

Montague Planning Board

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November 29, 2016 7:00 PM

Town Hall – First Floor Meeting Room

One Avenue A

Turners Falls, MA 01376

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ron Sicard – Chair, Fred Bowman, George Cooke and Bruce Young

Members Absent: Bob Obear

Staff Present: Walter Ramsey, AICP- Town Planner

Ron Sicard opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Zoning Workshop: Open Space Planning and Residential Design:

Guests: Peggy Sloan and Alyssa LaRose – FRCOG Planners

This is a continued discussion with FRCOG regarding open space residential design (OSRD), flag lots, and planned unit development

Flag Lot Bylaw-The purpose of this section is to allow for the creation of new residential lots within the Residential (RS) District on lots which do not have the required frontage but otherwise meet the dimensional requirements of the district.

- Site Plan Review was added to the bylaw for flag lots
- Set back minimums to 20 feet from all property lines
- A waiver section so that a person could go through a special permit process to see if the flag lot would be permissible if it didn't conform with what is stated within the district. The board would like to keep that the minimum requirements for a flag lot size will have to be met.
- If you have water and sewer available in a residential district you can apply for a special permit to have reduction of frontage for a regular lot NOT a flag lot.
- Vehicular egress to a flag lot is allowed even though flag lots don't have the required minimum frontage

The Board resolved that a special permit process would be done on a case by case basis in regards to flag lots to see what is being proposed. In the future it could be by right with site plan review after getting a feel for how the process goes for the Town of Montague.

The chairman allowed the audience to ask questions about Flag Lots.

Jeanne Golrick, resident questioned *where these would be allowed and whether it could be used to justify subdividing farmland into residential lots*. Walter clarified that this is only permitted in the RS district which does not typically have farmland. In fact there are approximately only 22 lots in the RS district that could realistically make use of a flag lot development. Not any of these are on farms or prime farmland soils. The Special Permit criteria allows for only one flag lot to be created from any given parcel. The special permit ensures this will not be abused by a large lot owner seeking to maximize the number of buildable parcels

Peter Golrick (resident) had a follow-up question. *Would land behind Grout Circle and land located off Wendell Road towards Wendell be considered a possibility for infill development/flag lots?* Walter responded: This area is zoned Agricultural Forestry (AF-4) so flag lots would not be permissible. Virtually the entire RS district in Millers Falls has pre-existing, non conforming house lots. This leaves little to no potential for flag lots in Millers Falls.

Peggy Sloan: Technically if you split a lot and they are then owned by two different people it then could be split into a flag lot on each lot. This is why it was changed to a special permit process as it is not the intent of the bylaw to do development in this way.

The Board was satisfied with bylaw as written, and amended to require a special permit.

Open Space Bylaw – The overall purpose of this section, in addition to the general purpose of these Zoning Bylaws, is to protect open space for the purposes of Section 7.11 which is defined as the land set aside as permanently protected open space pursuant to Section 7.11.7 (a)

As per the last Planning Board meeting changes have been made:

- AF district was added so that they could use the OSRD approach to that zoning district
- Allow single family homes by right with site plan review
- Allow two family homes is OSRD by special permit
- Only can have a single family or a two family on one lot
- Multi-Family dwellings would not be allowed to keep with the character of the district
- A conservation restriction being put on the land that might be remaining as forestry or farmland and remove the easements for septic systems since those should be in the homeowner's association land. An easement could be given in the future in case the system failed and would need to be placed in the conservation restriction land
- If you did a two family home when using OSRD the special permit would be needed.

The chairman allowed the audience to ask questions about Flag Lots.

Peter Golrick: Where is this being proposed for?

Walter R: It is being proposed for AF-2, AF-4, RS and RB districts?

Peggy S: This is an optional approach to a standard subdivision in the hopes the same amount of homes would be clustered as to preserve the surrounding land.

Peter Golrick: Would this encourage residential development off West Mineral road in proximity to the Airport? I don't think residential development would be suitable because of heavy aircraft use.

