

Town Planner Update

March 14, 2022

The Planning Board has had a few busy months. In addition to its regular monthly meetings, two public hearings were recently held for zoning bylaw and zoning bylaw amendment proposals. The Planning Board will be submitting the final text of the proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw to the Select Board after deliberations at their regular monthly meeting on March 16th. This is 21 days after the February 23 ADU Public Hearing, in accordance with MGL Ch. 40A, Sec. 5. The Planning Board will be submitting the drive-through bylaw amendment, proposed by the DDIC/DRA to the Select Board before March 31st. A DLTA request was submitted to BRPC for Master Planning Assistance. The Planning Board is tasked with periodically updating the Master Plan as stated in MGL Ch. 41, Sec. 81D. Dalton's current Master Plan is approaching six years without being edited.

The ADU subcommittee (of the Planning Board) has met to approve the last of its meeting minutes. The subcommittee was tasked with adopting the language for the ADU bylaw. In this effort, members researched the benefits of allowing zoning for these units, and how those benefits may apply to Dalton. Language from several nearby municipalities' ADU bylaws in addition to the AARP model bylaw provided guidelines, and was amended to fit the desires of Dalton residents as expressed at the public hearing and as received by written communication between the dates of 2/23/22 and 3/16/22. The subcommittee will be dissolved following the vote at Town Meeting

The Board of Appeals nominated an alternate, Caleb Darby tonight. He will be on the board through June 30, 2022. After this date, the Board plans to nominate Caleb for another term. The Board of Appeals is interested in a second Alternate. Please contact Town Planner, Grant McGregor, or Chairman Tony Doyle if interested.

The DRA recently submitted its proposed Drive-Through bylaw amendment to the Planning Board. The final text has been approved and will be on the warrant for Town Meeting. The DDIC is planned to be dissolved at Town Meeting. Membership has been inconsistent and there is no longer thought to be a need for this commission. Active members of the DDIC will be transferred over to the DRA. Additionally, a few new businesses are popping up in town. The former Burgner property has two business moving into the recently subdivided lot, Shire Donuts and Downswing Indoor Golf Center. The Golf center will be open from November-April beginning in November 2022. Shire Donuts will be open year round. During the spring and summer months, the golf facility may be used as a space for the owner's second business. Zinky's Pub is open and has seen good business to date. iBerkshires and the Berkshire Eagle have reported on both of the businesses mentioned above. It also appears that Dalton HD Pizza will be opening its doors shortly in the Greenridge Plaza. This is the former Paisani location. Agnes Witkowski conducted a health inspection for them to open today.

The Green Dalton Committee has been strategizing energy efficiency upgrades to the Town Hall building. Response times to energy audits and recent labor shortages have made the timing for a Spring 2022 Green Communities Grant difficult. The committee is on track to apply for a Fall 2022 round Green Communities grant for insulation and HVAC improvements. The order of these improvements is important both in terms of sound engineering/construction practices and to submit the most competitive application possible to the Green Communities staff. BRPC is providing assistance to the Green Committee in gathering data and structuring future grant applications. Building and Grounds Supervisor, Pat Pettit has been a tremendous help to the Green Committee. Pat has walked contractors through the building and has organized the necessary improvements in a time-sensitive and cost-effective manner, consistent with engineering and construction best practices.

The Open Space and Recreation Committee has taken on the challenge of improving “The Pines” trail area. This effort is fulfilling Objective 1.5 of Dalton’s current Master Plan, “Develop and maintain The Pines”. Future steps include an invasive species removal day in May and possible partnership with Greenagers, an Egremont-based non-profit which specializes in outdoor recreation work and provides local teenagers with summer jobs. The committee plans to apply jointly with Greenagers for a MassTrails grant in early 2023 in an effort to make the trail ADA compliant. This would be a benefit, especially considering the trailhead’s close proximity to the Senior Center. Greenagers’ employees would be recruited from Dalton primarily, in addition to the member towns of the CBRSD and Pittsfield. Other work being done by the committee includes planning for North Mountain Park. Glenn Lagerwall is Chairman of the North Mountain Park Advisory Committee and is on the OSR Committee. He provides updates at meetings.

The Conservation Commission has finalized the Dalton Municipal Wetlands Protection Bylaw proposal. It has been forwarded to the Town Manager for inclusion on the draft Town Meeting warrant. Some members recently attended the MACC Virtual Annual Environmental Conference. The Conservation Commission expects to be busier with the spring months approaching.

Additionally, Dalton is required to update its stormwater mapping as part of the Town’s MS4 requirement. I have been coordinating a “trial day” with Courteny Morehouse at BRPC and with Bud Hall on behalf of the Highway Department. The town has the option to hire UMASS interns to complete the field work. Cheshire and Lanesborough have decided to take this approach. The interns would be given a \$6,000 stipend from the Town of Dalton specifically, split between FY22 and FY23. I am capable of doing the field work as well. The trial day will serve to provide a timing estimate and help determine if there will be a need for interns. Regardless of if interns are hired, the field work and mapping will take place during the summer months. This is slated for a date in early April.