TOWN OF STOUGHTON
MA 02072

Stoughton Town Hall
10 Pearl Street
(781) 341-1300 X9201
John Charbonneau, Town Planner

Planning Board:
Joseph Scardino, Chairman
Daniel Kelly, Vice Chairman
Lynne Jardin
Jonathan Garland
Sennesie Kabba

PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES
THURSDAY, June 11, 2020

The Stoughton Planning Board met on Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the Yaitanes Meeting Room, 10 Pearl Street, Stoughton, MA 02072.

The Following Members were Present:
Joseph Scardino, Chairman
Daniel Kelly
Lynne Jardin
Sennesie Kabba
Jonathan Garland

Also present were: John Charbonneau, Town Planner.

The Planning Board meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Motion by Ms. Jardin to open the public meeting, seconded by Mr. Kelly. Approved 5-0-0.

Motion by Ms. Jardin to open Item #1 Chairman’s Comments, seconded by Mr. Kelly. Approved 5-0-0.

Item #1. Chairman’s Comments.

Chairman Scardino welcomed everyone to the Planning Board meeting of June 11, 2020 and explained the procedure for making comments during the meeting. He then announced that we would defer the rest of the comments to Town Planner John Charbonneau.

Mr. Charbonneau gave a brief summary of the progress of the SCMUOD rezoning process since the May 28, 2020 Planning Board meeting. He explained that this would be the first of three (3) meetings between the consultants and the major regulatory boards. After tonight, the consultants will meet with the Stoughton Redevelopment Authority (SRA) on Monday, June 15th and the Board of Selectmen on Tuesday, June 16th. The goal is to obtain feedback from the boards on general aspects of the SCMUOD that will help develop questions that will be included
in a survey that will be distributed to the public for their feedback. He then explained that Jeff Davis and Nate Kelly are present at the meeting to discuss the matter with the board a bit later.

**Motion** by Ms. Jardin to open Item #2 ANR Discussion for 576 & 580 Pleasant Street.

**Item #2. ANR Discussion (576 & 580 Pleasant Street).**

The Applicant was represented by their Engineer, Eric Dias. Mr. Scardino explained that the Board had approved the plan at the meeting on May 28th. However, at the time of endorsement, he noticed that the names of the owners of the affected properties were not included. Therefore, he recommended that they be added to the plans and be approved again by the Board for transparency. Discussion ensued. Mr. Kabba asked if abutters were notified about this plan. Mr. Charbonneau explained that ANR’s do not require a public hearing, so abutters do not get notified. Also, the scope of review of an ANR by the Planning Board is very narrow, per Massachusetts General Laws.

**Motion** by Ms. Jardin to accept the ANR Plan and authorize the Chair to endorse the plan on behalf of the Board, seconded by Mr. Kelly. Mr. Kabba withheld his vote due to a perceived lack of transparency. Approved 4-0-0.

Mr. Charbonneau explained to Mr. Dias that he would have the mylar signed by the Chair on Monday and then coordinate delivery of the mylar to him for recording.

**Motion** by Ms. Jardin to open Item #3, SCMUOD Rezoning Discussion, seconded by Mr. Kelly. Approved 5-0-0.

**Item #3. SCMUOD Rezoning Discussion.**

Mr. Charbonneau introduced Jeff Davis and Nate Kelly of Horsley-Witten who are the consulting team working with the Town on the SCMUOD rezoning. Mr. Davis began by summarizing the goals for the discussion, which are to confirm directions that appear to be universally agreed to, determine if there are any other confirmed directions that needs to be added and review various aspects of the SCMUOD area and regulations to obtain general guidance on where the board stands on them.

Mr. Davis then summarized the confirmed directions: the need to rename the district; to create a new baseline zoning district with subdistricts; to conduct a complete rewrite of the zoning regulations; to establish a clearer and simpler permitting process for developers; to ensure consistency within the SCMUOD regulations, ensure that all important terms in the new regulations have clear definitions and that those definitions are included in Section 11 of the Zoning Bylaws; add cross references to other relevant sections of the Zoning Bylaws to ensure clarity; revise the Purpose and Intent to reflect the vision and goals of the Master Plan and the new subdistricts and establish the Planning Board as the Special Perit Granting Authority for the area. Brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Davis then gave a presentation showing the proposed subdistrict boundaries. The area that is currently the Central Business District (CBD) would be referred to as the "Core". The boundaries of the "Core" would be consistent with the existing boundaries of the CBD. This would be the area where the most dense mix of uses and dimensions would be allowed. The setbacks would be the least of the subdistricts, the allowed building height would be the highest and the mix of uses would be the most flexible. The minimum lot sizes would also be small...
than the other subdistricts. The next area discussed would be called the “Flex” area. These areas would be located to the west and south of the “Core” as well as to the east and south of the “Core”. The majority of these areas is currently zoned “Industrial” and “Business”. In these areas, the dimensional regulations would be slightly less flexible than those of the “Core”, with modest setback requirements, larger minimum lot sizes and a lesser and slightly different menu of allowed uses. In this area, the Town may want to consider allowing some light manufacturing uses. It may also want to consider the allowance to multi-family residential only buildings. Discussion ensued regarding the proposed boundary of the “Flex” areas. There is a possibility that the northwest line of the “Flex” area may be moved to the east along Rose Street rather than along the railroad tracks. The last subdistrict would be called the “Transition” area and would serve as a transition from the “Flex” area to areas outside of the SCMUOD zoned residential. Overall, the Board agreed with the proposed boundaries but requested that future maps show the street names more prominently for reference.

