

## **OXFORD PLANNING COMMISSION**

### **MINUTES**

**MAY 2, 2023**

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Planning Commission was called to order by the Chairman, Norman Bell, on Tuesday, May 2, 2023, at 5:00 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

Other commission members in attendance were Lucy Garliauskas, Cameron MacTavish, and Bruce Beglin. Also in attendance was Oxford Town Planner, Maria Brophy.

The minutes of the meeting of April 4, 2023, were approved and accepted with the following correction: the 5<sup>th</sup> sentence, under the heading Old Business, should be changed from "Option 2" to "Option 3".

The following building permit was reviewed:

- Permit #23-32, Stephen A. and Rebecca H. Mulholland, 105 First Street, demolition of existing house for replacement. Both Mr. and Mrs. Mulholland were present to discuss their application. Mr. Mulholland spoke explaining that he and his wife would like to remove the existing house and shed on the property and construct a new home on it. He noted that they had considered keeping the house as it exists now but that it was not feasible as it was found to be in inadequately structured and in poor condition. The plan is to demolish the house and replace it with a two story version of what is there now using approximately the same footprint. Chairman Bell stated that he noticed there were dormers on the existing house and asked if there was second floor already there. Mr. Mulholland responded that there was no second floor and that the dormers were in an attic space that was not accessible. Planner Brophy spoke and explained that all requests for demolition have to come before the Planning Commission for approval and that the goal is for the new house to meet all setbacks and zoning requirements. Chairman Bell asked Mr. Mulholland how far along they were with their plans. Mr. Mulholland stated that they had already submitted their building plans to the town office. A motion was made by Mr. Beglin to approve the request for the demolition of the existing house. The motion was seconded by Mr. MacTavish and unanimously carried with all in favor.

This concluded the review of building permits.

### **CONSULTATION**

A consultation was held with Timothy Kearns, residential designer, along with Pete Linkin, pertaining to the house at 101 High Street and the vacant lot directly behind it, located at 200 Market Street. Mr. Kearns noted that a site plan is currently being developed by Lane Engineering to relocate the house from 101 High Street and move it over to 200 Market Street. Mr. Kearns shared with the commission members a site plan that he had put together showing approximately where the owner would like the house to be. Previously, a house had been on the property at 200 Market Street but has since been demolished years ago. Mr. Kearns noted that the plan is to reset the house, currently in a lifted stated, from its present location at 101 High Street to 200 Market Street with the idea of meeting the setbacks based on the

streetscape and the setbacks established, at the time, on Pork Alley for the side yard setback. Mr. Kearns added that it was his understanding that the Planning Commission would be the ones to approve the relocation of the house. Planner Brophy spoke stating there was nothing in the zoning ordinance about moving a house from one space to another and that this request involved relocating the house to an undeveloped lot with the parcel it would be leaving to be kept as open space. Mr. Linkin was questioned by Chairman Bell as to what would become of the property at 101 High Street. Mr. Linkin responded that there was no intention of developing that lot and that it would remain open. Mr. MacTavish asked what the driving factors were in moving the house from its present location to the Market Street property. Mr. Linkin responded that it was more advantageous to do so and that the house would fit better on Market Street than High Street. He added that he and the owner, Barbara Meade, wanted to keep the house as historically accurate as possible and that their intention was to bring it back to its original look. Ms. Garliauskas asked about the tree at the rear of 101 High Street fronting 200 Market Street and what the plans were for it. Mr. Linkin responded that it was Silver Maple tree that was rotten and split and that it would need to be taken down. Planner Brophy added that an application to remove the tree would need to be submitted. Planner Brophy briefly discussed her concern regarding the setbacks on the Market Street property as it is a corner lot and that the owner wanted to take advantage of the streetscape setback on the Market Street side of the property. Mr. Kearns noted that the setbacks he was using came from the original plat of the property which showed the location of the original structure on it that is no longer there. Mr. MacTavish asked what the distance of the house would be from Pork Alley when it is moved. Mr. Kearns responded that it would be between 10'4" – 10'5". Mr. Linkin added that the house, as it sits now on High Street, is only 6' back from Pork Alley. Planner Brophy again stated that her concern with moving the house would be with the setbacks. She noted that the ordinance states one can replace a house, in-kind, using the exact, grandfathered footprint, but that in this case, the owner was asking for reduced setbacks differing from that which is shown on the previous plat and that she was unsure as to how that could be treated. No other comments or concerns were discussed.

A consultation was next held with Richard Schmitt, owner of the property at 5023 Hel's Half Acre, along with his residential designer, Timothy Kearns. Mr. Schmitt explained that he wanted to remove the existing house on his property and build a new home using the same footprint. However, the house where it currently sits has direct visibility to the neighboring graveyard. Mr. Schmitt stated that he wanted to turn the new house so that it would face out onto the creek, that he did not want to go any closer to the water, and that he simply wanted the visibility to change. Copies of the proposed house scheme were presented to the commission. The overall plan would be to remove the existing house from the property, replace it with a new one, but keep all the accessory buildings on the property as they currently exist. Mr. Kearns noted that the reason he and Mr. Schmitt were appearing before the commission was because the property is within the 100' buffer and that they wanted approval to work within the 50' setback from the water. Planner Brophy noted that as long as the owner was not planning on encroaching any further towards the water, he shouldn't need a variance but that the Buffer Management Area (BMA) would need to be approved by the Planning Commission. Mr. Kearns responded that he needed to know what the setback would be before he could begin putting together the plans for Mr. Schmitt. Mr. Schmitt again stressed that he did not want to move any closer to the water. The commission members did not express any concerns with regards to what was being proposed. Planner Brophy stated that Mr. Schmitt could build in the area which he had shown to the commission but added that he could not encroach any closer to the water than what has already been established. It was asked if the house would meet all other setbacks. Mr. Kearns responded that it would. The discussion ended with Planner Brophy asking if the

newly proposed garage would be separated from the house. Mr. Schmitt responded that it would be attached to the house and sit on the side facing Oxford Road.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Bell reported on a letter given to him by Planner Brophy for the commission to approve concerning an annual report of the Oxford Planning Commission for the calendar year 2022 regarding a count of new residences built on undeveloped properties. Planner Brophy confirmed that only one new house was built during that period. All the members agreed to the letter and a motion was made to approve it as presented.

Prior to closing, Ms. Garliauskas asked if the commission needed to have a discussion concerning the upcoming open house for the public to look over the changes proposed to be made to the town's comprehensive plan. Planner Brophy responded that once she and the Town Manager figured out how they were going to set it up, they would send out an email with information on it and if the commission wanted to talk about it, they could plan for another public meeting though her thought was they may not need it. Two slots would be made available for residents to come to the municipal building to look over the plans. Details about it have been posted on-line and on the town bulletin board. Mr. Beglin thought there should be more advertising for the meeting. A brief discussion ensued concerning notification of upcoming public meetings ending with Chairman Bell stating that this may be something for the commission to think about but that he was concerned about the precedent it might set if changes are made to the way advertising is currently handled.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectively submitted,

Lisa Willoughby

Assistant Clerk