the 40-60 percent income range of area median income which is considered low income, i.e. a family of 4 with earnings between \$40,000-70,000 per year. The homes will be sold for \$150,000-180,000 with a local preference allowing 70 percent of the units available to those who live,

work or go to school in the Hamilton-Wenham area. Deed restrictions would prevent the homes from being sold at market rate and taxes will be based on the deed restricted price.

There would be a homeowners association for maintenance and snow removal. Each residence would have 2 parking spaces. A visitor parking area will be determined once the Fire Department had approved the roadways. No special sidewalks are in the plan currently.

Mr. Reffett commented that at the last meeting, three general observations were made:

1. A professionally prepared drainage plan would be needed for the site that would require peer review.
2. A detailed roadway access plan would be needed.
3. Lighting would need to be dark-sky compliant.

Mr. Reffett suggested a few other recommendations and questions for the ZBA to address:

1. A description of trash management;
2. The location of visitor parking;
3. Zoning bylaw relief due to density above what is permitted under the existing R-1B zoning bylaw which allows for one residential unit per lot;
4. Drainage issues as the site is abutting wetlands and protected areas;
5. Ensure that steps are taken to protect the wetlands during the design and construction process and that those steps meet with the Conservation Commission's approval;
6. Where would snow storage be;
7. Would there be a landscape improvement plan and what plant materials would be proposed?
8. Would there be an onsite pedestrian access plan that is safe and reasonable?
9. Would there be adequate screening and/or buffering?

Ms. Crouch mentioned safety concerns with regard to children entering or leaving the property as there would not be a sidewalk. Mr. Preston said the end of the driveway would be brought up to ground level which was currently being engineered and that the driveway would be a private way. Mr. Dahlquist and resident Betsy Manzelli also expressed safety concerns with regard to pedestrians and the need to consider a sidewalk.

In response to ADA requirements, Mr. Preston explained that the first floors of multi-story units would be handicap friendly and the entryways could be made fully handicap compliant if needed.

The Board discussed the possibility of traffic lights at the busy intersection and Mr. Reffett commented that the state controls traffic light placements in Massachusetts. The intersection would need to be evaluated through a Signal Control Warrant to determine if a traffic light would be needed. Mr. Reffett added that pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist safety should be evaluated by the Hamilton Police Department.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Resident Paul Smiley who lives at the Village at Canter Brook Farm expressed traffic issue concerns for what will be a populated area with Canter Brook Farm, the Habitat for Humanity development, Asbury Grove, and the proposed Harbor Light Community Partners proposed development adjacent to Canter Brook.

Resident Lydia Szdlowski commented that Asbury Grove consisted of summer homes and Mr. Reffett responded that about half of Asbury Grove are year-round residences. Resident Ann Geikie of 230 Highland Street commented that there was a stop light where Highland and Asbury Streets meet at the main entrance to Asbury Grove and that Asbury Grove has three exits and she also expressed her traffic and pedestrian concerns.

Board members agreed that when the Harbor Light site is reviewed by the ZBA, sidewalk concerns would need to be addressed by the Police Department and water

delivery and drainage would need to be addressed by the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Preston explained that there would be an appeals process and, following that, construction would begin in the fall after the demolition of the existing structure, and roadway engineering. Construction would start with the 1 and 2 bedroom units. The family selection process would probably begin at the end of August. Families chosen for the homes are required to put in 400 hours of sweat equity and would therefore be involved in the construction of their home. Mr. Preston explained that the construction would be done in several phases lasting several years.

Mr. Preston left the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

2. **BOARD BUSINESS** – Interview Associate member candidate(s);  
Review/approve Meeting Minutes of April 6, 2021 and April 22, 2021;  
Liaison reports; Staff reports; Future agenda items; Etc.

Mr. Reffett reported that the Board of Selectmen voted to approve Emil Dahlquist as a new associate member. Dan Hamm resigned which left a vacancy for a full Board member which would likely be filled by an associate member. The Planning Board forwarded a letter of recommendation for Casey Ryder to be approved as an associate member to the Board of Selectmen but it was accidentally overlooked last week at the Board of Selectmen meeting and will get advanced to the Board of Selectmen again. Pat Norton and Jack Lawrence were in attendance to speak of their interest in becoming associate members.

Mr. Norton told the Board that he moved to Hamilton a couple of years ago and worked at New England Biolabs leading the Engineering Department. He had presented to the Ipswich Planning Board on several occasions which influenced his interest to be a part of the Hamilton Planning Board. Mr. Norton explained that his familiarity and background in the design of facilities and buildings both residential and commercial would make him a good candidate for the position of associate member. The Planning Board had a question and answer session with Mr. Norton.

Mr. Lawrence told the Board that he originally moved to Hamilton in 1941 and had been involved in different projects since he moved back in 1975. Mr. Lawrence spent 4 years on the Finance Committee, three years as a Selectman and was involved in many projects in between those years. Mr. Lawrence commented that he was currently on the Capital Committee and the Town Hall Building Committee and had been appointed to the Master Plan Steering Committee. Mr. Lawrence felt that Hamilton was on the cusp of change and would like to be involved in that change as an associate member of the Planning Board. The Planning Board had a question and answer session with Mr. Lawrence.

Mr. Stein expressed concern that the Master Plan Steering Committee would have three Planning Board members on it, Mr. Dahlquist, Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Lawrence. Board Members discussed how having new blood and engineering experience would be beneficial for the Board at this time. Mr. Lawrence agreed and withdrew his name as a potential associate member of the Planning Board.

Motion made by Richard Boroff that Pat Norton be made an associate member of the Planning Board.

Seconded by Corey Beaulieu.

