

**Town of Freetown  
Planning Board**

Minutes of the Tuesday, October 3, 2023 Meeting  
Held at the Police Station Community Room, 15 Memorial Drive

**Present:** James Frates, Chad Carvalho, Christopher Mello, David Crose and Steven Tripp.

**Absent:** None

**Call to Order:** James Frates called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**Continued Site Plan Review and Special Permit – 34 County Road**

Mr. Frates opened the public meeting for 34 County Road.

Motion made by David Crose, seconded by Chad Carvalho, to continue to October 17, 2023 6:00 p.m. at the Police Station.

**Minutes**

A motion was made by David Crose, seconded by Chad Carvalho, to approve the 09.05.2023 and 09.19.2023 minutes as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

**Planning & Land Use Administrator Update**

Victoria Alfaro gave an update on the complete street/Four Corners intersection. She stated that she is trying to connect with Environmental Partners (EP), to know what options are a definite and what is allowed. Mrs. Alfaro stated that 12-hour traffic counts are needed. She is trying to shoot for the May deadline to apply. Mr. Frates asked if selectman would be in charge of this and put proposals together for the board's recommendations. Mrs. Alfaro stated that she thinks it will be the opposite, board will make recommendations but she will double check on that.

Mrs. Alfaro gave an update on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvement grant program. The self-evaluation and transition plan were completed, approved and adopted by the Board of Selectman. The grant was closed out and reimbursed. Mrs. Alfaro had applied for two implementation grants. One grant is for a LULA and the other is for bathroom renovations at the Town Hall. We will know about the awards in December. Mr. Crose asked for clarification on what the little elevator at Council on Aging (COA) is. Mrs. Alfaro explained that it is the LULA elevator which is a limited-use-limited-application elevator. Mr. Crose stated there was talk about building a new COA and if that was still happening. Mrs. Alfaro stated that it is at a standstill, in her opinion. She had consulted with Rebecca and Deb about this and if COA did move into a new building then the current building would get repurposed and still be used. She explained that long-term was considered and what would make sense.

Mrs. Alfaro gave update on local hazard mitigation plan. It is currently in the gathering data phase but it is on track to be completed in February, which is ahead of the contract end date. She explained that it is about how to mitigate local hazard of weather-related incidents. If the plan is in place and something would happen then we would be able to get the funds to help mitigate the issues. If plan is not in place, then it would be harder to get the help. Mr. Crose asked if this would include evacuation signs. Mrs. Alfaro answered that the plan itself would not. That point had not been reached to develop the mitigation strategies, currently still gathering data.

Mrs. Alfaro reminded the board about the safe routes to school project, which is a share use path from Memorial Drive. It is still at the 10% concept design phase. But after today, she would send a few more plan sets of the police station building and the school so they have more data and that will start to get developed. It is a 5-year process, constructed in 2027.

Mrs. Alfaro gave update on the Master Plan. Open house is planned for October 11, 2023. Surveys are still accepted, public input is crucial. At the open house, Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD) would be there and would be doing a presentation about what a master plan is. There will be boards set up to go over the different elements of the master plan.

Mrs. Alfaro gave update on the open space and recreation plan. It was approved by the state and now is certified for the next seven years. Implementing the plan is next. Open space and recreation plan is for conservation and recreation land. With this approval, we can get grants to acquire parcels, renovate existing parks, and create new parks.

Mrs. Alfaro gave update on the MassDOT speed feedback signs that are for the schools. The signs are to track speed and send data do MassDOT. We are waiting for the bike signs to be delivered. Those signs are for the new bike law that just passed. A few of those signs will be put up on the active roadways.

Mrs. Alfaro gave an update on MBTA communities. SRPEDD should have recommendations by November. The state emailed and said they fixed data and updated on website. It reduced the requirement from 40% in ½ mile to the 20%. Emailed that they updated the shape files for the data SRPEDD would use and to have exact data.

Mrs. Alfaro gave an update on the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). Year five was completed for the permit and sent to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The by-law is on for the upcoming special town meeting.

Mr. Crose asked where King Philip's Cave is. Mrs. Alfaro stated that it is at 30 Washburn Road. Solar is there but the cave is in the back and was supposed to be deeded. In the site plan review decision, one acre was to be deeded but the Historical Commission said it was three acres to be deeded, but no acres had been deeded to the town. Mrs. Alfaro stated that she was not sure what authority the board would have to say that they need to deed three acres, if it was not in their plans. The Historical Commission might need to do that.

#### **Informal Meeting – 0 Chace Road, Map 228 Lot 8**

Mr. Frates explained that it is a past solar project that was approved but the permit had expired. Azu Etoniru from ET Engineering explained that it is a solar array on Jeff DeMoranville's property and was approved in February 2021. Project was sold for construction and financing fell through. Alan Alves now got it back, then Covid with delivery of materials did not help. He didn't realize it expired in time to file for an extension, now did not qualify for the permit tolling. Site conditions have not changed, but statute says two years or less can be extended, can not extend something already expired. He is hoping to reapply for it and not have to go thru peer review since conditions have not changed. Mr. Frates stated that they have extended a lot of solar permits recently and he is on board with it. He advised that he reapply, do the presentation just like last time and will not make him go thru peer review again but the waivers would have to be voted on again.

#### **Any other business to properly come before the Board**

Mrs. Alfaro shared that in the future, to look at rules, regulations and applications and to make needed changes. Online permitting will not happen for a while in Conservation department. Building has online, Board of Health is next and then Conservation. Mr. Frates asked if it is a cost issue. Mrs. Alfaro stated that it is not a cost issue. She stated how the online permit is a great tool, it beneficial and modern. Mr. Frates asked if the forms online are fillable. She stated the forms are not. The applications are rules and regulations and would need to be a public hearing to amend it. She stated how some have appropriate funds and have hired a consultant to look thru rules and regulations and have them update them. There are wording issues that need to be updated to make sure they are clear but concise. Mr. Frates stated that a consultant would be better. Mrs. Alfaro talked about certain requirements always being waived by engineers and need to be updated for the newer data.

#### **Meeting Adjourned**

A motion was made by James Frates, seconded by David Crose, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nicole DeMoranville, Senior Clerk