



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

#### Community Planning and Development Commission

Date: 2023-02-13

Time: 7:30 PM

Building: Town Hall

Location: Hybrid Meeting – Zoom and Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Hybrid Meeting

Version: Final

Attendees: Members: Heather Clish, Chair (remote); John Weston, Pamela Adrian, Tony D'Arezzo – Associate

**Members - Not Present:** None

#### **Others Present:**

Community Development Director Andrew MacNichol, Town Manager Fidel Maltez, Community Services Director Jenna Fiorente, Facilities Director Joe Huggins, Mark Novak, Stephen Crisafulli, Megan Donahue, Carlo Bacci, Jackie McCarthy, Stephen Crisafulli

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Mary Benedetto

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### Topics of Discussion:

#### **MEETING HELD IN THE SELECT BOARD ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA ZOOM**

Ms. Clish called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM.

Mr. MacNichol gave an overview of the hybrid meeting set up and procedures.

#### **Continued Public Meeting, Minor Site Plan Review Birch Meadow Complex, Phase One Improvements**

Ms. Clish opened the continued public meeting for a Minor Site Plan Review at Birch Meadow Complex. Mr. Mark Novak, Ms. Megan Donahue, and Mr. Stephen Crisafulli of Activitas Design were present on behalf of the application. Also, in attendance was Town Manager Fidel Maltez, Town Engineer Ryan Percival, Facilities Director Joe Huggins and Community Services Director Jenna Fiorente, all who have helped manage the project to date.

The discussion started with a summary of the Commission's prior issues with the new curb cut, the possible necessary striping for busses. Ms. Clish stated that there was a meeting with school staff and Mr. Crisafulli summarized that they met with the principals of both school and the police department to discuss and the final decision was to make that curb cut exit only with a swing gate and will be opened for specific events or games by event. Therefore, on a day-to-day basis the entrance will be closed but will have no parking in front of it. The spots for busses aren't intended to be permanently striped, but the area can be closed off for bus stacking in that area based on event. Mr. Weston followed up clarifying that his asking of this question was related to the fact that outside of events where administrators will decide about the busses that this parking lot functions as a public parking lot and on days where busses may need to park there later will they be blocking those four spots that would be blocked by busses? It's not a reason to reject the project, just want to make sure everyone involved is aware. The Commission members stated that while the use of those 4 parking spaces isn't an issue for Activitas, that the Town staff should consider how to manage them based on events and a further discussion ensued



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

about the times and types of events at the complex. Mr. Novak indicated that when they were originally envisioning the parking lot they imagined busses dropping off and not parking there, so it's up to the Town how they want to use that space.

Mr. D'Arezzo requested to be walked through the types of lighting being used on site as he had questions about the types of lights and height of the poles. Mr. Crisafulli detailed where that information can be found in the lighting/electrical plans. Mr. D'Arezzo asked if the parking lot lights would be controlled separately from the fields and be on timers. Mr. Crisafulli stated they were on their own system and would be controlled by the Town with regards to when they would be on. Ms. Clish asked about the Type S3 lights that would be on the path, and making sure that the max color would be adjusted to be in line with international dark sky requirements and Mr. Crisafulli assured her that would be adjusted as requested.

Mr. D'Arezzo asked for clarification about what could be done with the pole in the pathway. Mr. Novak stated that after looking into it further it just isn't possible to be moved because of the crucial electrical on the pole and that it would require them to redo everything around the softball field. However, at the distribution panel for the walkway lights they are installing, everything is set up for the future to redo the softball lighting. It just wasn't in the current phase budget. Ms. Adrian wanted to know when the next Phase would take place. Mr. Novak indicated it was up to the Town. Mr. Weston clarified for her that the softball portion was listed under the vision which would be the third phase of the project indicating it's not a community priority, nor has it been a Town priority as it took so long for the Town to get back to this project. Ms. Adrian asked if the pole in the softball field was a safety hazard, Mr. Weston indicated he believed it was even though others obviously disagree, though the pole does have padding on it.

Town Manager Mr. Maltez spoke about the new momentum he has sensed around the project and though he doesn't have the long view that local citizens do, he does feel that the engagement, forums, and surveys done by Jenna and others led them to this Phase. While they plan to continue to engage the community around their priorities, a Town priority will continue to be Birch Meadow. The Town has had a capital plan for some time and there has been \$2.5mn dollars sitting in FY25 for some time, but thanks to ARPA they were able to move it up. He suggested that if the Commission members felt very strongly that the softball field improvement should be moved up then they can take it to Town Meeting, and that there is still the intention to spend the Fiscal Year 25 funds on the next phase of the project.

Ms. Jenna Fiorente spoke a bit about the intentions for Phase 2 which are to bring priorities from recreation and from the community together and decide what should be included. She stated for the next phase they would love to have either Mr. MacNichol or another CPDC member as part of the working group so as to be able to address their concerns earlier.

The Commission reviewed the draft decision.

