

Town of Princeton, MA Planning Board

Meeting Minutes November 2, 2022

Town Hall Annex and GoToMeeting

Board Members present in-person: Ian Catlow, Rud Mason, John Mirick, and Alternate Lisa Drexhage

Board Members present remotely: Ann Neuburg

Public Participation, in person and remote: none

Call to order: 7:30 PM

ANR Plan Reviews

There were no ANR plans to review.

Review and Approve Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2022

MOTION to approve minutes

Motion: Ann Neuburg; second; Lisa Drexhage

Vote: unanimous

Solar Energy Systems

The Chair reported on several informal comments he had received on the draft of a possible solar by-law circulated after the October 19, 2022 meeting. All comments related to small scale systems (up to 1,750 square feet). For a free-standing system, the setbacks for a small scale system are the same as the setback for any structure. The definition of small scale came from the model solar by-law circulated by the Commonwealth, and should be more than sufficient to provide electricity for a residence. The Board discussed whether vegetative screening had to be 10 feet high when installed, which could be expensive. A free-standing system will require site plan approval so there will be an opportunity for the Planning Board, the owner, and neighbors to discuss site-specific screening, including size of shrubs/trees when planted.

It was the consensus of the Board that the draft by-law is ready for a public hearing in early 2023 in preparation for the warrant for the May 2023 Town Meeting.

High Density Zoning as MBTA Community

The Board reviewed a further draft of a possible by-law prepared by the Chair following the discussion of issues at the October 19 meeting. The overlay area on the southerly side of Route 140 (Redemption Rock Trail North) between Hobbs Road and Mirick Road used in the draft for illustrative purposes is probably 80 acres, which is more than is required by the guidelines from DHCD, and includes some DCR land in the southwesterly corner which cannot be used for residences. There are no existing residences in the illustrative overlay area, but there are some residences on the northerly side of Route 140 west of the intersection with

Route 31 (Fitchburg Road) across from the illustrative overlay area. After lengthy discussion, it was the consensus of the Board that the overlay area ought to end at the intersection of Route 31 and Route 140, which would result in approximately 40 acres, a portion of which is DCR land. It might be appropriate to make the back boundary of the overlay area the property line with DCR, and reduce the rear lot setback requirement.

The Board briefly reviewed the other revisions which responded to the discussion at the October 19, 2022 meeting. No formal action was taken, but it was the consensus that, apart from deciding on the boundary for the overlay area and possible modification of the setback when DCR land was involved, the draft was ready for inclusion in the Town's "action plan" for submission to DHCD in January. Although it will be clear that anything submitted as part of the action plan is only a draft, DHCD may provide comments on draft zoning amendments.

The Chair reported that DHCD is presenting a Zoom program on Ch. 40A sec. 3A on November 3, 2022, and will circulate the Zoom link. There is ample time to revise the draft by-law before the Town's deadline for submitting an action plan.

Housing Production Plan Committee

Ann Neuburg reported that the HPPC's plan should be ready next week. Discussion of the plan with HPPC will be the focus of the Board's November 16, 2022 meeting. HPPC will post an agenda for HPPC.

Master Plan

Ann Neuburg reported that the Master Plan Committee had made a presentation using GoToMeeting on the work to date. Sarah O'Brien from CMRPC has spoken informally with some members of the Board about some of the issues that will be covered in the Master Plan. There is no specific target date for completion of a draft plan.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be Wednesday, November 16, 2022, at 7:30 in the Town Hall Annex. It will be a joint meeting with the Housing Production Plan Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

MOTION to adjourn passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

John Mirick

Documents reviewed: Discussion Draft 10/31/22 of High Density Zoning