

# **Town of Princeton, MA Planning Board**

## **Meeting Minutes April 20, 2022**

### **Town Hall Annex and GoToMeeting**

*Board Members present in-person:* Ian Catlow, Rud Mason, John Mirick, Ann Neuburg, Tom Sullivan, and Alternate Lisa Drexhage.

*Board Members absent:* Alternate Corey Burnham-Howard

*Public Attendees present in-person:* Joya Mutti, Nancy Olesin (for public hearing)

*Public Attendees present via Go-To-Meeting:* none (Nancy Olesin originally telephoned-in, but then attended in person)

**Call to order:** 7:35

### **Public Hearing**

The Board held a public hearing on the application of Joya Mutti for a Home Occupation. Because the Home Occupation will be in her detached barn, Section XVIII.3(A)(2) of the Zoning By-Laws requires a special permit. Any use requiring a special permit also requires site plan review. The Board combined the public meeting on site plan review with the public hearing on the special permit.

Joya Mutti outlined her plans to offer workshops for art, décor, and furniture refinishing, with seasonal exhibitions. She hopes to have 15 or more total students, but with space limitations probably not more than 8-9 in any one class. She will be the only teacher, although in the future she might involve an assistant. She expects that classes will be weekday evenings and weekends.

Other than adding a window and some downward-directed lighting for parking by the barn, no exterior changes are planned for the barn. Some gravel or crushed stone could be added in front of the barn to level and firm up an expanded area for parking.

Nancy Olesin had some questions concerning hours of operation and parking, which were addressed by Joya Mutti. Classes will end at 8:30 PM. There will be sufficient parking for students taking classes. For exhibitions, visitors will be asked to park off-street if possible, and only on one side of the street. The Chair commented that parking is a site plan issue, and can be revisited if it is a problem.

The Chair closed the public hearing at 8:10 PM. The Board reviewed the information presented by the Applicant, and the provisions of the Zoning By-Laws for Home Occupations and Site Plan Review. Because of the logistical issues associated with COVID and the interest of the Applicant in moving forward as quickly as possible, the Board agreed that the Chair should sign the decision on behalf of the Board.

**MOTION** to Issue Special Permit with site plan review and authorize the Chair to sign for Board

Motion: Ian Catlow; second Ann Neuburg Vote: unanimous

## **Review and Approve Regular Meeting Minutes of March 23, 2022**

**MOTION** to accept minutes as drafted.

Motion: Ian Catlow; second Ann Neuburg: Vote: unanimous (Rud Mason, Tom Sullivan abstain - not present at 3/23/22 meeting)

## **Housing Production Planning**

Ann Neuburg reported that her committee is seeking suggestions for locations for additional housing. This dovetails with housing issues being reviewed by Master Plan working group, and high density zoning mandated by M.G.L. 40A sec 3A.

## **High Density Zoning**

The recent amendment to Ch. 40A Sec. 3A requires MBTA Communities to have at least 50 acres zoned for high density housing – 15 units per acre. Draft regulations were issued for comment by end of March. As a town adjacent to towns with MBTA rail stations, Princeton is an MBTA Community. The statutory language refers to Title 5 restrictions, but the draft regulations provide no guidance. Princeton is a community dependent on wells and septic systems, with thin soil and bedrock close to or protruding from the surface, high density zoning is impractical. The Chair passed out copies of comments submitted to the Secretary of the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development from concerned municipalities and organizations.

General feeling of the Board was that high density zoning will not work in Princeton. Tom Sullivan observed that one branch of state government has been working hard to conserve watershed land while this high-density initiative threatens watershed purity. Ian Catlow commented that there are “mini treatment” plants available, but at a significant cost. It is not at all clear that there are water sources for high density zoning.

CMRPC is taking the lead. If Princeton is required to designate a high density overlay district, then area along Rt 31 from East Princeton north is closest to MBTA station, but would probably be the hardest to develop. Best location for concentration of population would probably include Post Office Place, auto museum, PMLD, and vacant land north of PMLD. Total area is well over 50 acres and could be zoned as an overlay district.

## **Solar Generation Working Group**

John Mirick reported that the Solar Generation Working Group has had an initial meeting. He represents Planning Board on the Working Group which is looking into what would be involved in using the old landfill as a 1 megawatt site. Concept being considered is to lease the site to a

private company that could take advantage of tax incentives and sell power to the grid until Princeton's supply contract has run out. PMLD might then acquire the facility. As a facility leased to a private company, the project would probably require a special permit from the ZBA for "light manufacturing" while a facility generating power used by Princeton is an "as of right" use under Section III.1(D) of the Zoning By-Laws. There is some suggestion that some adjacent DCR land and a long, narrow town-owned strip on Rt 62 might be additional solar generation sites. Working Group is in very early stages of looking into access, construction, transmission, and contractual issues.

**Upcoming meeting May 18, 2022**

Unless something comes up which needs an earlier meeting, the next meeting will be May 18, 2022, in the Town Hall Annex at 7:30.

**Meeting adjourned** at 9:15 p.m.

**MOTION** to adjourn.

- Motion: Ian Catlow; 2d: Ann Neuburg Vote: unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

John Mirick