



Hubbardston Massachusetts

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Date: June 7, 2023

Location: 7 Main Street, Slade Building, Hubbardston, MA 01452

Members Present: Kristofer Munroe, Francois Steiger, Bill Homans, Erica Dack, John DeMalia, Peter Russell

Other Attendees: Cathy Hansgate (BOH Chair), Colleen Higgins (BOH Member)

1. Call to Order – 7:05 p.m.

2. Public Meeting – Cannabis odor mitigation plans

a. Chair Munroe summarizes the history of complaints received during the previous growing season, and discussions at the previous meeting regarding odor mitigation plans. He indicates that a letter has been received from Paper Crane Cannabis outlining their mitigation plan, and requests that Boey Bertold (Paper Crane Cannabis) summarize the contents for the Board.

b. Paper Crane Cannabis

Mr. Bertold states that fewer plants will be planted this year, staged in smaller groupings so that they can get them out of the field as quickly as possible this year. He says that they also have an additional building that they can use to store plants. The general plan is to work more efficiently and not get behind when harvesting.

Chair Munroe points out that the Board was unaware of the operational challenges encountered during the last harvest, but they are still accountable to the public. He thinks it would be helpful to have a frank assessment of the situation at harvest time in order to help set reasonable expectations. He encourages Mr. Bertold to keep communications open with the Town if any problems are encountered again this year. BOH Chair Hansgate agrees that setting expectations appropriately will be helpful.

Member Steiger indicates that complaints received by the Board of Health last year were not communicated to the Planning Board immediately, and recommends that any new complaints should be forwarded to both the Planning Board and to the growing operations promptly. He also points out that since there is substantial variability of individual sensitivities to odors, confirming and acting upon odor complaints can be challenging.

Member Steiger would also like clarification on when the plants are harvested, relative to when they begin generating odors in the field. Mr. Bertold indicates that there is a 3-4 week period from the initial production of odors to the maximum point, and that the goal is to harvest the

plants a little bit before the maximum odor production. He is hopeful that their improved planting scheduling this year will avoid having the plants over-ripening in the field.

Member Homans feels that communications will be very important, and wants to be sure that the growing operations are notified if complaints are being received. BOH Chair Hansgate agrees. She also asks Mr. Bertold if any plant composting operations include a cover layer to absorb odors. Mr. Bertold explains that a cover layer of organic barley hulls is used, which acts as a super absorber. Chair Hansgate wonders about other alternatives, if the barley hulls are unavailable. Mr. Bertold indicates that other alternatives like organic hay, rice hulls, and coffee chaff can also be used. Chair Hansgate thinks this will help a lot.

Chair Munroe thanks Mr. Bertold for providing this information and indicates that there is no voting issue, so everybody will just continue on with this growing experiment and see how it goes.

Danielle Arakelian would like to know whether this staggered planting schedule will just lead to an even more extended season of repeated ripenings for eight weeks. Mr. Bertold replies that the odor will always be present late in the season, but the goal of the staggered plantings is to prevent it from becoming overbearing. Ms. Arakelian suggests that it could be a six-week period, Mr. Bertold agrees that it could be. Ms. Arakelian also wants to know whether the Boards have a list of the varieties being planted to confirm whether they are low odor varieties. Chair Munroe requests that Mr. Bertold provide a list of the varieties being grown. Clerk Kresge will provide this list to Ms. Arakelian.

Albert Afonso would like to provide articles regarding air quality/odor mitigation at marijuana farms in Colorado and California as a follow-up to the previous meeting. Chair Munroe feels that this issue was adequately covered at the previous meeting and asks the Board whether they would like additional information. The Board declines to receive additional information.

c. Royal Sun Farm

Chair Munroe states that Damon Schmidt was unable to attend this meeting due to family reasons, but he did submit a letter just before the meeting. He points out that Mr. Schmidt did testify significantly about intended mitigation steps at the previous meeting. He asks what the Board would like to do with this. BOH Chair suggests that a list of varieties being grown be requested, similar to Paper Crane, and that improved communications be suggested as previously discussed.

Member Homans would like to know if we have phone numbers to contact the growers if needed. Chair Munroe thinks that working on a plan for communications will be a task for administrative staff. Clerk Kresge will request additional information from Royal Sun Farm.