Mr. Davis then began a discussion of general use categories in the subdistricts. He used the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Core</th>
<th>Flex</th>
<th>Transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant/Café</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Office</td>
<td>Yes (upper floors only)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Yes (upper floors only)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service (barber, tailor)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maker Space</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment (theater, etc.)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Parking (primary use)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion ensued. The Board raised the question of why professional offices would be allowed only on upper floors. Mr. Kelly explained that the first floor of buildings in town centers are normally better-occupied with more dynamic uses that will generate foot traffic for other establishments in the area. The Board replied that having a professional office on the ground floor is preferable to having it be vacant. Further discussion ensued. Mr. Charbonneau encouraged the Board to think about which uses it would want to encourage in the SCMUOD and consider allowing the most desirable uses by right through Site Plan Approval to provide a simpler, more transparent permitting process for developers.

Mr. Davis then initiated a discussion regarding dimensional regulations. The Board agreed that buildings in the “Core” should have no front setback requirements. They also agreed that the front setback requirements would increase in the “Flex” areas and even more so in the “Transition” areas. Mr. Charbonneau mentioned the discussion that was held with the Downtown Redevelopment Task Force regarding lot size and that the lot size should not change; rather, property owners should be offered more flexibility to develop the properties with the lot sizes they have. Mr. Scardino indicated that there may be interest by the Town in allowing maximum building heights in the “Core” district higher than four (4) stories and that it would enhance the potential for development. It depends on how the building is designed and that providing visual renderings of what such buildings would look like in relation to existing buildings will be essential to obtain public support. Further discussion ensued. Mr. Garland supported this concept, stating that the Town needs to take steps to become more “business
friendly”. The building height, affordable housing and open space requirements were identified as most significant hindrances to development.

Mr. Davis stated that the previous discussion was a good transition into the next topic of open space and public space. The Board agreed that the current requirement for open space with all proposed projects in the downtown isn’t effective. In fact, in some cases, it causes creation of areas that are too small for any meaningful purpose and can actually decrease public safety. There is interest in establishing regulations that would contribute to more usable open space, whether it be in the form of a large Town common or other types of usable space such as wider sidewalks or “pocket parks”. Discussion ensued.

The last item for discussion was parking. Mr. Davis explained that there are many methods available to address parking in the downtown. They include eliminating the minimum parking requirements altogether to allow property owners to find their own creative solutions, eliminate the minimum parking requirements in certain area like the core area, reduce or eliminate the minimum parking requirements where an applicant provide a written “Parking Strategy, provide developers with a list of possible acceptable strategies to address their parking needs and allowing paid parking lots and/or structure(s). Mr. Horsfall also mentioned the possibility of allowing parking to be provided under the proposed structure. The feasibility would be on a case-by-case basis depending on the groundwater level. It may also be cost prohibitive. Another idea that was discussed was the use of a “scissor lift” that would allow vehicle to be parked vertically. This concept may also be cost prohibitive for developers. Discussion ensued and it was also mentioned that developers are learning that many tenants of residential downtown units don’t mind the idea of having to park some distance from their apartment/condominium. The Board also discussed the idea that there is not adequate parking supply in the downtown area as not completely accurate. Mr. Kelly mentioned that there may not be adequate identification of available parking as well as signage directing motorists to the parking. Mr. Charbonneau then mentioned that there may be available on-street parking spaces that motorists don’t feel safe utilizing or may be inconveniently located. One example is the on-street spaces in front of the building that contains the thrift store on Pearl Street across from Town Hall. Motorists coming through the traffic signal northbound along Pearl Street may not notice those spaces until they have passed them. At that point it is too late and inconvenient to turn around to park in them.

Lastly, Mr. Davis and Mr. Charbonneau outlined the next steps in the rezoning process. The consultants will meet with the Select Board and the Redevelopment Authority next week to obtain their feedback. Then a draft survey will be prepared and reviewed by the working group and the DRTF. Once finalized, the survey will be distributed in late June and will be available for approximately three (3) weeks.

**Item #4. February 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

The Board reviewed the draft meeting minutes for the meeting on February 27, 2020. Mr. Scardino recommended several minor edits.

**Motion** by Mr. Kelly to approve the meeting minutes with the proposed edits, seconded by Ms. Jardin. Approved 5-0-0.
ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Garland to Adjourn, seconded by Mr. Kelly. Motion Approved 5-0-0.