

Montague Planning Board

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July 28, 2015 7:00 PM

Town Hall – Upstairs Meeting Room

One Avenue A

Turners Falls, MA 01376

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ron Sicard – Chair, Fred Bowman, Bruce Young, Bob Obear.

Staff Present: Walter Ramsey, AICP- Town Planner

Ron Sicard opened the meeting at 7:03 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

***Motion** by, Bruce Young to accept the June 23, 2015 Planning Board minutes. Seconded by Fred Bowman. **Motion passed unanimously.** Bruce Young abstained.*

Pat Smith, FRCOG Planner- Update on Millers River Watershed Project and review of proposed Low-Impact Development Standards for the Turnpike Road Development Area.

Guests: Pat Smith and Ivan Ussah from FRCOG

The western portion of the Millers River Watershed in Franklin County includes all or portions of 7 towns. This region of the watershed is characterized primarily by a rural landscape with two population centers along the Millers River – Orange and Montague. Most of the impervious surface area in the western portion of the watershed is associated with these two towns. The FRCOG was awarded an s.319 Nonpoint Source Pollution grant to implement a project that will mitigate the impacts of stormwater runoff in urban areas like Montague and Orange and protect the sensitive areas in the more rural areas of the watershed through the use of Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management techniques. FRCOG will work with the Planning Boards in the Towns of Montague and Orange to review their Zoning Bylaws to identify sections that might discourage or prohibit the use of LID, prepare updates that would encourage builders and property owners to apply LID techniques, and bring the proposed zoning revisions to Town Meeting. FRCOG will partner with the MRWC to conduct a series of regional LID training workshops and a site visit to view local LID installations. The Unity Park Rain Garden in Turners Falls is on one of the site visits. There will be a talk on best management practices and cost competitiveness of the projects by Andrew Bohne and Issac Ussah. Pat mentioned that enforcement is driven by complaints and that there could be an addition to the policies to give the Planning Board some “teeth” to enforce stormwater implementation. The target audience will be town administrators, DPW directors, building inspectors (who are often the local zoning enforcement officers) local planning boards and conservation commissions, local developers, and the general public. The goal is to inform local regulators, developers and residents about the benefits of LID so they will encourage their towns to adopt more LID-friendly regulations and policies.

Discussion Points on Proposed LID standards for Turnpike Road Industrial Area:

Bruce Young:

- Have the document streamlined as not to “scare off” potential interested parties. He suggested a punch list including items such as estimated seasonal groundwater – the town could address before the project thus trying to help market the site.
- Some of this material is covered in the Town of Montague’s Stormwater Management Plans. How much of the information is an overlap? For example: long term operational plan and elicit discharges are not prohibited. Combine both the FRCOG document with the existing Town of Montague Management Plan. The thought is to streamline the process for the end user so that they know how many documents they have to acquire and have a guide to refer to.
- How is this process going to be implemented and enforced?
- If it was a conveyance then we would not want to take anything out. This is made to be a guideline for the park.
- Is there a percentage that you (FRCOG) recommend for developing a lot so that you leave land open for LID above the ground? Highlighted was a recent permit that did below ground retention basins. Does this go into design guidelines or your LID?

Ivan Ussah:

- LID is a type of design which maximizes open space and the LID term has been taken and applied to larger design techniques for example developing an entire site (subdivision) vs. cluster design where incorporating stormwater features allows for greater percentage of open space being protected (50%+/-) thus allowing the natural hydrology to cleanse stormwater efficiently. When it is integrated into a site it appears natural even though it might be a bio-trench or a technique to help manage stormwater.

Bruce Young and Ivan Ussah:

- There will be up to 8 industrial sites with a lot of pavement being used and will this pervious payment hold up? It will be used where there is not a constant traffic pattern. In an Industrial area integrating pervious payment would have fewer applications. Bruce wanted to know if we were to add that it is preferential to add above ground stormwater LID techniques (grass swales). Bruce is also concerned that if you don’t see the stormwater management systems then maintenance is not done. Ivan said know your site (smart design) and have a strong maintenance plan which will be effective and cost-saving to the overall project.

Pat Smith:

- Spoke to hybrid systems which work nicely together but if the TOM wanted it to be preferential for above ground stormwater management (grass swales) that language could be adjusted.

Bruce Young:

- Anything that is built is part of a permit and trust is given to those that should be monitoring the issues.

Pat Smith and Ivan Ussah:

- Most issues with stormwater management are complaint driven but when it happens you want something in place that gives you the ability to enforce. Pat Smith will meet with Walter and touch base on the suggestions, enforcement and decide the new and amount of a fine that has some magnitude to be fair and strict enough so they follow the laws and what constitutes a violation of the plan.
- Will do the revisions and tighten up the document and send it out to have the Planning Board for review and additional suggestions.

Action was not taken. These proposed regulations are being taken under consideration.

Schedule Zoning Map Amendment Hearing proposed by landowner petition to redistrict Assessors Map 29, Lot 122 (5-7 Church Street) in Millers Falls from Public-Semi Public to Neighborhood Business under the Montague Zoning Bylaws

Walter R requested that the Board schedule a hearing for this citizen initiated request on 8/25/2015. The petition has been received by the Selectmen.

David Jensen brought up some other changes to “clean-up” the zoning areas in town including:

- Montague Center Post Office which is currently up for sale and is zoned Public-Semi Public
- Some homes in and around the Sheffield School area are also zoned Public- Semi Public

It was decided not to pursue these amendments at this time. Planner directed to schedule hearing.

Topics Not Anticipated:

ANR#2015-05 32 South Street by Catherine Wirth

Yesterday the Town received a surveyed plan to transferring a sliver of land (6 feet) in lot 2 to lot 1 between two neighbors that have a common driveway. The area is zoned Rural Business with 200 feet of frontage required. Both lots fit these criteria for the request. Planner noted that the house located at #32 is essentially giving away the ability to split the lot into 2 in the future as it will retain less than 400 feet of frontage.

Motion by, Bruce Young to approve ANR #2015-05 for plan of land in Montague surveyed for Catherine Wirth dated July 23, 2015. Seconded by, Bob Obear. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Next meeting: August 25, 2015 at 7:00 PM

Motion by Bob Obear at 8:46 PM to adjourn the July 28, 2015 Planning Board meeting. Seconded by Bruce Young. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Approved by: _____ Date: _____