

MERRIMAC PLANNING BOARD

January 31, 2023

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Sandra Venner called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM

ATTENDANCE: Chair Sandra Venner, Vice Chair Karol Flannery, Member Thomas Abisalih, Member David Cressman

Absent: Member Dennis Brodie

Motion to approve minutes of December 6, 2022. 1st Thomas Abisalih, 2nd Karol Flannery, All in favor 3-0 and 1 abstention (David Cressman)

Motion to approve minutes of December 21, 2023. 1st David Cressman, 2nd Thomas Abisalih, All in favor 3-0 and 1 abstention (Karol Flannery).

Approval of Minutes for November 15, 2022: Minutes from meeting on November 15, 2022 moved to next Planning Board meeting for a quorum of those members that were present.

OLD BUSINESS:

Storm Water Management For 1 High Street.

The Planning Board received the inspection report from Horsley Witten for the site at 1 High Street. The inspection report was forwarded to the applicant for review and action. Denise McClure stated that a scope and cost for Horsley Witten to conduct inspections was received and signed by the Chair. There are funds in the escrow account to cover inspections and peer review for the site.

PROJECT UPDATES:

118 East Main Street/Merrimac Crossing: The site work is moving along as expected.

Abbey Road: Denise McClure stated that staff met with the developer for Abbey Road to discuss the inspection report received from Horsley Witten. The developer will be addressing all of the items included in the report. In addition, staff discussed the open space for the development. The open space currently is held by the homeowner's association but the staff requested that it be transferred to the Conservation Commission and the applicant agreed.

Regency Mixed Use: The site work is moving along as expected.

NEW BUSINESS:

Public Hearing – Special Permit and Site Plan Review - 51 East Main Street

The applicant requested to continue the public hearing to the next regularly scheduled Planning Board meeting.

A motion was made to continue the public hearing for 51 East Main Street until February 21, 2023. 1st Thomas Abisalih, 2nd Karol Flannery, All in favor 3-0 and 1 abstention (David Cressman)

CORRESPONDANCE

1. Planning Board Budget

Sandra Venner provided an overview of the proposed FY 24 Planning Board budget. She explained that the budget is proposed to be level funded from last year, with the exception of the recalculation of the Administrative Assistant hours since the position is no longer shared with the Board of Health. In addition, she further explained that the Town Planner funding was located in a different line item.

Thomas Abisalih questioned where the funding was for the Town Planner

Sandra Venner explained that the funding is in a consultant line item as the Town Planner does not only provide staffing to the Planning Board. There are other projects and work that the Town Planner is responsible for undertaking.

Denise McClure stated that the Town Planner funding is proposed to be \$5,000 higher than it is currently funded.

Thomas Abisalih questioned why we have not yet been able to hire a new administrative assistant.

Denise McClure stated that we are struggling to find someone who is willing to be in the office for so few hours.

Karol Flannery suggested that Ms. McClure look to other town's administrative staff to see if they would be interested in additional hours

David Cressman suggested that the advertisement be put in Town Talk and other town social media.

Sandra Venner asked if any member of the Board would be willing to help with the minutes so as to free up some of Ms. McClure's time until we hire a new administrative assistant.

Thomas Abisalih stated that he would give it a try.

2. MBTA Communities Legislation

Denise McClure provided the Board with an overview of the updated legislation and the steps the Town has completed thus far in order to remain in compliance. The Town has submitted the Action Plan by the deadline date and will be working in the coming months to begin the process of developing zoning to comply with the legislation.

3. Open Space Committee

Sandra Venner presented the request from the Open Space Committee to utilize MVPC technical hours. The Town is allotted a certain number of technical hours each fiscal year and no hours have been used at this point.

A motion was made to permit the Open Space Committee to utilize 14 hours of technical service from the MVPC. 1st Thomas Abisalih, 2nd Karol Flannery, All in favor 3-0 and 1 abstention (Sandra Venner)

4. MVPC Commissioner

Sandra Venner explained to the Board that there is a vacancy for a Commissioner on the MVPC from the Town of Merrimac. She asked if any Board member would be interested in filling the vacancy

Thomas Abisalih questioned when the Commission meets

Sandra Venner stated that the Commission meets on a Thursday morning once a month

Thomas Abisalih stated that he would consider filling the vacancy

5. Conservation Commission Agent Hours

Sandra Venner informed the Board that the Conservation Commission has requested additional hours for their agent be included in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget. The Commission has asked if the Planning Board would support their request. Ms. Venner further stated that she personally as a member of both the Planning Board and the Open Space Committee sent a letter of support.

A motion was made to send a letter supporting an increase in hours for the Conservation Commission Agent. 1st Karol Flannery, 2nd Thomas Abisalih, All in favor 4-0

WARRANTS/FINANCIAL

1. Poplar Circle Escrow Account Release – A motion was made to release the remaining funds in the Poplar Hill escrow account 1st Karol Flannery, 2nd Thomas Abisalih, All in favor 4-0
2. Warrant – Invoice from Horsley Witten – Abbey Road/22 Bear Hill Road
3. Warrant – Invoice from Horsley Witten – 118 East Main Street
4. Warrant – Invoice from Horsley Witten – 1 Jana Way

COMMUNICATIONS, NOTICES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Surrounding Towns

1. City of Haverhill – Flexible Development Special Permit for Scotland Road

Confirm Next Meeting:

The next meetings of the Planning Board will be on February 21, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:20 PM. Motion to approve adjournment, 1st Karol Flannery, 2nd David Cressman. All in favor 4-0