Walter R: The privately owned land around the TF Airport off East and West Mineral Road is zoned AF-4. Under zoning it is potentially possible, but so is traditional subdivision. A sizable portion of land off West Mineral Road has been permanently protected from development, so there is little potential for intense development in this area.

The Board was satisfied with the bylaw as written.

Planned Unit Development – The Planned Unit Development Overlay District is designed to allow for "Planned Unit Developments" in designated areas of Town. Through a comprehensive site plan, a unified development containing a mixture of land uses and buildings is developed as a single entity. It is the intent of this provision to ensure sound planning and zoning practices while allowing certain

desirable departures from the requirements of specific zoning provisions. The goals of the Planned Unit Development are:

(a) Encourage flexibility in the design of development through a carefully controlled review process of detailed plans within a particular zoning district.

(b) Promote the use of multiple-story buildings and campus-like clustering of buildings to maximize the amount of available open space.

(c) Encourage a less sprawling form of development which makes more efficient use of land, requires shorter networks of streets and utilities and which fosters more economical development and less consumption of developable land.

(d) Provide an efficient procedure which will ensure appropriate high-quality design and site planning.

(e) Promote high-quality coordinated building and site design which buffers adjacent residential uses and protects both scenic and natural features.

Maximize pedestrian circulation within the project and connection to surrounding compatible land uses, both through the design of circulation systems and through the design and layout of land uses.

It allows for a different mix of allowable uses while complying with other sections of the zoning bylaws. Building heights of 35 feet (2 1/2 stories) are allowed; but that might have to be changed as the Industrial Park and Mill buildings are taller. For existing buildings it could be a height of up to 70 feet (to be checked). The definition of measurement for heights of buildings is stated as: vertical mean finished grade to the highest point. (not including antennas etc.)

This is proposed to be allowed by Special Permit in the Industrial, Historic Industrial, and General Business Districts. In terms of eligibility, the parcel needs to have 200 acres and 400 feet of frontage. Access would be at one point with allowance for emergency services access rather than curb cuts.

Any changes presented would have to come before the Planning Board as an amendment to the special permit. They would be given the opportunity to review and comment on the changes. All would be require special permit and site plan review as the Planning Board would be the special permit granting authority and would do site plan review so it would be under one board to keep the process streamlined. It might be a good idea to do a separate special permit section with clear and concise procedural requirements for applicants.

Next Steps: FRCOG will be doing a draft of the special permit section along with preparation public information session presentation. Another topic for discussion is a need for a dimensional table and a comprehensive and up to date zoning bylaws guide with maps and with collaboration from the zoning board. FRCOG will re-join the Board in January.

The Board was satisfied. Walter will look into max building heights in the HI District.

Medical Marijuana- Walter shared a memo from Town Counsel about how to prepare for medical marijuana. There are still many unknowns and the Board should monitor the issue closely as it develops at the State level.

Planner Report & Other Business:

Canal District Vision Plan

The final presentation will be in December 15 at 2PM at the Public Safety Complex. Public is invited.

EPA Brownfield Grant

Walter is working on this for hazard materials removal at the Strathmore Mill Complex and the grant is for \$400,000. The town has committed \$385,000.

Green Communities FY16 Annual Report

Walter is wrapping this up and the Town of Montague has reduced its energy use by 20% since the start of the grant. Other improvements include upgraded fuel efficiency with town owned vehicles (6) as well as 11 houses been built under the stretch code and 2 commercial businesses in the last 6 years.

Millers Falls Historic District Public Information Session

To be located at the Millers Falls Library on December 6, 2016 at 5:00 PM. Public is invited.

Motion by Ron Sicard at 8:22 PM to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Fred Bowman. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Next scheduled meeting: December 27, 2016

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Exhibits:

OSRD Draft

Flag Lot Draft

Planned Unit Development Draft

Medical Marijuana Overview from KP Law