

**Town of Freetown
Planning Board**

Minutes of the Tuesday, January 2, 2024 Meeting
Held at the Multi-Purpose Senior Center, 227 Chace Road

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

Absent: James Frates

Call to Order: David Crose called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Review and Vote on As-built – 191 Chace Road, Zitano Way

Mr. Crose asked if everything had been done. Donna Zitano, of 191 Chace Road, stated that everything was done. Mr. Tripp asked if Victoria Alfaro had been on site. Mrs. Alfaro stated that she had not been by the site. Mr. Mello stated that everything looks good, paved apron and the pole had been relocated.

A motion was made by Christopher Mello, seconded by Chad Carvalho, to approve the 12/21/23 as-built plan. The motion carried unanimously.

Refund Cash Surety – 191 Chace Road, Zitano Way

Mr. Crose explained that the cash surety was originally asked for until the pole was moved and relocated. He stated that since all the work had been completed, he saw no reason to not release the cash surety. Mr. Tripp asked if a final inspection could be done. Mr. Carvalho and Mr. Mello stated that they both drive by that site every day and had seen that everything was completed.

A motion was made by Christopher Mello, seconded by Chad Carvalho, to approve the cash surety refund of \$20,000 plus interest. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion on Accessory Apartment By-law

Mr. Crose suggested to push this subject to the next meeting so that Mr. Frates could be present for the discussion. There is a current by-law and we are looking to revise it. Mr. Mello added that it would make the town more affordable for younger people or the senior population.

Planning and Land Use Administrator Update

Mrs. Alfaro explained the updates of projects being done at the office.

There was an update on Complete Streets for the Four Corners Intersection. It was narrowed down to two options; a mini roundabout and a signalized intersection. There was a demonstration performed on December 27th. Environmental Partners (EP) will adjust the concept slightly based on what was seen during the demonstration. Mr. Crose asked if any land would be taken with either of the options. A survey was performed of that land for the sewer extension project. Data would be used and an update would be given if there would be any impacts. A grant would be submitted for this project.

She gave an update on the Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvement Grant Program. She applied for a grant for a Limited Use Limited Application elevator (LU/LA) at the Council on Aging (COA) and bathroom renovations at the Town Hall. Mr. Crose asked if there was any discussion for putting bathrooms in the Guilford H. Hathaway library. There had not been any discussion due to no running water in that building but there has been discussion about a joint building for the library. Notification of awards should be mid-January. Mr. Crose asked if the modification of the bathrooms at the Town Hall would take away space from an office. Office space could be taken, depending on the option that is decided on.

There was an update on the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). It is half way thru the planning process. One public workshop was held at a Board of Selectmen meeting and another would be held once a draft plan is completed. The anticipated completion date is mid-March of 2024.

The update on Safe Routes to School was that a design consultant was assigned. They are doing research and it is still in process.

There was an update on the Master Plan. An interactive map was posted. The traveling workshop series started. There was a session held at the COA and positive feedback was received. The seniors that attended, expressed that they want senior housing but are ok with amending the accessory apartment by-law. One senior had mentioned tiny homes. Mr. Mello commented that he had seen modular homes that are smaller and affordable. He mentioned an area in Raynham that had those types of homes. Mrs. Alfaro suggested to start with zoning first to work toward a different option for seniors. Mr. Mello added that senior housing would be a nice addition, it doesn't add stress to the school system and creates revenue. Some common remarks that had been received are a pharmacy, grocery store, and a recreation center.

There was an update on the Open Space & Recreational Plan. The work is being done toward the plan implementation. There is an existing trail at the back of the COA and next to the ball fields that could be improved. It is wide enough but would need more material put down. There is a Mass Trails Grant that Mrs. Alfaro could apply for to fund the improvements. It only requires a 20% match and then could possibly use federal funds from ARPA.

The update on MassDOT Speed Feedback signs was that signage was installed on Bullock Road. Positive feedback from residents stated that people are slowing down around the school area. Bike signs have also been installed around town. There is a new law that there must be a 4-foot distance to pass a cyclist.

The update on the MBTA Communities is that it is moving forward. SRPEDD should be providing an update for the January 16th meeting. They had a preliminary meeting with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), formerly Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), they will need to approve the district once amended. The deadline is December 31, 2024.

There was an update on the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). We are waiting for the approval from the Attorney General on the by-law before adopting the rules and regulations. Therefore, this was moved to the next meeting.

The update on the Shared Streets project was that we applied for a grant to upgrade and add new ADA curb ramps around town. The notification of award should be announced soon.

The update on the Taunton River Watershed Council was that \$3,600 was received to purchase and install a kayak/canoe rack at Hathaway Park. The rack would be installed soon. The current rack would only hold eight and more racks could be added in the future. Mr. Crose asked what the idea behind it was. Mrs. Alfaro explained that a kayak or canoe would be brought there and stored for the season.

The update on Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) was that an express of interest was submitted for two projects. One project is to do a town wide culvert assessment. The culverts are not mapped throughout the town and most probably need to be replaced. Another project would be evaluating vulnerabilities and options to promote resilience on the Assonet River. This project would be to address flooding issues and what can be done to mitigate it. These are only expressed interest for ideas of a project and they would then contact Mrs. Alfaro if they would be good projects to apply for. In the spring, the board can decide to apply for both or one of the projects.

The update on MassWorks Sewer Extension Design was that there are monthly progress meetings with EP and the Sewer Line Extension Committee. They had talked about having a pump station on Alexandra Drive. The lot is currently under covenant through the Planning Board. The owners owe taxes and we would try to take the property through tax title or do an exchange with accepting the roadway as it is. The estimate for roadway

improvements would be just under \$800,000 and there are drainage issues in the area. James Frates is on the Sewer Line Extension Committee.

The update on the Mass BroadBand Digital Equity Plan was that SRPEDD had a presentation with Mrs. Alfaro and Deborah Pettey. This would be a plan to identify ways to increase digital literacy and access; to help the senior population to understand how to use computers and access computers in the home. It is a new concept and Freetown is one of the first towns to make this plan. Ms. Pettey received a municipal fiber grant and it is in the preliminary stages.

There are side projects happening in the office. The clerk is working on scanning files, then destroying them as record retention and the Board allows. We are refunding old peer review accounts and old cash surety accounts. We are reviewing all permits and figuring out which ones are complete, expired, etc. The clerk is also sorting through the plans in the basement.

There are potential projects that could take place in the near future. The Board should start to think about updating the site plan review by-law, rules and regulations, and by-laws that relate to special permits. We may want to look for a grant or put an article on for the fall special Town meeting for funding to hire a consultant for this project. We should start to look at updating the Planning Board applications and filing requirements. The Board agreed.

Minutes

Mr. Crose had a comment about the minutes. He commented about the subdivision on Walnut Street being three lots and not two. The board agreed. The clerk changed the minutes to the correction.

A motion was made by Christopher Mello, seconded by Chad Carvalho, to approve the 12.05.2023 minutes as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Christopher Mello, seconded by Chad Carvalho, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Nicole DeMoranville, Senior Clerk