3. Royal Sun Farm inquiry about special permit modifications - bathroom facilities and additional greenhouse

- a. Chair Munroe suggests that it will be difficult to evaluate this issue without a representative from Royal Sun Farm present to provide additional details and answer questions. Member

Homans and Clerk Kresge suggest that discussion should probably be deferred for another meeting. The Board agrees that it can be rescheduled for the 6/29 meeting.

4. Conceptual site development plans – Marinelli gravel pits off Pitcherville Rd

- a. Amit Schilgi explains that his group is under contract for purchase of the gravel pit property, and they would like to do development on the site but want to hear what the Town would like to see in that development. He introduces Patrick McCarty (McCarty Engineering), who will assist them in developing conceptual plans. They're not at the point of presenting a plan with a proposed number of units, but they want to exchange concerns and opinions with the Board.

Mr. McCarty talks briefly about current conditions on the property and thinks that development that included stabilization of existing slopes and elimination of dangerous conditions/ATV traffic would be beneficial to the Town. He also points out that part of the conversation would have to be how to get access to Pitcherville Rd. through the Town-owned parcel. He is here to listen tonight, and will be back at a future meeting with conceptual plans.

Chair Munroe indicates that previous thoughts on the Town-owned parcel were for affordable housing or senior housing. Affordable housing funds were expended doing site investigations for a soil contamination problem resulting from a shooting range on the site. If there is a way that some kind of affordable/senior housing option could be incorporated into a development proposal, that would be meaningful to the Board.

Member Homans inquires about the issue of materials that were supposedly trucked in from Worcester and dumped on the Marinelli property years ago. During previous site visits, he has seen quite a few piles of debris and concrete. Mr. Schilgi states that he has not seen piles like that on the property. Mr. McCarty indicates that they would look further into issues like that as they develop any plans.

Nathan Boudreau (Town Administrator) joins the meeting remotely and suggests a follow-up meeting be conducted in the Town Offices to parse out Select Board vs. Planning Board issues. He is wide open to discussing this in more detail from a municipal standpoint and see if there is anything we can do to work together.

Member Steiger would like more information on Mr. Schilgi's development group. Mr. Schilgi states that the group is three private investors incorporated as KSP Builders LLC, comprised of himself, Eyal Preis (also present tonight), and Mark Klinger. Mark Klinger has been a GC for 25 years. They work on moderate sized residential conversions and developments – one current project is conversion of a factory in Fitchburg that had been empty for 25 years to 18 beautiful apartments.

Mr. Preis states that they are serious and did not come here to play. They came to do something good for the Town, and for themselves. They are not volunteers, they are here to make money, but they want to develop the site in a way that makes sense for everybody. They have in mind half of the property in residential housing, and half as a park or golf course as a community resource.

Speaking as an individual, Chair Munroe says that he would like to see the gravel pits developed in some manner, and that he hopes that the recent ATV accident fatality is the last one for that

area. He doesn't have any control or authority over what the Town does with its adjoining parcel on Pitcherville Rd at Lot 57, but he hopes that the Town would come to the table for discussions on that.

Member DeMalia would like to see the area developed into something more than it is currently.

Member Homans is hopeful that some kind of senior housing could be worked into the proposal by working together.

Member Steiger wants to be sure that they are aware that there is no public water and sewer available. Mr. Schilgi and Mr. McCarty are fully aware of this. Member Steiger also points out that some current residents in the Pitcherville Rd. area enjoy a quiet neighborhood, so the challenge will be to create a proposal that is feasible from both a planning perspective and can overcome possible local opposition.

Mr. Schilgi would like clarification on what is meant by senior housing. Chair Munroe thinks that the form of housing could be different as long as it meets some of the needs for existing older residents to downsize from their current house into an environment that would be attractive and affordable. He doesn't think we're talking about a classic 55+ community, but conversations would need to take place to see what would make economic sense and also try to meet some of these needs.

Member Steiger understands that KSP is a for-profit organization, not a charitable organization, but is encouraging them to find a way to blend the needs of the community with those of the business, and find a way to integrate an affordable component.

Chair Munroe points out that the access to Pitcherville Rd through the Town-owned Lot 57 is still a negotiating point, so the Town may have some leverage in making requests for meeting its needs during development of plans that will also make sense from a business standpoint.

5. Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated by Chair

- a. Draft language on agro-tourism bylaw has been received from MRPC and will be discussed further.
- b. Next meeting will be organizational meeting to elect chair.
- c. Representation on other committees will be discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Kresge, Land Use Clerk