Roll Call Vote: Marnie Crouch – aye, Bill Wheaton – aye, Rick Mitchell – aye, Corey Beaulieu – aye, Richard Boroff – aye, and Brian Stein – aye.

Unanimous in favor of voting members.

Mr. Mitchell explained to Mr. Norton that the Planning Board would forward their it's associate member recommendation to the Board of Selectmen and Mr. Norton and Ms. Casey Ryder should attend the BOS meeting on May 17, 2021 to answer questions.

### **Review of Minutes**

Motion made by Marnie Crouch to accept the amended April 6, 2021 minutes of the Hamilton Planning Board.

Seconded by Bill Wheaton.

Roll Call Vote: Rick Mitchell – aye, bill Wheaton – aye, Marnie Crouch – aye, Corey Beaulieu – aye, Richard Boroff – aye, and Brian Stein – aye.

Unanimous in favor of voting members.

Motion made by Rick Mitchell to approve the amended April 20, 2021 minutes of the Hamilton Planning Board.

Seconded by Richard Boroff.

Roll Call Vote: Corey Beaulieu -aye, Richard Boroff – aye, Marnie Crouch – aye, Bill Wheaton – aye, Rick Mitchell – aye, and Brian Stein – aye.

Unanimous in favor of voting members.

## **Updates**

Mr. Reffett reported that Town Manager, Joe Domelowicz sent an email to different Hamilton Boards requesting a member from each board be assigned to the Master Plan Steering Committee.

Mr. Reffett informed the Board that he would be requesting funding from the town to do engineering work for an Approval Not Required (ANR) to section off 100 feet around the perimeter of Winthrop School. Mr. Reffett estimated the cost would be about \$15,000 to do the survey work and the ANR before it would come back to the Board.

- 3. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW & DISCUSSION OF 40B PROPOSAL FROM HARBOR LIGHT COMMUNITY PARTNERS AT (approximate #) 455 ASBURY STREET (also known as southeast portion of Map 20, Lot 11 – immediately north of the Canter Brook Project)** - The Board will receive a conceptual 40B presentation and will undertake a conceptual 40B site plan review with their recommendation to be submitted to the Hamilton Zoning Board of Appeals for their formal review.

At 8:30 p.m., Andrew DeFranza of Harbor Light Community Partners joined the meeting for a preliminary review of the 455 Asbury Street 40B proposal. Mr. Stein reminded those attending the meeting that the discussion should be limited to site plan questions only.

Mr. DeFranza explained that Harbor Light Community Partners is a local non-profit affordable housing organization headquartered in Beverly. Asbury

Commons is their most current project and is proposed next to the corner of the Village of Canter Brook Farm. It would consist of a total of 45 units of housing eligible for inclusion on the Subsidized Housing Inventory and would contain mixed income tiers. The proposed units would be as environmentally efficient as possible and would be a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes. The building would be on a 4-acre parcel of property and would only use 40 percent of that property, leaving 60 percent as open space. All abutters and public bodies were notified of the proposal. Mr. DeFranza commented that this was his first official meeting and that Harborlight wanted to appear before the Planning Board for feedback before seeking a permit.

### **PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS**

Mr. Mitchell commented that turning the building 180 degrees to face the field could be a viable option to avoid conflict with the Village at Canter Brook Farm. It was also noted that the Asbury Commons site sits much higher and thus more imposing than their neighbors. Suggestions were made to make the building 2 stories with the second story being dormered which would increase the footprint by 33 percent but would decrease the height creating less visibility. Mr. Defranza expressed concerns with regard to the need for more elevators if the building was spread out. Sidewalks and walking paths were also planned for the development and there would be significant augmentation of the landscaping barrier.

Mr. Mitchell asked if the Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary affordable housing proposal were accepted, would Hamilton meet the inventory requirement for Chapter 40B. Mr. DeFranza said it would but that building at the Seminary would take much longer than Asbury Commons due to financing structures and that Asbury Commons was Harborlight's priority over GCTS. Mr. Mitchell also asked how much funding Harborlight likely would request from the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust to which Mr. DeFranza responded with an estimate of less than \$1 million.

Mr. DeFranza reminded meeting participants that this was the first of many meetings and studies before a project like this would be approved which would potentially take a year or more before permitting would be done.



## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Residents and abutters, Paul Smiley, Lidia Szdlowski, Leonard Rubin and Julia Rubin expressed their concern and dissatisfaction with a development of the proposed size being built in their neighborhood. Concerns were raised regarding the height of the development, the thin woods buffer and heavy traffic due to three existing and proposed developments in such close proximity to one another.

Mr. Mitchell explained that this meeting was only the first in the process and that the Planning Board only had an advisory role and would not have a final say in the process.

Mr. Reffett agreed to draft a list of recommendations draft to be reviewed by the Planning Board and once finalized forward to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Residents within 300 feet would all be notified of the Zoning Board of Appeal's agenda on the town's website.

## **Other Business**

Mr. Reffett and other Planning Board members thanked Mr. Stein for his years of service to the Board as this would be his last meeting.

## **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn made by Bill Wheaton at 9:52 p.m.

Seconded by Marnie Crouch.

Roll Call Vote: Rick Mitchell – aye, Bill Wheaton – aye, Corey Beaulieu – aye, Richard Boroff – aye, Marnie Crouch – aye, and Brian Stein – aye.

Unanimous in favor of voting members.

**Upcoming Board Meeting(s):** May 18, 2021; June 1, 2021; June 15, 2021.

Documents:

1. Site plan for 434-438 Asbury Street
2. Harbor Light Community Partners slide presentation

Prepared by:

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Ann Schlecht

5/8/2021

Attest