



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Remote via Zoom Video Conferencing

June 10, 2021, at 7:15 PM

1 Present: Tricia Kendall
2 Lakshmi Krishnan
3 Joe Rubertone
4 Deepa Venkat
5 Anna Tesmenitsky
6
7 Others: Peter Matchak, Town Planner
8 Emma Snellings, Assistant Town Planner
9

10

11 ***Call to Order***

12 Tricia Kendall, called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM and reviewed the meeting agenda. She
13 explained that the meeting was being held via Zoom per the Governor's orders to allow public
14 meetings to be held remotely. The meeting is being recorded by WACA TV and Mr. Matchak
15 provided instructions on how to access the video conference meeting access numbers and
16 passcodes.

17

18 **Public Hearing – 0 Megunko Lane Site Plan Review**

19 Mr. Matchak reported that the applicant requested a continuance of the Site Plan Review public
20 hearing.

21

22 Mr. Rubertone made a motion to continue the 0 Megunko Lane public hearing until June 24,
23 2021. The motion was seconded by Ms. Krishnan; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye,
24 Rubertone-aye, Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.

25

26 **Public Hearing – 355 West Union St. Site Plan Review**

27 Mr. Matchak reported that the applicant requested a continuance of the Design Plan Review and Site
28 Plan Review public hearing.

29

30 The members discussed the need to distinguish the requirements for a temporary and a permanent
31 outside dining permit, to set a standard for future applications.

32

33 Ms. Krishnan made a motion to continue the 355 W. Union St. public hearing and Site Plan
34 Review until June 24, 2021. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Krishnan-aye,
35 Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Rubertone-aye, Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.

36

37 **Public Hearing – 123 Winter St. Scenic Road Permit**

38 Ms. Krishnan read the public notice and Ms. Kendall opened the public hearing.

39

40 Mr. Matchak explained that the applicant and homeowner at 123 Winter St. is proposing the limbing
41 of a tree, due to concerns about its overgrown size, and the removal of a pine tree stump. He said
42 that the homeowner stated that approximately six years ago the town Dept. of Public Works (DPW)
43 reviewed the trees at the location and identified the trees on town land and those on the resident's
44 lot. Mr. Matchak noted that there was no official documentation of the review completed by DPW.
45 The homeowner proactively hired an arborist company that had already finished some of the limbing
46 and tree removal work. Mr. Matchak completed a site visit and determined that some of the cut trees
47 were on town land.

48

49 The members viewed photos of the site that showed four large trees at the front of the lot, and a 12ft.
50 to 15 ft. pine tree stump. Ms. Maloney, 129 Winter St., and an abutter identified a tree in the
51 submitted photo that is on her lot.

52
53 Mr. Matchak stated that the requested permit is being sought to bring the remaining work up to par.
54
55 The members provided an overview of the scenic road bylaw and the rules that govern alterations to
56 trees and rock walls in a scenic road right-of-way. There was further discussion about the need to
57 disseminate this information about scenic roads to proactively educate homeowners.
58
59 The members discussed the homeowner's intent when the decision was made to remove the trees.
60 Ms. Kendall mentioned that the homeowner has lived in that home for over 50-years. She also felt
61 that the tree work was completed out of order, likely due to the homeowner's unawareness of the
62 bylaw, and recommended devising a plan to move forward.
63
64 Rob St. Germain felt the homeowner intended to limb the trees due to safety concerns. However,
65 Mr. St. Germain explained that limbing a tree in actuality contributes to its destabilization. He
66 advised the board to deny the permit, as the remaining trees appeared to be healthy.
67
68 Mr. Matchak stated that the town would bear the cost to remove the pine tree stump. Ms.
69 Tesmenitsky suggested replacing the pine tree, as a way to demonstrate the town's involvement
70 in maintaining the scenic road. Ms. Maloney countered that suggestion, as the homeowner would
71 have to assume the ongoing maintenance of the land beneath the tree.
72
73 The members recommended the town remove and cut flush the stump and consult the Tree Warden
74 regarding replanting, the condition of the remaining trees on the lot, and any safety concerns they
75 may pose. Ms. Kendall suggested the possibility of replacing the pine tree in an alternate location on
76 Winter St.
77
78 Mark Dassoni commented on the town's responsibility to maintain the trees in the right-of-way on a
79 scenic road.
80
81 Ms. Kendall recommended continuing the hearing until after the board obtains information on the
82 best way to address the stump and how high to cut it and if grinding is needed, what techniques and
83 policies allow for replanting in that area, ask the homeowner if they would be in favor of planting a
84 smaller tree in that area, and ask the Tree Warden to assess the remaining trees the area any safety
85 concerns.
86
87 Ms. Krishnan made a motion to continue the 123 Winter St. hearing until June 24, 2021. The
88 motion was seconded by Mr. Rubertone; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye,
89 Rubertone-aye, Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.
90
91 **Scenic Tree Bylaw Review and Enforcement**
92 Ms. Kendall indicated that this topic was addressed during the 123 Winter St. Scenic Road
93 Permit discussion.
94
95 **Approval of Minutes**
96 Mr. Rubertone made a motion to approve the minutes from May 13, 2021, as amended. The
97 motion was seconded by Ms. Krishnan; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye,
98 Rubertone-aye, Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.
99
100 **Administrative Matters: future meetings, public hearings**
101 Ms. Kendall requested scheduling a working meeting to discuss the Planning Board's goals
102 for the coming year. She asked the members to think about topics to address. She asked Mr.
103 Matchak to propose a date.
104
105 Ms. Kendall reminded all that Town Meeting will be held on June 12, 2021, and the Planning
106 Board has three warrants on the agenda. Regarding Article 9, Ms. Kendall requested a
107 friendly amendment to the Covered Open Air Front Porch amendment and strike items 7
108 and 8.
109
110 Mr. Rubertone made a motion with regards to the printed and published Article 9 in the
111 Ashland Town Warrant to make a minor amendment and delete numbers 7 and 8. The motion

112 was seconded by Ms. Krishnan; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Rubertone-aye,
113 Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.

114

115 The next Planning Board meetings are scheduled for June 24, 2021, July 15, 2021, and July
116 29, 2021, and maybe virtual, depending on the state legislature.

117

118 **Report from Board Members and Town Planner**

119 None.

120

121 ***Adjournment***

122 Ms. Krishnan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 pm. The motion was seconded by
123 Mr. Rubertone; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Rubertone-aye, Kendall-aye; with
124 a vote of 5-0-0.

125

126 ***Documents***

- 127 1. June 10, 2021 Agenda
- 128 2. 123 Winter Street Scenic Road Application
- 129 3. May 13, 2021 Draft Minutes

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