

TOWN OF DARTMOUTH PLANNING BOARD



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
May 18, 2020
Teleconference

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Present

Lorri-Ann Miller, Chairman
Kevin Melo, Vice Chairman
Stephen Taylor, Clerk
John Sousa
Margaret Sweet

Christine O'Grady, AICP – Planning Director

Chairman Miller opened the Board's regular meeting at 7:00 p.m.

TOPIC: Coordination efforts between the Planning Board and the DPW

DPW Staff Present:

David Hickox, P.E. Director of Public Works
Tim Barber, Senior Engineer
Paul Duarte, Associate Engineer

Construction Installations and Inspections for Roadways, Driveways, Common Driveways and Aprons

David Hickox explained that the main reason the DPW does the above-referenced inspections is to ensure that the utilities and drainage facilities are put in properly and meet DPW specifications. He noted that OSRD subdivisions and private lanes are causing some confusion.

Mr. Hickox expressed concern with private gravel roads. He stated that the Planning Board will approve the gravel road but then after the subdivision is completed, many homeowners look to the DPW to figure out how the road can be paved. It was noted that storm water systems aren't designed for a paved road. He asked the board to keep that in mind.

Mr. Hickox also stressed that the road aprons need to be constructed properly to ensure that the public road is protected.

Discussion ensued. Board members suggested ways to eliminate the confusion between the developers and the DPW. Moving forward, the Planning Director will ensure that there are appropriate notes on the plan until the subdivision regulations can be updated to address the concerns outlined by the DPW.

Mr. Hickox stated that there is a developer who posted a tri party agreement as surety that is requesting surety reductions more often than typical. It was

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suggested that the DPW come up with an inspection schedule for developments that use tri party agreements.

One member questioned if it would make more sense to hire consultants for inspections rather than use the DPW. Mr. Hickox did not think that was a good idea, explaining the importance of institutional knowledge.

Subdivision Sidewalk Requirements

Mr. Hickox stated that he had an intern do a study on the tree vs. sidewalk issue in Town. The report shows that 41 streets were looked at, and 58% of the trees had damaged sidewalks (501 trees). Three options to remedy the problem were listed in the report. The report will be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board. He stated that the damage happens most with older subdivisions with mature trees, and is hoping to find a solution for future subdivision approvals.

Discussion ensued. It was noted that sidewalks are now required to be ADA compliant. R-O-W width was discussed as an option to provide a solution for future subdivisions. The DPW recommended a 50 foot width. The Town's Complete Street priority list was also discussed. Specifying tree species was also explored as a possible solution.

OSRD Subdivisions without Frontage

Mr. Hickox questioned OSRD subdivisions approved without legal frontage. He thought there should be a minimum standard.

Discussion ensued. It was noted the OSRD bylaw allows waivers from design standards. The board wanted the developer to have complete flexibility with its design since the Town received open space in return. Mr. Barber pointed out that the bylaw allows for reduced frontage, but thought that the State required a minimum of 20 feet. The Planning Board will look into this and if it is a requirement, make the appropriate amendments.

Padanaram Bridge

Mr. Hickox stated that a comprehensive evaluation of the bridge was completed this past year. He reviewed the executive summary with the board, and noted that it will be presented to the Select Board as well. He explained that it's difficult to obtain funding from the State because the State looks at traffic volumes and detour lanes. The Padanaram Bridge has low traffic volume compared to other State bridges and doesn't rank high on the State's list.

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Discussion ensued. A board member stated that it is a State error, and stressed that the Padanaram Bridge should be a priority because we are one of less than 15 bridges in the entire state that are required to be kept in the open position for maritime use due to Federal Maritime Laws. He argued that the Padanaram Bridge should actually be a high priority for the State. He noted that he sent a letter to the State in 2018 and will forward his letter to Mr. Hickox. Mr. Hickox stated that he did not believe that MassDOT considered this fact while ranking bridges.

With no further business to discuss, Chairman Miller called for a motion to adjourn.

John Sousa motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Kevin Melo and unanimously voted (roll-call vote). 9:00 p.m. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Kirby, Planning Aide

APPROVED BY:

The Dartmouth Planning Board

Christina O'Riordan

(Planning Director)

during COVID-19

Date of Approval: *6/29/20*