Ms. Clish asked clarification on the phrase "night sky friendly" vs. dark sky compliant. Mr. MacNichol clarified that dark sky compliant is in line with that organization's standards while "night sky friendly" just means downface lighting, perhaps not fully up the dark sky seal, but is an effort to match those requirements. Ms. Clish requested the language be changed to dark sky compliant, specifically on the lighting on the pathway.

Mr. D'Arezzo requested some other minor language changes to a few other items.



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

***Ms. Adrian made a motion to approve the Minor Site Plan Review for Birch Meadow Drive as amended. Mr. Weston seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0-0.***

### **Continued Public Hearing, 40R Plan Review** **25 Haven Street, 25 Haven Street LLC**

Ms. Adrian read the request for a continuance of the public hearing, submitted by the Applicant, into the record.

***Mr. Weston made a motion to continue the public hearing for 40R Plan Review at 25 Haven Street to Monday March 13, 2023 at 9pm. Mr. D'Arezzo seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0-0.***

### **Housing Production Plan Review**

Mr. MacNichol stated that the draft Housing Production Plan is nearly complete. He received a formal version this afternoon and noted a deep review will be conducted prior to submittal. He noted that Nicole Lambert of consultant firm Anser Advisory has done a fantastic job on researching available programs and support services, which are detailed in the strategies section of the plan. He continued that the plan contains the most recent data on demographics and population statistics, the housing market and the local subsidized housing inventory (SHI). Goals and Strategies were separated into three overarching services: Regulations and Development; Funding and Resources; and Leadership and Education. Each area maintains goals and relevant strategies to achieve such. The plan received approval from the Reading Select Board on Tuesday January 24, 2023.

Mr. D'Arezzo asked some questions about a few of the specific properties listed on Page 28 and Mr. MacNichol stated he would investigate to confirm that the numbers are correct. Mr. Weston stated that overall the plan is really great. He pointed out that there is language in the plan about adopting an environmental justice district, which is not the correct language. He noted that the population projections particularly around school age children are very interesting and something to keep in mind to use in future discussions. As well, the needs of an aging population will need to be addressed in addition to workforce housing.

Mr. MacNichol noted that both Staff and Consultant will continue review of the plan for additional language opportunities and any needed corrections. The plan will be submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) before the end of the week. He thanked the working group, public members and CPDC, who provided insight and comment to the plan development.

***Ms. Adrian made a motion to adopt the Housing Production Plan with amendments. Mr. D'Arezzo seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0-0.***

### **Executive Session** **With respect to GC Fodera Contracting, Inc. v. CPDC (459 Main St litigation)**

Ms. Adrian made a motion to enter Executive Session under Purpose Three, relative to the litigation involving 459 Main Street, because an Open Session may have a detrimental impact on the litigating position of the public body, and to invite Community Development Director Andrew MacNichol, and to return to Open Session and continue on with the meeting at the conclusion of the Executive Session. Mr. Weston seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0-0.

The CPDC entered Executive Session at 8:30 PM. The CPDC returned to Open Session at 8:50 PM.



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

### **Other Business**

Mr. MacNichol updated the Commission that the Action Plan was submitted to DHCD on MBTA Communities. Next steps for staff are to dig into the data to build scenarios. Mr. D'Arezzo requested to work the plan backwards to be able to meet the milestones needed and he stated that the November Town Meeting is for zoning changes.

Mr. MacNichol brought up and Ms. Clish clarified that The Select Board Chair has brought up the ideas of a strategic plan for the Town as an entity. Ms. Jackie McCarthy concurred that it is coming up for the Select Board. Mr. Carlo Bacci stated that the Select Board is being careful in deciding how to move forward on it and will keep the CPDC in mind.

Mr. MacNichol brought up that it is a 6-person board with 5 members and 1 associate, now another member down, to only 3 members with 1 associate so barely a quorum. Most votes require only 3 votes, so while the board can continue functioning they will be trying to fill the empty seats.

Mr. MacNichol indicated that the ability for the board to attend the meetings remotely might be expiring at the end of March, though there is a push from other planners to allow permanent remote board attendance. He plans to fully keep hybrid meetings going, although not all board members would be able to attend remotely. The Commission members strongly supported continuing hybrid meetings, specifically so members of the public could attend remotely.

### **Other Business** **Meeting Minutes**

***The Commission reviewed the minutes for October 17, 2022 and November 7, 2022, and made changes. Ms. Adrian made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/17/22 and 11/7/22 as amended. Mr. Weston seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0-0.***

### **Adjournment**

***Ms. Adrian made a motion to adjourn at 9:18 PM. Mr. D'Arezzo seconded and it was approved 4-0-0.***

#### Documents Reviewed at the Meeting:

- Minor Site Plan Review, Birch Meadow Complex
  - Civil Plan Set, dated 1/27/23
  - Site Rendering, received 2/3/23
  - Draft Decision, dated 2/6/23
- 40R Plan Review, 25 Haven Street
  - Request to Continue hearing, dated 1/30/23
- Housing Production Plan Review
  - Draft Housing Production Plan, dated January 31, 2023
- Meeting Minutes
  - October 17, 2022
  - November 7, 2022